

Biological & Genetically Modified Materials Safety Committee

1. Constitution

- 1.1 The Vice Chancellor has established a committee known as the Biological & Genetically Modified Materials Safety Committee (BGMS), which reports to the Health, Safety, Sustainability & Wellbeing Board (HSSWB).

2. Scope

- 2.1 BGMS is responsible for overseeing the health and safety aspects of any academic work carried out in the University involving biological agents or genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

3. Membership

- 3.1 The membership shall be as follows:

Ex Officio

- Chair appointed by HSSWB
- University Biological Safety Advisor
- Associate Director, Health & Safety

Other Members

- A minimum of 3 members of staff with relevant expertise from each of the departments involved in biological or genetic modification work
- The other members will be appointed by HSSWB annually for one year.

4. Attendance at meetings

- 4.1 At the discretion of the Chair, other staff who are not members of the Committee may be invited to attend on an ad hoc basis for specific items where their attendance can inform and support the Committee.

5. Delegated Authority

The Committee is authorised by the Vice Chancellor to approve:

- 5.1 Procedures, guidance and good practice documents relating to areas within the Committee's remit.
- 5.2 All proposals for new academic work or changes to academic work involving biological agents and GM. Where appropriate (i.e., biological safety level of class 2 and above), proposals should also be sent to the Health & Safety Executive by the academic/individual who is responsible for the work (i.e. the PI / Supervisor).
- 5.3 When a piece of work is complete, the academic/individual undertaking the work is required to inform the BGMS committee.

6. Other Duties

- 6.1 The other duties of the Committee shall be to Peer review all risk assessments
- 6.2 related to working with Biological Agents or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

- 6.3 Classify the risk level of any associated work, including determining whether such work is notifiable to enforcing authorities
- 6.4 Ensure statutory notifications and returns are made appropriately to enforcing authorities;
- 6.5 Monitor the effectiveness of GMO / Biological agent containment measures across the University laboratories and related facilities;
- 6.6 Consider the findings of inspections, accident or incident reports and investigations relating to biological agents and GMOs and monitor progress in implementing recommendations; and
- 6.7 Recommend an annual report from the Committee to HSSW covering the activity of BGMS over the past year.
- 6.8 Have particular regard to the importance of freedom of speech and academic freedom in the committee's business, acting in accordance with the commitments in the University's [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#).

7. Standing Orders

- 7.1 The Committee must adhere to the Standing Orders for Academic and Executive Committees.
- 7.2 The following changes from the Standing Orders have been approved:
 - 7.2.1 To comply with health and safety requirements, minutes of the Committee's meetings should be made available to staff through an appropriate mechanism (e.g. publication on the University's portal).

Amended February 2026

Document owner: University Secretary

Approved by Vice-Chancellor February 2026