

Information: Biosafety at JCU

WHS-PRO-INFO-009c

This Information Sheet provides information for the biosafety application process at JCU.

Biosafety at JCU

Biological hazards are any biological agent, substance or material (whether alive or not) present in or arising from living organisms, that are or may be hazardous to the health or wellbeing of the environment or people.

James Cook University is an Accredited Organisation certified by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR). Due to this accreditation and our duty of care, the University is required to have an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) in place. The IBC oversees compliance of JCU with the OGTR and makes recommendations relating to biosafety issues at JCU. Hazards the IBC specifically monitor include:

- Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)
- Materials derived from human sources
- Materials derived from animal sources in particular those with zoonotic infection
- Micro-organisms

All activities must be conducted in the appropriate facilities for the Biosafety risk taking place.

JCU Biosafety Application:

A biosafety application is required for projects with biological hazards. Risk associated with biological hazards include, but are not limited to:

- GMO
 - Genetically modified microorganisms
 - Genetically modified animals and plants.
- Materials derived from human sources
 - Collecting blood
 - Interacting with potentially infected individuals, for example, interviewing or taking biological samples
 - Activities conducted outside of facilities being operated under infection and control requirements from Queensland Health
 - Materials derived from animal sources, in particular those with potential for causing zoonotic infection
 - Dealing with wild animals, such as bats (e.g. Lyssavirus)
 - Dealing with domestic animals, such as horses (e.g. Hendra Virus)
 - Dealing with animals outside of Australia (e.g. rabies)
 - Purposely infecting animals

- Working with poisonous or venomous organisms
- Synthetic toxins/biologicals
- Working with microorganisms.

Not Sure if a Biosafety Application is required?

If there is uncertainty whether the project requires a biosafety application, the applicant should seek guidance by sending an email to biosafety@jcu.edu.au. The Divisional Biosafety Representative may also be able to offer assistance. The email should include the following:

- Applicants name and contact details
- Name of Supervisor
- Division and College / Institute
- Description of the project.

An initial ruling will be made by an IBC member to determine one of the following for the project:

- Confirm that the biosafety application process is relevant, and the full biosafety application is to be completed
- That the biosafety application process is not relevant, and the decision will be recorded on a central register maintained by the IBC
- Further information is required to make the assessment.

If you have concerns regarding Biosafety please contact the Institutional Biosafety Committee on biosafety@jcu.edu.au

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/work-health-and-safety/biosafety-and-quarantine>

Further information:

Work Health and Safety Unit:

Phone - 07 4781 3473

Email – biosafety@jcu.edu.au