Occupational Health and Safety in the Laboratory Guideline

Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) The University has many laboratories that are commonly used in many scientific disciplines ranging from health sciences to biological and physical sciences.

(2) This Guideline outlines what are considered good safety practices, and what requirements are necessary to be met of those persons who are required to perform work, research, teaching or learning within a laboratory setting whilst at the University.

(3) Laboratory managers requiring laboratory maintenance work must ensure that the relevant areas are decontaminated before requesting Property and Facilities Division (P&F) to conduct work. The Hazards in Laboratories form (PF306) must be filled out and signed by the laboratory manager before work commences.

Section 2 - Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

Terms	Definitions
Laboratory	Place of specialised research, clinical or diagnostic evaluation, teaching and/or learning. Laboratories are commonly used in many scientific disciplines across the University ranging from health sciences to biological and physical sciences. The term laboratory may also equate with a workshop in some engineering areas, as well as animal houses.

Section 3 - Guideline Scope/Coverage

(4) This Guideline applies to:

a. Staff;
b. Postgraduate students;
c. Undergraduate students;
d. Subject and Course Coordinators;
e. Practical class coordinators and tutors;
f. Technical staff associated with practical classes;
g. Supervisors of staff or academic supervisors of honours or postgraduate students who have a responsibility for safeguarding the occupational health and safety of these persons; and
h. Heads of Schools, Centres and Institutes who have a responsibility for implementing and maintaining occupational health and safety standards and practices in laboratories and teaching facilities under their control.

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Section 4 - Guideline Statement

(5) Work, research, teaching or learning within scientific laboratories exposes the individual to a wide range of hazards, for example chemicals, biological materials, animals, radiation, and the use of equipment under pressure. Having in place specific procedures for laboratories is crucial in ensuring the safety of staff and students who work or study in these areas.

(6) Separate laboratory guidelines apply for undergraduate students, and staff and postgraduate students.

Section 5 - Undergraduate Students Involved in Practical Sessions

(7) It is essential that health and safety principles and concepts are integrated at all levels of organisation of practical classes. The University of Queensland recognises that students are considered to be 'in training' and consequently, safe working practices must be adopted and taken seriously when undertaking laboratory activities.

(8) Activities performed in the laboratory by undergraduate students must be undertaken in accordance with the OH&S guideline: Occupational Health and Safety in the Laboratory (Undergraduate Students).

Section 6 - Staff and Postgraduate Students

(9) Staff and postgraduate students involved in research within scientific laboratories are exposed to a wide range of hazards, and work more independently than undergraduate students. Work or research performed by staff and postgraduate students must be undertaken in accordance with the OH&S guideline: Working Safely in the Laboratory - Guideline.

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