

User Protocols for The Marine and Aquaculture Research Facilities Unit (MARFU)

Guidelines and Procedures for Safe and Efficient Facility Use

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Administration/Need to know

- Prior to the start of any experiment/project, the prospective users need to complete an “Application for Use” form and make an appointment to discuss their project with the MARFU manager. The Application for Use form is available [here](#).
- A copy of the experiment methodology is helpful for our technical staff to understand what the researcher is trying to achieve and assist us in the design and setup. It is advisable to provide as much notice in advance as possible of research requirements.
- Any person accessing the MARFU facility must have completed a MARFU induction with the exception of short term visitors who will be supervised for the duration of their visit by someone who has completed the induction.
- Every experiment must be risk assessed by the user to identify all safety hazards and control measures related to the experiment. Risk assessments need to be lodged in RiskWare before any project can commence.
- MARFU Management must be notified as soon as possible if time extensions or changes to an experiment are necessary.
- Unauthorised usage of a seawater system in any way, even by our regular users, will result in the immediate removal of animals from the system. This includes breaches of WH&S requirements including electrical equipment.

- MARFU staff must be consulted when selecting electrical equipment for purchase and when installing any electrical equipment within MARFU.
- All Researchers are required to make arrangements for any extra space/aquaria well in advance of animals arriving at the facility.
- JCU Animal ethics protocols are to be followed within the Aquarium Complex. Approval to start a research project will not be granted without the written approval from the JCU Animal Ethics Committee for that particular project. More information about Animal Ethics requirements can be found [here](#). Failure to comply with these protocols will result in the expulsion or suspension of the User from the facility.
- No changes are to occur to the animal population within the Aquarium Complex without notifying to the Aquarium Staff. All changes must be within the guidelines of the original User's Approval.
- The Aquarium Staff must be notified of the absence of any approved researcher and briefed on the arrangements that have been made for a competent person to look after the animals, whilst the researcher is away.
- Any costs associated with rectifying the system because a User has not followed protocols, will be charged at the standard rate.
- A User's authorization will be withdrawn or suspended for any incidents due to carelessness that break animal ethics regulations or endanger the success of other research projects.
- Visitors or friends of a Researcher are requested to stay within the confines of the Researcher's experiment and supervision unless the facility staff are notified of their visit and given authorisation to view other areas.
- Above all else Users must accept full responsibility for their animals. This means a researcher is 100% responsible for their experiment inc. husbandry, water quality (individual systems), individual system upkeep, etc. Aquarium staff may be available to assist in the general operation of researcher's experiment/systems when requested, nevertheless the researcher always maintains the primary responsibility for their own system.
- Users are NOT to borrow, remove or alter equipment belonging to others without their permission. This includes turning off valves to observe the animals of another researcher's experiment.
- Cleaning of tanks, sumps, equipment or research space is the responsibility of the User to whom they were allocated to - this applies throughout the duration of the project and at completion. Failure to

comply with these guidelines will result in suspension of User Approval and a charge of \$150 per hour cleaning could apply.

Seawater Supply and After Hours Support

- MARFU is an inland research aquarium, all seawater is delivered by truck therefore all water levels throughout the facility are continually monitored and unfortunately there can be times of minimal availability of seawater.
- During times of low seawater availability, facility staff may have to restrict water use and not allow the start up of new research projects to ensure the continuity of existing research.
- Please always consider your seawater a precious resource and report any wastage or loss.
- All sea water usage, for example filling or emptying tanks, may only be performed after consulting the MARFU On Call Technician first. MARFU business hours are 8am to 4pm on weekdays, excluding public holidays.
- Any problems associated with a seawater system being automatically shut down usually means a tank has overflowed or a tank filled outside work hours, the water pumps shut down immediately and a technician is called out to fix any problems and reset the system. At present, the set fee for after hours CALL OUT is \$392 per call out and 5 cents per litre of seawater lost or wasted. This cost will be on charged to the user if it is found that the system fault was due to user error rather than mechanical breakdown.

Biosecurity and Animal Health

- All animals introduced into the Aquarium Complex are to be prophylactically treated and cleaned to prevent introduction of disease. All animals transferred between systems are to undergo the same treatments to prevent the translocation of disease. The protocols for disease prevention and management are detailed in “Disease Prevention and Treatment Protocols” available from the MARFU office.
- No equipment is to be moved between research labs or seawater systems prior to being adequately sterilised. Sharing of equipment is

not advised. Hands and boots should also be sterilised when moving between labs.

- Please minimise the amount of foot traffic through research spaces. Please don't walk through other researcher's outdoor research spaces or access labs without permission.
- Please don't invite visitors unnecessarily. Be aware that MARFU is a research aquarium and not open to the public.
- The removal of all uneaten food and faeces from seawater systems on a daily basis is essential.
- If there are any signs of infectious disease in any animals at MARFU, MARFU staff should be notified immediately.
- If a disease or mortality event meets the requirements of an Unexpected Adverse Event (UAE) then the ethics office and/or Animal Welfare Officer must be notified with 48 hours.
- Any mortalities need to be sealed in a plastic bag and placed in the Wet Waste Freezer in Building 71 ready for disposal.

Safety and Electrical

- It is the responsibility of the User to dispose of all bio-hazardous waste such as gloves, needles, pipettes, scalpel blades and plastic bags using the proper disposal methods.
- All persons who enter these Facilities must comply with JCU Work Place, Health and Safety regulation regarding footwear, ie. Fully closed in shoes only.
- MARFU staff must be consulted when selecting electrical equipment for purchase and when installing any electrical equipment within MARFU.
- All electrical equipment must be turned off at the switch before handling, both the equipment itself or a water body the equipment is immersed in.
- All electrical equipment used inside MARFU wet labs or outdoor tank areas must have a minimum IP rating of 56 unless excepted by a Risk Assessment.
- Several First Aid kits are located throughout the complex. Please report any accidents or incidents, no matter how minor they may seem.
- Promote personal safety by:
 - Working to JCU's WPH&S regulation (located on JCU web page).

- Removing broken glass and dispose of it in the specially marked containers.
- Do not use unsafe electrical leads, power boards etc. All electrical equipment brought into MARFU must be approved by MARFU staff that it is suitable for use in wet areas and tested and tagged.
- No smoking, drinking or eating inside the compound fence.
- Wear safety glasses or face shields where appropriate.
- Please roll up freshwater hoses after use.
- Keeping your area clean and tidy, securing electrical appliances and leads away from water.



Thank you and happy researching 😊

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