

# University Occupational Health and Safety Information Sheet

## SPECIALIST SAFETY COMMITTEES AND FORUMS

### 1. Genetic Modification Safety Committee

The Genetic Modification Safety Committee (GMSC) has been convened to fulfil the statutory requirements of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2014. The GMSC is a University committee representative of all departments where GM work is undertaken. The GMSC meets at least once a year.

The main remit of the GMSC is to:

- Monitor and review activities involving genetically modified (micro)organisms;
- Ensure that the approach to risk assessment is in accordance with the regulations and takes into account the independent advice provided by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification;
- Ensure that GM projects are classified appropriately according to the guidelines laid down in relevant legislation and that statutory notifications are made to the regulatory authority where appropriate;
- Ensure that satisfactory decisions on appropriate containment and control measures have been made; and
- Ensure that the University, its staff and its students cooperate and communicate efficiently on GM matters.

The constitution of the GMSC is that of both management and employees with its members representing the full scope of GM activities undertaken at the University of Strathclyde.

The constitution is described below:

- A chairperson as nominated by the GMSC;
- University Biological Safety Adviser;
- Biological Procedures Unit Manager;
- Four members of staff, with relevant expertise, who between them are able to represent all those who work with genetically modified material or who might otherwise be exposed to such work;
- A representative from any organisation(s) utilising the Biological Procedures Unit for the purpose of GM activities; and
- In Attendance a GMSC Administrator (Secretary to the Committee) and any person by invitation of the Committee.

The terms of reference for the GMSC are as follows:

- To ensure that the premises where the work is to be done are registered with the Regulatory Authority as a centre for genetic modification;
- Advise on the formulation of guidance documentation to cover work involving genetic modification;
- Advise staff who are carrying out work on GM organisms on the control measures necessary to carry out the work safely and meet legal requirements. Review systematically and in detail, every proposal involving genetic modification and provide advice on GM risk assessment;
- To give approval, where the Committee is satisfied, regarding the classification and containment proposals;
- Advise on statutory notifications to be made to enforcing authorities;

- To make recommendations to departments on suitable forms of information, instruction and training for workers performing experiments involving GM material;
- To verify that where a GM risk assessment indicates a requirement, the names of GM workers involved in or affected by GM work have been notified to the Occupational Health Service;
- To consider accidents and incidents involving GM material, to advise accordingly, and to confirm that SHaW and the HSE are notified (if necessary), of any significant release of genetically modified organisms which presented a hazard;
- Report to SACSOH annually.

## 2. SHaW Specialist Forums

SHaW Specialist Forums convened by Specialist SHaW Advisers for biological, chemical, fire, and radiation safety provide a forum for communication and consultation on specialist safety matters. The forums are attended by representatives from departments whose work activities fall within the scope of each relevant OHS Standard e.g. biological safety coordinators, chemical safety coordinators etc.

The remit of the SHaW Specialist Forums is to:

- Facilitate discussions on matters of current concern in relation to specialist health and safety;
- Provide a platform for formal consultation on specialist health and safety matters;
- Enable the sharing of best practice between the departments;
- Promote a strong safety culture among staff and students within the departments;
- Promote a collaborative approach to safety, health and wellbeing at the University of Strathclyde;
- Identify areas for improvement using new and innovative practices and techniques;
- Identify any opportunities to be more effective and efficient in relation to specialist safety management;
- Provide guidance, support and advice to colleagues in similar roles;
- Ensure effective communication between departments on common issues;
- Identify any key issues and discuss potential solutions which supports continual improvement.