

# La Trobe University Institutional Biosafety Committee

## Terms of Reference

February 2024

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The La Trobe Institutional Biosafety Committee (LTIBC) was created as a pre-requisite for the accreditation of an organisation under the Gene Technology Act (2000) 'the Act'. The LTIBC assists the University by advising on the identification, management and monitoring of the risks associated with any dealings with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) undertaken by the organization, including the physical containment of GMOs and providing an interface with the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR).

### Scope of Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the LTIBC are to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Gene Technology Act 2000 and the associated Gene Technology Regulations 2001, the Biosecurity Act 2015 and all other biosafety and biosecurity activities undertaken across the University including:

- Contribute to new policies, procedures and guidelines for La Trobe University regarding hazardous biological materials including genetically modified organisms and gene technology as needed.
- Assist La Trobe University to comply with external regulations, guidelines and standards relating to biosafety, biosecurity and dealings involving genetically modified organisms and gene technologies.
- Oversee best practice of research and teaching potentially involving hazardous biological material.
- Administer an internal laboratory accreditation system aligning with the Australian Standard for Microbiological Safety in Laboratories AS/NZS 2243.3:2010 for those laboratories performing work with Risk Group 2 organisms that are not GMO.
- Undertake assessment and review of all research potentially containing at least Risk Group 2 biological materials, technologies and infectious organisms as outlined in the Australian Standard for Microbiological Safety in Laboratories AS/NZS 2243.3:2010 and all dealings involving genetically modified organisms and gene technologies at La Trobe University as outlined in the Gene Technology Act 2000, Gene Technology Regulations 2001 (and any amendments), and any related State legislation.
- Monitor all biosafety, biosecurity and genetic manipulation activities conducted in internally certified and OGTR certified facilities where La Trobe University is the facility certification holder, including activities conducted by non-La Trobe personnel where the activity or dealing(s) has been assessed by an external Institutional Biosafety Committee.
- Review the import, export, transport, use and storage of all biosafety, biosecurity and genetically modified materials at La Trobe University according to the Quarantine Act 1908, Customs Act 1901, Defence Trade Controls Act 2012, National Health Security Act 2007, Security Sensitive Biological Agents Standards 2010 and the Guidelines for the Transport, Storage and Disposal of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) 2011, regulated by the Department of Defence, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health.

- Provide advice and training to staff, students and visitors potentially working with hazardous biological materials including dealing(s) with genetically modified organisms and gene technologies or conducting work within internally certified and OGTR certified facilities at La Trobe University.
- Conduct annual inspections of La Trobe University internally certified and OGTR certified physical containment facilities according to La Trobe University and OGTR conditions of certification and inspect and recommend facilities for certification to the Gene Technology Regulator prior to the facility being used for genetic manipulation work.
- Conduct annual inspections of La Trobe University internally and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry accredited approved arrangements according to La Trobe University and Department of Agriculture conditions of certification and inspect and recommend facilities for accreditation to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry prior to the facility being used for research, analysis and/or testing of imported biological material including micro-organisms, animal and human products and soil. Ensure appropriate processes and record keeping requirements are maintained for the monitoring, recording of decisions, and register of biosafety, biosecurity and genetic manipulation activities.

A detailed set of committee governance and operation procedures as prescribed by the Act are available from the Ethics, Integrity and Biosafety office.

## **Institutional Accountability**

The LTIBC is the institutional biosafety committee for LTU on all its campuses, national and international. The LTIBC is responsible to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Industry Engagement) through the Research and Graduate Studies Committee (RGSC).

## **Mechanisms of Reporting**

The LTIBC will produce an annual report for the RGSC on all matters relating to biosafety and biosecurity including genetically modified organisms and gene technologies.

The LTIBC will report to the Gene Technology Regulator in accordance with the obligations and responsibilities under the Act, Regulations and Guidelines for Accreditation of Organisations issued by the Regulator.

## **Membership**

LTIBC members shall have knowledge and expertise which is appropriate to support LTU's obligations under the Gene Technology Act (2000).

The Committee shall be composed of a minimum of at least one each of the following categories:

- Chairperson: The Chairperson should hold a senior position at the University. If the Chairperson is an external appointee, they will be given the necessary support and authority to carry out the role. The Chairperson is appointed by the SDVCRIE.
- Deputy Chair: This person will act as the Chairperson in their absence. The EIB will appoint the Deputy or Acting Chair from the LTIBC membership.
- Independent Member: Member not employed or otherwise associated with the University. The independent member may or may not be a scientific expert.
- Expert Member: University personnel who have research experience in one or more of the following areas - Gene technology, microbiology, virology, plant sciences, animal sciences or any other scientific expertise that can assess the risks and hazards of associated dealings.

- Ex-Officio Member: University personnel that as a result of their role may provide relevant information or advice to the committee. Examples include personnel from LTU Facilities and Technical Services, Infrastructure and Operations, Occupational Health and Safety, Animal Research and Teaching Facility.

In addition to the members defined as above, the Senior Coordinator Research Ethics and Biosafety and other representatives of the LTU Ethics, Integrity and Biosafety team, shall act in an advisory capacity within the Committee (non-voting member).

LTU may appoint multiple representatives to each membership category to ensure appropriate representation at each LTIBC meeting.

The Committee is empowered to solicit independent external advice from time to time on scientific, statistical, welfare or other matters, as required. The Committee may invite any person to attend a meeting, to either provide specific expertise/advice, or act as an observer. The Committee must be satisfied that such persons have no conflicts of interest in relation to the projects under consideration.

All non-Ethics Integrity and Biosafety team persons attending the committee meetings must have a fully executed Deed of Confidentiality in place prior to attending a meeting.

The approved membership categories are published but the members of the LTIBC shall remain confidential, and their names are not published.

## **Quorum**

To be quorate the LTIBC meeting must be attended by at least one-third of the appointed voting members, including at least one independent member.

If there are no independent members present at the meeting, the meeting minutes are to be sent to the independent members for endorsement.

## **Review of Terms of Reference**

The LTIBC Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years or as necessary in response to changes in legislation, La Trobe policy or upon the request of the LTIBC. The RGSC is responsible for approving these Terms of Reference. The LTIBC will be consulted when revising these Terms of Reference.

The LTU AEC Terms of Reference were last approved on 5 May 2020.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

### Guidelines & Legislation

- [Gene Technology Act 2000](#)
- [Gene Technology Regulations 2001](#)
- [Biosecurity Act 2015](#)
- [Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013 \(updated 2021\)](#)
- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#)

### La Trobe University Policies and Procedures

- [Research Biosafety and Biosecurity Policy](#)
- [Research Biosafety and Biosecurity Procedure](#)
- [Research Animal Ethics Procedure](#)

- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Research Data Management Policy](#)
- [Research Governance Policy](#)
- [Research Integrity Policy](#)
- [Research Misconduct Procedure](#)