I. Policy Statement

The University of North Texas has established guidelines for the proper use of biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, and recombinant DNA molecules in research and other educational activities.

II. Application of Policy

Total University

III. Policy Definitions

A. Biohazardous Agents

“Biohazardous Agents,” in this policy, means any microorganism (including, but not limited to, bacteria, chlamydia, and their phages and plasmids, viruses, fungi, mycoplasmas, rickettsia, protozoa, parasites, or prions) or infectious substance, human and non-human primate tissues, body fluids, blood, blood byproducts, and cell lines, animal remains and insects that may harbor zoonotic pathogens, or any naturally occurring, bioengineered, or synthesized component of any such microorganism or infectious substance which are capable of causing: death, disease, or other biological malfunction in a human, animal, plant, or another living organism; deterioration of food, water, equipment, supplies, or material of any kind; or deleterious alteration of the environment.

B. Principal Investigator

“Principal Investigator,” in this policy, means any UNT faculty member, staff employee, or student conducting research or other educational activities utilizing UNT facilities or due to their status as a UNT employee or student involving biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, or recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules.

C. Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid (r/s NA) Molecules

“Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid (r/s NA) Molecules,” in this policy, means molecules that are constructed outside living cells by joining natural or synthetic nucleic acid segments to nucleic acid molecules that can replicate in a living cell, i.e., recombinant nucleic acids, or -Molecules that result from the replication of those described above, and -Synthetic nucleic acid segments which are likely to yield a potentially harmful polynucleotide or polypeptide.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. Generally

Principal Investigators shall assume primary responsibility for the proper use, handling and disposal of all biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, and recombinant r/s NA molecules in research or other educational activities conducted utilizing UNT facilities or due to their status as a UNT employee or student. For any research or
educational use of biohazardous agents, human materials, or recombinant DNA molecules, UNT requires compliance with Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (current version), the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (current version), the OSHA and Texas Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens Standards, the UNT Biosafety Manual, the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Charter, and any additional guidelines adopted by the UNT IBC. To protect students, faculty, staff, the community, and the environment, the IBC and the Biosafety Officer are authorized to review and monitor all research and other educational activities involving biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, and recombinant DNA molecules, whether such research is funded or not. Failure to comply with this policy and the associated manuals and guidelines will result in a review by the IBC and possible suspension or revocation of approval by the IBC to work with biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, and recombinant DNA molecules, and may result in disciplinary action under the procedures applicable to faculty, staff, and students.

B. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

The UNT Institutional Biosafety Committee is responsible for the oversight of all research and teaching activities involving potentially hazardous biological materials and recombinant or synthetic DNA molecules. IBC responsibilities and membership are outlined in the IBC Charter and are reviewed and updated annually.

C. Biosafety Officer

The Biosafety Officer shall be appointed by the Sr. Vice President for Finance and Administration. The responsibilities of the Biosafety Officer are outlined in the IBC Charter and are reviewed annually and updated as required.

D. Principal Investigator

The responsibilities of the Principal Investigator are outlined in the UNT Biosafety Manual and are reviewed annually and updated as required.

E. Biosafety Protocol (BSP) Registrations and Approvals

Guidelines on the submission requirements for biosafety protocols and approvals are outlined in the IBC Charter and detailed in the UNT Biosafety Manual.

F. Use of Animals, Human Subjects or Radiation

In addition to IBC registration and approval, any research or other educational activity involving biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, or recombinant DNA molecules in conjunction with the use of animals, human subjects, or radiation also requires approval from the appropriate UNT committees:

1. Animals – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).


Review of proposed research or educational activities by the above committees may run parallel with review by the IBC.

G. Termination or Suspension of Research or Other Educational Activity

A Principal Investigator who willfully or negligently violates federal, state, or UNT guidelines governing the use of biohazardous agents, potentially hazardous human materials, or recombinant DNA molecules may have his/her IBC approval suspended by the IBC, pending further investigation and final action by the IBC. In the event the IBC’s final action includes revocation of IBC approval for the use, the IBC is authorized to notify any sponsoring agency of such action.

H. Procedure for Reporting Violations

Any suspected violation of this policy may be reported to:

1. the UNT Biosafety Officer at the telephone number or e-mail address indicated on the Risk Management Services website,
2. the UNT IBC at biosafety@unt.edu, or
3. the University Compliance and Ethics Office.

All such reports will be referred to the IBC for review, and if warranted, an investigation to determine if corrective action is needed.

V. Resources/Forms/Tools

UNT Biosafety Institutional Committee Website
UNT Biosafety Website

VI. References and Cross-References

Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (NIH Guidelines), National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
29 C.F.R. § 1910.1030, Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens Standards, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor
Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 1, §§ 96.101 & §96.501
UNT Biosafety Manual
UNT IBC Charter
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