

# University College Cork Biological Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

---



**Responsibility in relation to all matters involving safety in University College Cork resides with the Heads of Functional areas. The remit of the Biological Advisory Group [BADGR] is not to in any way replace this responsibility. The purpose of the Group is to share knowledge, best practice and assist with effective compliance with statutory instrument [SI] 572. The BADGR is not a Safety Committee.**

In all cases the provisions of the SHWW Act 2005 and UCC Safety Policy apply. For the purpose of the Biological Regulations the requirements as set out above apply to staff. Consideration of the risks arising for third parties, which includes students, who may be adversely impacted by the work conducted by UCC employees must also be catered for by each duty holder.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing in these terms of reference implies or creates any conflict with the role of the University Safety Officer or the functions of that Office or those of the Corporate Secretary. In that regard and for the avoidance of doubt, the roles of the both the Group and the Biological Safety Advisor are advisory and regular reports shall be provided by the Group to those Offices/Officers with formal responsibilities in the area of safety within the University.

1. The University College Cork [UCC] Biological Advisory Group [BADGR] has been established to support and advise duty holders under Safety, Health and Welfare at Work law [SHWW] and UCC Safety Policy in meeting the requirements of:
  - a. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations current edition S.I. No.572 of 2013 (and associated codes of Practice as may be amended in the future). Referred to hereunder as “the Biological Regulations”.
  - b. Research grants/applications which may require institutional policies and procedures demonstrating a commitment to workers health and safety in conformance with existing regulations in this area.
  - c. Duty of care obligations in this area.

Specifically, the Group will advise the Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) and the University Safety Officer on biological hazards and best-practice risk controls of relevance to work with Biological Agents at any and all places where UCC employees conduct such work, (both on and off Campus) in accordance with the provisions of the Biological Regulations. The BADGR will adhere to and take cognisance of UCC Safety Policy and legislative requirements and advices of the University Safety Officer as appropriate.

2. The Group will shall include:
  - a. A Chairperson, appointed by the VPRI.
  - b. At least four management and scientific representatives of Colleges, Research Institutes and Departments where regular work with biological agents is performed.
  - c. One Representative of the Functional area of Buildings and Estates

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the provisions of the 2005 Act, students undergoing a course of study at a University are not employees of the University.

# University College Cork Biological Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

---



- d. One member of UCC staff whose work does not involve the use of or routine exposure to biological agents.
  - e. The Chairperson of the Genetic Engineering sub-Group of the BADGR.
  - f. One representative external to the University to be decided by the BADGR. The external representative will be a member of the BADGR for not more than three years.
  - g. The Chairperson of the BADGR can invite individuals with appropriate expertise from within UCC, as s/he deems necessary, to be in attendance and to act as an advisor(s) to the Group.
  - h. Biological Safety Adviser –in attendance.
3. The Group shall meet at least four times per year, or more often as required. A quorum of five Group members shall be required at each meeting.
  4. The BADGR will provide a report to the OVPRI and to the University Safety Officer on an annual basis.
  5. The BADGR will advise duty holders (such as, but not limited to) Heads of Functional Area, Heads of School/Department, Directors of Research Institutes and Centres and Principal Investigators/authorised users undertaking work with biological agents or whose staff come in contact with biological agents as part of their normal duties with regard to the duty holders discharge of:
    - a. The registration of such work as required under the Biological Regulations, as well as the associated notifications to the BADGR and other bodies as necessary. (In the case of all such notifications, the duty holder under 5 above shall be listed as the person responsible for safety at the place where the work is conducted).
    - b. The provision of suitable facilities, equipment, procedures and appropriate training for the conducting of work so as to ensure safety and compliance with the Biological Regulations of individual projects(s) and normal work activities involving contact with biological agents by FA Heads.
    - c. Adherence to the University Safety Policies, best practice and EU/Irish law.
    - d. The conduct of risk assessments prior to staff commencing work with biological agents, including the acquisition, use, handling, storage and disposal of biological agents.
    - e. The maintenance, and secure storage, a log of all risk assessments, risk controls and any relevant standard operating procedures up to date and available locally at the places of work concerned.
    - f. Implementation of the necessary risk controls (in order of hierarchy) and operation of all regulatory requirements (whether as specified by the Biological Regulations or other legislative requirement) including containment, signage, equipment, waste handling, safe transport, record keeping, health surveillance and vaccinations where appropriate and the appropriate training of staff working with biological agents from commencement of work activities and at regular intervals thereafter.
    - g. Any other requirements, relevant to SI 572, as may be advised by BADGR, the University Safety Officer, UCC fire or safety advisers including the University's occupational health physician or Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority.
    - h. The periodic dissemination of essential risk/control information to other relevant people (cleaning, security, maintenance, other contractors, emergency personnel, and staff safety representatives as necessary) is documented.
    - i. The timely investigation of accidents or dangerous incidents by duty holders in accordance with approved University procedures for investigating and recording such incidents, in consultation

# University College Cork Biological Advisory Group: Terms of Reference

---



with the Chair of the BADGR and the University Safety Officer within 72 hours of the incident and notify same, in writing, to the BADGR and University Safety Officer within the same timescale. Where required the submission of reports to the HSA within a maximum of 28 calendar days from the date of the incident. Duty holders are still required to fulfil all other UCC obligations in relation to accidents and/or dangerous incidents and Health and Safety regulations.

6. The Group will only liaise on behalf of the University with the relevant enforcement agencies on matters concerning biological agents with the specific approval of the OVPRI and in consultation with the University Safety Officer and OCLA.
7. A Group (the Genetic Engineering Group, formally the Biosafety Committee) will deal with all matters arising from the implementation of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations, 2001 (SI 73/2001) and associated environmental legislation. The Chairperson of the BADGR will be appointed a member of the Genetic Engineering Group by the Chairperson of the Genetic Engineering Group
8. The BADGR will oversee an annual review of work involving Biological agents to assess whether the regulatory conditions are being adhered to by duty holders and to sample the adequacy of risk assessments and control measures which the duty holders operate including local record keeping, HSA notifications and current lists of staff working with Biological agents, dates of commencement and cessation of work with such agents as relevant. The report arising from this annual review will be forwarded to the VPRI, the University Safety Officer and the Corporate Secretary.
9. The BADGR will consult at the level of College (or equivalent) and the Functional area of Buildings and Estates on appropriate emergency response plans covering accidental spills and personnel contamination resulting from work with biological agents and the treatment and disposal of waste. The BADGR will advise OVPRI, the University Safety Officer and the Corporate Secretary as to the general state of readiness of plans to cover such emergencies and will be outlined in the annual report.
10. Working groups can be established within the BADGR to advise on specific elements of biological hazards as mandated by the Chair.
11. The BADGR will consult with duty holders (as described in 5 above) and any relevant staff within UCC in the manner of the safe disposal of biological materials of any origin.
12. The BADGR will address other issues related to the use of biological agents as they arise.
13. Two members of the BADGR may be replaced every two years. No one person may be a member of the BADGR for more than five years. The term of office for the Chair is three years. No one person can occupy the position of Chair for more than two terms.
14. The Biological Safety Adviser will support and co-operate with the University Safety Officer and supply discipline-specific advices to the University Safety Officer, BADGR and Duty Holders whilst taking account of SHWWW law, University Safety Policy and best practice [not limited to the university sector].