

**Faculty of Science
University of Jaffna**

Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Biosafety Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

Biosafety (The application of knowledge, techniques, and equipment to prevent personal, laboratory and environmental exposure to potentially infectious agents or biohazards) is one of the important aspects for an institution where biohazardous materials and infectious agents are produced for research and teaching purposes. Faculty of Science (FoS) has many laboratories in several departments that produce bio-wastes, including hazardous material. A proper mechanism should be developed to ensure and monitor the safety of the persons working these laboratories and the surrounding environment is essential in addition to quality assurance and accreditation. Institutional Biosafety Committee approval and monitoring is essential to secure grants and embark on research for which biosafety monitoring is a mandatory.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of Biosafety Committee is to ensure that all biohazardous agents/materials used at the Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna are properly handled to avoid any personal or environmental risk. Biosafety Standards are handled with proper consideration for the health and safety of staff, researchers, volunteers, visitors and the public, as well as protection of the environment. This committee is responsible for the oversight and administration of the Faculty biosafety program. The committee will also support the departments to ensure that the national or international standards are adhered to at the laboratories.

3. ESTABLISHMENT

The Biosafety Committee is a sub-committee of the Faculty of Science, and will provide reports, recommendations and/or advice to the Dean (Faculty of Science) and the

Vice Chancellor (University of Jaffna) and the Research Committees at the Faculty and/or University level.

4. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Being the primary committee responsible for handling Biological safety associated with the laboratories at the Faculty of Science, other than the academic, the committee is empowered with the following responsibilities;

- Formulate and implement policies and standard operating procedures (SOP) for the use of biohazardous materials/agents at the FoS
- Review the manual of SOP every five years or as required according to the change in standards or national and international norms
- Design and conduct training programs on biosafety to the staff and students
- Propose a mechanism for the Biohazard waste management at the FoS
- Provide advice and make itself available to the events or accidents related to Biohazards
- Draw guidelines for laboratory biosafety management and review process
- Provide consultancy in laboratory constructions or renovations
- Review the laboratory safety practices in laboratories, upon the request, which produce Biohazard and submit the report to the respective departments
- Recommend any changes deemed appropriate based on the information supplied in these reports
- Review all audits and reports regarding biosafety sent to the University by National and international organizations or government bodies
- Make any appropriate recommendations based on these reports
- Respond to biosafety issues that require immediate consultation
- Organize an orientation programme to the freshmen students
- Monitor and approve/revise the biosafety program
- Evaluate all proposals for teaching and research work involving genetically modified organisms

5. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE

The membership of this Committee shall be constituted and approved by the Faculty Board of Science. The Committee may also co-opt additional members to deal with particular issues or applications, where necessary. Gender representation on the Committee's membership is encouraged. Members shall serve for a term of up to three years, extendable by mutual agreement.

The committee is composed of;

- a. A senior academic staff member representing each department
- b. A technical staff officer representing each department

±In the event of the resignation or termination of a membership, another one person from the same category and the same department shall be nominated at the next available Faculty board of Science.

±The member is preferred to have any previous experience in Biosafety or laboratory safety

6. CHAIR

The Chair shall be one of the senior academic staff member of the committee appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Science. The Chair shall serve for a term of office of three years, extendable by mutual agreement.

The members present will elect an Alternate Chair if the Chair is unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

7. SECRETARY

The committee shall nominate the Secretary, who will provide administrative support for the Committee.

8. QUORUM

The quorum for a committee meeting shall be more than 50% of the membership. Where a loss of quorum is identified, the meeting may be adjourned until a time the Chair determines.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Committee members are required to declare to the Chair any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest they may have with any item on the Committee's agenda. If the Chair or Committee deems a member to have a conflict of interest in a matter before the Committee, the member must not be present when the Committee considers that matter.

10. MEETINGS, AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Committee meetings may be held face-to face, by telephone, videoconference, or other electronic means. Committee meetings shall be held at least twice per year.

Agendas and associated documentation will be distributed at least 07 working days before the meeting.

Committee records must be retained by the Secretary.

Periodic reports should be submitted to the Board of the Faculty of Science

11. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The committee should undertake an annual self-assessment of its performance against these terms of reference and provide that information to the Board of Faculty of Science.

The Board of the Faculty of Science shall review the information and provide necessary recommendations and/or guidance.