

SAFETY IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING POLICY

Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy in the Policy and Procedure Manager (PPM), the electronic policy management system (EPMS), to ensure you are referring to the latest version.

Purpose:

This policy forms part of a suite of policies that support the overarching *Research Integrity Policy*. The *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007* specifies certain Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) obligations. Thus consideration of risks to the safety of researchers, human participants, and wellbeing of animals or the environment is required. Murdoch University is also subject to statutory OSH obligations, which apply to all the University's research and teaching activities.

Legislative documents, forms, contact details for responsible staff referred to, and relevant definitions are listed on the Safety in Research and Teaching (SRT) Office website <http://goto.murdoch.edu.au/SafetyResearchTeaching> and/or the OSH Office website <http://goto.murdoch.edu.au/OSH>.

Audience:

Staff, Students

Objectives:

- Murdoch University meets its OSH statutory obligations and other requirements in relation to staff and students in the research and teaching context.
- Staff and students identify, manage and control the risks and hazards in their research and teaching working environment.

Definitions:

The definition of common terms appears in the Murdoch University Dictionary of Terms.

- For the purposes of this policy, staff includes all academic and professional staff, as well as those appointed via the *Honorary Titles and Appointments Policy*. Students refer to Graduate Research Degree candidates, Honours degree students, and those enrolled in undergraduate degrees.

Policy Statement:

1. Murdoch University is responsible for ensuring a safe environment and, as far as practicable, minimising staff and student exposure to hazards when they are engaged in research and teaching activities.
2. The relevant College is responsible for ensuring the safety of staff, students

- or another person engaged in research and teaching activities.
3. Staff and students are responsible for following proper practices for safety and security, and for ensuring their own and others' safety in their research or teaching activities.
 4. In their research and teaching activities, staff and students must consider their own safety, or how the safety or health of others may be affected (through any act or omission), to comply with the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*.
 5. Additionally, in their research activities, staff and students must minimise safety risks to human participants, the wellbeing of animals and/or the environment, to comply with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007*.
 6. Staff and students must identify hazards and associated risk reduction strategies before a research or teaching activity begins, and take all reasonable steps to comply with legislative requirements and other applicable Murdoch University policies.
 - 6.1 Before commencing on any research activity, staff and students must submit a Risk Assessment Murdoch Processes (RAMP) form.
 - 6.2 Before commencing on any teaching activity, where required, staff must submit a Risk Assessment Murdoch Processes (RAMP) form.
 - 6.3 Staff and students must attend appropriate OSH and SRT training, where required.
 - 6.4 Laboratory activities shall comply with provisions of *Australian Standard 2243 – Safety in Laboratories* and requirements in the *Safety in Research and Teaching Manual*.
 7. Before commencing on any research or teaching activity, staff and students must obtain all necessary approvals, permits and licences, including for biological, chemical, defence and strategic goods, fieldwork and radiation safety.
 - 7.1 Essential approvals, including the RAMP number, must be obtained for research funds to be released, and all relevant approvals must be obtained for full release of research funds, subject to the grant's requirements.
 - 7.2 Essential approvals, including the RAMP number, must be obtained for Graduate Research Degree students' candidature to be confirmed.
 - 7.3 Internal University approval is required although safety for research or any teaching activity at other institutions is the responsibility of the other institution as stipulated in the agreement with that other institution.
 8. All injuries, incidents, near-misses and hazards must be reported on the Murdoch University Incident Reporting System (MUIRS), in accordance with the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* and *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996*.
 9. The OSH Office must report all relevant injuries, incidents, near-misses and hazards recorded on the MUIRS to the SRTC and its sub-committees at each of their respective meetings.

Governance Framework

10. The Safety in Research and Teaching Committee (SRTC) shall develop, recommend and oversee implementation of policies and procedures governing the safety of staff and students in research and teaching. The work of the SRTC shall be supported by four sub-committees:
 - 10.1 Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) which is to oversee biological safety issues, ensure compliance with relevant government biosafety requirements and gene technology requirements of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR), including the *Gene Technology Act 2000* and *Gene Technology Regulations 2001*;
 - 10.2 Chemical and Hazardous Substances Committee (CHSC) which is to oversee the appropriate purchase, management, use and disposal of chemicals and hazardous substances at the University, and to ensure compliance with the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2014*, *National Code of Practice for Chemicals of Security Concern 2013*, and relevant OSH legislation;
 - 10.3 Fieldwork Committee (FC) which is to oversee safety issues pertinent to research and teaching activities in the field, and to ensure compliance with relevant OSH legislation and University policies; and
 - 10.4 Radiation Safety Committee (RSC) which is to oversee compliance with radiation safety requirements of the Radiological Council of Western Australia, as specified in the *Radiation Safety Act 1975*.
11. The SRTC shall provide advice on the export of defence and strategic goods issues, and to oversee compliance with the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012*.

Biosafety

12. Staff and students working with any biological material must conduct a risk assessment, including an application for approval to the IBC where necessary, of such use in their research and teaching activities.
13. All research and teaching activities using biological material must comply with the relevant Australian Standard for safety in microbiological laboratories in place at the time of the proposed activity.
14. IBC is responsible for monitoring all biological material activities and for inspecting all relevant laboratories including non-OGTR laboratories.

Genetically Modified Organisms

15. All research and teaching activities using gene technology or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) must comply with the *Gene Technology Act 2000* and *Gene Technology Regulations 2001*.
16. Before working with any GMOs, staff and students must obtain IBC approval.
17. IBC is responsible for monitoring all biosafety activities and for inspecting relevant premises at least annually.
18. The SRT Office shall maintain a database of all OGTR applications and related information for reporting to each IBC meeting.
19. IBC must report annually, or as required, to the OGTR.

Biosecurity Material

20. All research and teaching activities using biosecurity material must comply with the requirements of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.
21. Before importing any biosecurity material, staff and students must ensure that there is a relevant permit.
 - 21.1 Staff and students must ensure that the import permit is kept accessible with the biosecurity material.
22. Before using any biosecurity material, staff and students must ensure that relevant certificates have been obtained.
23. All research and teaching activities using biosecurity material must only be conducted in Approved Arrangements (AAs).
24. IBC is responsible for monitoring all research and teaching activities using biosecurity material and for inspecting AAs, at least annually.
25. External monitoring, when required, must be facilitated.
26. Laboratory Managers are responsible for reporting on all relevant approvals or permits to the SRT Office.
 - 26.1 The SRT Office shall maintain a database of all approvals/permits and related information for reporting to each IBC meeting.

Chemical Safety

27. Research and teaching using chemicals and hazardous substances at Murdoch University must comply with the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*, the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996*, and any other relevant regulatory requirements.
28. Before commencing on any research or teaching activity using chemicals and/or hazardous substances, staff and students must conduct a risk assessment, including an application for approval to the CHSC where necessary.
29. All chemicals and hazardous substances, including poisons, must be purchased, transported, stored and disposed of in accordance with the relevant legislation.
30. The OSH Office must maintain a register of all licences and permits pertaining to chemicals, with approvals and renewals reported to the CHSC regularly.
31. The OSH Office must maintain a current accessible central register on the chemical management database detailing all hazardous substances and their location in buildings under the University's control.
32. The OSH Office must make available a current Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each hazardous substance to staff and students.

Defence and Strategic Goods Safety

33. All research and teaching activities involving the intangible supply (in a non-physical form), publication and brokering of technologies on the Defence and Strategic Goods List (DSGL) must comply with the export controls outlined in the *Defence Trade Controls Act 2012* and its amendments.

34. Before a research and teaching activity listed on the DSGL begins, staff and students must conduct a risk assessment, including applying for a permit from the Defence Export Controls Office (DECO), if required and reporting the permit obtained to the SRT Office.
35. Staff and students must ensure that they comply with any conditions or requirements placed on the permit, and put in place procedures to ensure these are met.
36. Staff and students must report to DECO, in accordance with its reporting conditions.
37. Staff and students holding DECO permits must maintain records for five years.
38. SRTC is responsible for monitoring all DSGL activities and for reporting annually on the activities to the Vice Chancellor.
39. The SRT Office shall maintain a database of DECO permits for reporting to the SRTC meeting annually.

Fieldwork Safety

40. Before the fieldwork activity begins, staff and students must obtain fieldwork approval.
41. Staff, students and volunteers must undergo any required briefing, training or induction before fieldwork begins.
42. Staff and students on fieldwork must:
 - 42.1 comply with the approved conditions, any relevant Murdoch University policies, the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* and other relevant external regulatory and/or legal requirements as listed on the SRT Office website;
 - 42.2 take responsibility for their own safety, that of fieldwork team members and participants; and
 - 42.3 have a copy of the approval on fieldwork, where required.
43. In the event of any critical incidents or accidents, staff and students must report to:
 - 43.1 the appropriate authorities out on fieldwork; and
 - 43.2 the OSH Office, as soon as possible, on their return from fieldwork.
44. The SRT Office must maintain a record of all approved fieldwork applications.
45. The RAMP number is required for any fieldwork reimbursements.

Radiation Safety

46. Before using any irradiating apparatus or radioactive substances for research or teaching purposes involving human subjects, staff and students must obtain approval from the Radiological Council of Western Australia and/or Radiation Safety Committee by submitting their application to the respective Murdoch University Radiation Safety Officer.
47. Staff and students using any irradiating apparatus or radioactive substances must comply with the *Radiation Safety Act 1975*.
48. Staff and students using any irradiating apparatus or radioactive substances

must conduct their activity in registered premises, as stipulated on the relevant Murdoch University registration.

49. Only approved license holders may acquire, use, or supervise the use of irradiating apparatus or radioactive substances.
50. The following officers shall report to each meeting of the RSC details regarding any applications, including approval dates (or, reasons for non-approval), type of equipment and/or substances being used, and staff and students involved:
 - 50.1 The Radiation Safety Officer (Irradiating Apparatus);
 - 50.2 The Radiation Safety Officer (Radioactive Substances); and
 - 50.3 The Radiation Safety Officer (Transilluminators and Lasers).
51. In the event of any critical incident involving irradiating apparatus or radioactive substances, staff and students must report to the OSH Office immediately.
52. The SRT Office must maintain a record of all licence holders using irradiating apparatus or radioactive substances.

Compliance Monitoring

53. The SRT Office shall monitor compliance with this policy by:
 - 53.1 coordinating reports to/from SRTC, its sub-committees and other responsible officers as appropriate;
 - 53.2 coordinating the submission of reports to external agencies in accordance with their specified requirements; and
 - 53.3 maintaining a schedule of audits/inspections by external agencies and monitoring implementation of any recommended outcomes of those audits/inspections.

Performance Indicators:

- Number of research and teaching safety-related accidents/incidents/near misses (with the optimum being zero).
- Number of Corrective Action Requests arising from external audits/inspections (with the optimum being zero).

Related Documents:

[DefenceTradeControlsAct2012\(Cth\)](#)

[GeneTechnologyAct2000\(Cth\)](#)

[OccupationalSafetyandHealthAct1984\(WA\)](#)

[OccupationalSafetyandHealthRegulations1996WA](#)

Medicines and Poisons Act 2014

Biosecurity (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2015

[RadiationSafetyAct1975\(WA\)](#)

[NationalCodeofPracticeforChemicalsofSecurityConcern2016](#)

[Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)

[Working in Isolation Policy](#)

Safety in Research and Teaching Manual

[Fieldwork Procedure](#)

[Fieldwork Guidelines](#)

References:

Internal Air Transport Association (IATA). *Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR)*. (2018).

Retrieved from <http://www.iata.org/publications/dgr/Pages/index.aspx>

Safe Work Australia. *Hazardous Substances Information System (HSIS)*. (2018).

Retrieved from <http://hsis.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/>

Approval and Implementation:

Approval Authority:	Academic Council
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager Research Ethics and Integrity
Committee with oversight:	Research Committee
Approval Authority for supporting procedures:	Safety in Research and Teaching Committee (SRTC)
Approval Authority for supporting guidelines:	Safety in Research and Teaching Committee (SRTC)
Approval Authority for supporting standards:	There are no supporting standards.
Contact Officer:	Manager Research Ethics and Integrity

Revision History:

Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date Approved	Effective Date	Next Review Date	Resolution No. (if applicable)
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Approved Administrative Amendments	29/05/2018		27/01/2019	
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AC/120/2011(ii)				
Approved	10/08/2011		10/08/2014	AC/120/2011(ii)