1. **ESTABLISHMENT**

The ECU Radiation, Biosafety and Hazardous Substances Committee (RBHSC) is a sub-committee of and established by Academic Board. The RBHSC is the university’s reference and referral point for all matters relating to the use of radiation, biological and hazardous chemical materials (Risk Materials), including Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) used for research, teaching and non-academic purposes.

In accordance with these terms of reference the RBHSC will determine and document its own operating procedures. Academic Board shall endorse these procedures.

In this document:
- ECU Personnel means *all staff, students, volunteers and contractors*;
- GMOs means *Genetically Modified Organisms*; and
- Risk Materials means *radiological/biological (including GMOs)/ hazardous chemical materials*

2. **OBJECTIVES**

I. To develop, recommend and oversee the implementation of policy and procedures, in accord with legislative requirements, concerning activities utilising Risk Materials, which may pose a risk to ECU Personnel or the environment;

II. To advise on the development and delivery, using external and internal resources, of training programs to ECU Personnel intending to use hazardous or radioactive or genetically modified materials;

III. To provide advice and guidance to relevant Schools and Service Centres to ensure that risks related to Risk Materials are appropriately managed;

IV. To communicate guidelines, processes and decisions – internally and externally where appropriate;

V. To act as a resource where required to assist the university in dealing with complaints and breaches of procedures or guidelines;

VI. To review, assess and, where appropriate, approve proposals for research, teaching and non-academic activities involving Risk Materials;

VII. To verify that:

   - applicants, intending to use Risk Materials, and their ECU Personnel have the necessary qualifications and experience to ensure good practice is maintained; and that legislative, regulatory and policy requirements are addressed and identified;
   - ECU Personnel, particularly those inexperienced in the procedures to be used, are well supervised;
   - foreseeable risks are appropriately managed; and
   - facilities intended to be used are appropriate for the purpose

VIII. To review safe working practices and procedures and to oversee known and foreseeable hazardous procedures and situations, within the committee’s ambit, ensuring that good and appropriate practices are implemented;
IX. To monitor and report on approved projects and facilities as defined by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) (http://www.ogtr.gov.au/) and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) at Department of Agriculture (www.daff.gov.au/).

X. To review any high risk OGTR and AQIS and other relevant applications and apply risk management conditions where appropriate;

XI. To oversee appointment of the University’s Radiation Safety Officers and Biosafety Officers.

3. MEMBERSHIP
   I. Composition
      The membership shall comprise of University and external members who collectively possess the requisite knowledge and experience for the competent and efficient functioning of the RBHSC to be able to assess, evaluate and monitor work being undertaken at the university and enable the RBHSC to meet its objectives and regulatory requirements. Committee membership to be reviewed annually for this purpose.

      The membership will include representatives from each relevant academic and non-academic area.

      Committee positions will include the Chair, Deputy Chairs, ECU Committee Members, a non-expert educated independent member and one educated lay member as required by legislation.

   II. Appointment of members
      Academic Board, on advice from the committee and endorsement by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), to appoint the Chair.

      The Chair RBHSC, on advice from the DVCR and the committee, to appoint one or more but not more than three Deputy Chairs, ECU committee members, one non-expert educated independent member, and one non-expert educated lay member as and when vacancies arise. Committee membership to be endorsed by Academic Board.

      Deputy Chairs will hold an academic role in a School and/or WAAPA and one or more but not more than three deputies will be appointed. This approach is put in place to assist the committee in ensuring that a solid succession plan for the position of Chair, a range of expertise from across Schools and WAAPA to support the Chair of committee in fulfilling the role, while also providing leadership development opportunities for those Academics nominated.

      The Chair RBHSC can extend invitations to technical experts to assist with matters if required.

   III. Term
      Members are appointed for a term of up to three years.
      ECU committee members will be appointed for terms of either two or three years to ensure continuity of knowledge as members change. Committee members may be appointed for consecutive terms.
IV. Committee Member Indemnity
The University indemnifies Committee Members (regardless of whether they are ECU employees or external members) for their personal liability whilst acting in their official capacity as committee member, whilst performing a statutory function arising from their committee membership, or whilst performing a function or task which has been authorised by the University, except in as far as that liability arises from the committee member’s gross negligence, misconduct, bad faith, or breach of duty imposed by the Statutory Corporation (Liability of Directors) Act 1996.

4. MEETINGS
I. Meeting Frequency
The RBHSC will meet as and when required but at least three times in any calendar year.

II. Quorum
The quorum for the ECU RBHSC Committee is not less than one half of the total number of members plus one. To comply with relevant legislation, the quorum is to include relevant committee and lay members where matters involving radiation and/or GMOs are on the agenda. In the event of a quorum being lost during the course of a meeting the meeting may continue and any resolutions of the meeting taken after the quorum is lost shall be ratified out of session.

III. Committee Executive
A Committee Executive shall comprise the Chair, Deputy Chair and two ECU RBHSC Committee members selected by the Chair. The Committee Executive will be responsible for establishing a rapid response to applications, breaches and other urgent matters as they arise. The Committee Executive will promptly inform the RBHSC of the matter, actions taken and outcomes. Actions taken by the Committee Executive shall be ratified at the next normal meeting of the RBHSC.

IV. Conflict of Interest
The RBHSC will manage conflicts of interest in accordance with ECU’s Conflicts of Interest Policy (PL259 [rm009]). This requires that where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest involving a member of the RBHSC, that member must not be involved with any deliberations or have any influence over decisions made in relation to the matter where the real or perceived conflict of interest occurs. The member who advises of a potential conflict of interest may be asked to leave the meeting during the deliberations and may be asked to provide a summary of the activity/issue in question. The occurrence and resolution of conflicts of interest will be recorded in the RBHSC meeting minutes.

V. Applicant Attendance at Meetings
All applicants may be invited to committee meetings to speak to their applications for up to 10 minutes.

5. REPORTING
THE RBHSC reports to the:
I. Academic Board on its activities following each of three meetings annually but also to immediately report any breaches of policy to the Risk and Assurance Services Centre in the first instance.

II. AQIS and OGTR on any breach of legislative requirements and otherwise annually in accordance with regulatory requirements of those bodies.
III. Radiological Council and other statutory authorities as required on all matters of radiation safety, biosafety, GMOs and hazardous substances.
6. RECORD KEEPING
   The RBHSC will maintain:
   I. Official records and other records, including meeting agendas and minutes, kept in accordance with the university’s record management policy and as required by legislation.
   II. A record of ongoing projects, and provide the list to each meeting of the RBHSC;
   III. A record of all OGTR applications and approvals, including dates and staff involved, as well as any project conditions;
   IV. A register of all exempt dealings, notifiable low risk dealings and licensed dealings and their assessments as required by the OGTR.
   V. A record of all risk assessments of the use of biological material/potential exposure to infectious agents, including application/approval dates, infectious agents and staff involved.
   VI. Records for worker exposure to radioactive substances, irradiating equipment, biological materials and hazardous chemicals;
   VII. Records of all AQIS permits, renewals and licensed facilities.
   VIII. Records of RBHSC inspections of university facilities where a radioactive, biological or hazardous substance risk may exist.

7. FACILITIES
   Representatives of the RBHSC will, at least annually or at will, inspect all university facilities where a radioactive, biological or hazardous substance may exist and satisfy itself that the facilities meet the required certification standards.

   The RBHSC shall also take steps to ensure that non-university facilities used by ECU staff and students for teaching or research activities involving radioactive, biological and hazardous substances meet required certification standards.

   With respect to ECU Physical Containment Level 2 (PC2) facilities the RBHSC will:
   I. Maintain a list of PC2 certified facilities;
   II. Inspect PC2 certified laboratories, plant houses, animal houses and other facilities prior to use;
   III. Inspect all PC2 certified facilities at least annually and following any modification or installation of equipment that could impact upon the certification.

8. SECRETARIAT SUPPORT
   The Executive Officer and administrative support will be provided centrally.

   The Administrative Support will prepare agendas and minutes; coordinate proposals to the RBHSC and provide support with meeting arrangements.

   The Executive Officer will oversee the Administrative Support activities and be responsible for establishing a schedule of inspection and monitoring for:
   I. compliance;
   II. assessment; and
   III. modification as necessary of procedures, guidelines and training programmes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.