

## **GM Safety Committees - remit and membership**

### **School/Area Genetic Modification Safety Committees**

It is a statutory requirement under the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations that a Genetic Modification Safety Committee be constituted to advise on risk assessments and ensure that:

- Proper and valid assessments have been made of the risks to human health and safety and to the environment;
- Satisfactory decisions about the appropriate containment and control measures have been made; and
- The approach to risk assessment is in accordance with the guidance provided by ACGM taking into account the parameters detailed in the Regulations.

Given the amount of genetic modification work ongoing in the University it is not feasible for a single committee to be tasked with this duty and more localised arrangements are necessary. Therefore, each area where genetic modification work is carried out must be covered by a local School Genetic Modification Safety Committee (GMSC). Some Schools will need to have more than one committee if they have significant amounts of genetic modification work being undertaken on more than one main site. If a School has only a minor amount of work at a particular site where another School has a GM safety committee, then the Heads of Schools should agree to the other Schools committee advising on the risk assessments.

The GMSC should be constituted to represent both management and employees with its members being representatives of all persons having access to genetic modification facilities. In particular, there should be enough members with sufficient knowledge and experience to understand and recognise the risks arising from the work activities.

The University Biological Safety Adviser will sit on all GMSCs within the University to ensure consistency in approach and outcome of risk assessments. The University's notification for genetic modification work as a single premise or Centre has been submitted to the HSE on this basis. The University Biological Safety Adviser may refer matters to the University Occupational Health Adviser or the Director of Biological Services where considered appropriate.

Within the University the following representation on the GMSC is appropriate:

- School GM Biological Safety Officer - to cover the specified locations;
- School Deputy GM Biological Safety Officer(s) - where there are different buildings or Institutes covered by the committee and the GMBSO it may be appropriate to appoint more than one Deputy GMBSO. Where there is a large group present from another School, a

Deputy GMBSO who is a member of the other School should be appointed to cover those particular areas;

- School Safety Adviser - to liaise with the main safety committee;
- Management Representative(s) - e.g. Head of School, Head(s) of Divisions/Units (or senior Administrator);
- General Staff Representative(s) - to represent all persons who have access to genetic modification facilities e.g. technical staff, research workers, ancillary workers, students etc; appointees may include a trade union safety representative (if one is appointed in the School) from a recognised trade union. Each Unit or School undertaking GM work should be represented;
- Technical Expert(s) - to provide expertise where necessary on particular work areas, e.g. on viral vectors, medical or environmental aspects (if the required expertise does not already exist in the School and additional technical expertise is considered beneficial then member(s) should be sought from other Schools).
- University Biological Safety Adviser.

All risk assessments must be approved by the local GMSC in advance of the work starting and be reviewed annually and at any other time when there is reason to believe the assessment is no longer valid. All notifications for higher risk work made to the Health and Safety Executive are subject to prior approval by the local School GMSC.

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University of Edinburgh  
January 2004

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If you wish to discuss any issues relating to the above documents please contact the University Biological Safety Adviser.