

Faculty of Science and Health

MEMORANDUM

TO Faculty of Science & Health

FROM Faculty Health & Safety Committee / Biological Safety Committee

DATE 23 August 2005

RE EPA/HSA Submissions

As part of its ongoing commitment to best Health and Safety practice, the Faculty of Science and Health created a Health and Safety (H&S) Committee as one of its standing committees when the new Faculty structures were put into operation. A specific Biological Safety Committee (BSC) has been established to report to the Faculty H&S Committee on matters of biological safety. The BSC was established to advise and assist biological researchers in matters of biological safety and also discharges a statutory responsibility of the university to manage aspects of safety, particularly the requirements of the environmental protection agency (EPA) and Health and Safety Authority (HSA) with regard to reporting and monitoring ongoing biological research. The full terms of reference of BSC have recently been ratified and can be viewed on the Faculty internal website (<http://www.dcu.ie/internal/staff/science/minutes.shtml>).

The EPA places a number of statutory requirements on the BSC with regard to genetically modified organisms (GMO). Details of these requirements are available at the following weblink (<http://www.epa.ie/Licensing/GMOLicensing/ContainedUseofGMOs/>). These regulations might best be summarised by stating that the BSC must oversee, review and, where necessary, advise on, all relevant GMO work. Requirements from the HSA (www.hsa.ie) are currently less explicit; however, the combined requirements of the EPA and HSA necessitate the BSC to oversee general Biological Safety and specifically GMO work being undertaken by staff and students of the Faculty.

In the past, individual biologists and various biological research groups within the Faculty have submitted the necessary documentation to the EPA and HSA as required. However, there has been no formal mechanism in place for the Faculty to oversee and create an inventory of such submissions.

Proposal

In order to allow the BSC to discharge its responsibilities there is a clear need for an ongoing inventory and review of all work with a biological safety or GMO component.

To this end the following is proposed.

1. Copies of all EPA & HSA submissions made in the preceding two years (2003 & 2004) or for ongoing work by individuals on their own behalf or on behalf of units or schools should be copied to the secretary of the BSC, Ms. Grace Hickey. *As highlighted recently by the EPA, this must include notification where work has ceased or changed in any significant way.*
2. Any new submissions to each of these bodies with biological safety or GMO relevance should also be copied as a matter of course to the BSC secretary.
3. Prior to any new work involving GMOs **and/or** where there is a reasonable indication of biological hazard to personnel or the environment, a submission must be made to the BSC outlining briefly the nature of the work, the risk of the GMO or biological hazard and the measures which will be put in place to afford protection according to best practice.
4. For those using GMOs, a brief annual status report is required by the EPA. The BSC requires a copy of this report for reference.

To standardise and simplify the detail required a standard submission template has been developed and should accompany internal submissions for existing or new work (see next page). Documentation should be sent to the BSC secretary, Ms. Grace Hickey, at the Faculty Office for distribution to the committee.

Faculty of Science & Health
Biological Safety Committee

Template for submission of information on GMO & Biological Hazards in use

Standardised BSC submission template to accompany submissions to the BSC

This form to be used for all biological work (planned or underway):-

- classified as Biohazard level 2 or above
- involving primary human tissue, primary tumour or primary blood/plasma/serum
- involving prion material
- involving pathogenic/disease causing microbes

Project title	
Person with Principal responsibility for work	
Contact phone number & e-mail	
Proposed duration of work	
Indicate if work will be undertaken by the following:- staff, postgraduate students, undergraduate students and/or other (please define)	
Brief description of work to be undertaken (approx 150 words)	

For GMO work	
Please append copy of EPA GMO licence application including Risk Assessments & SOPs	
EPA GMO license number (<i>where granted</i>)	
Identity of vectors, genes, cell lines, organisms to be used /developed	

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For work with biological hazards	
Please append copy of any HSA notification including Risk Assessments & SOPs	
Please indicate where work is being/will be performed ?	
Identity of the hazard/toxin/organism in use/to be used	
Indicate specific biological safety risk	
Measures to be utilised to control and minimise risks	
Has a written risk assessment been conducted for the work? <i>(please append)</i>	Yes/No
Is dedicated equipment to be utilised ?	Yes/No
Where is material to be stored?	
How will material be transported to/from laboratory?	
Will material be moved within DCU, how will this be undertaken?	
How is waste to be disposed of?	
<i>Please append SOP for Waste treatment</i>	
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Signed	
Date	

To be submitted to Grace Hickey, Secretary to the Biological Safety Committee, Faculty of Science and Health, HG01, Nursing Building.

Queries & suggestions to Dr. Robert O'Connor, University Biological Safety Advisor (robert.oconnor@dcu.ie phone 5691) or Mr Michael Burke, Chair, Faculty Biological Safety Committee (michael.burke@dcu.ie, phone 6307).