

# Research School of Biology

## Occupational Health and Safety in the Laboratory

### Guidelines for Undergraduate Students

#### **Introduction**

These guidelines apply to all undergraduate students participating in practical classes run by the Research School of Biology that involve practices, procedures or substances which could affect the health and safety of students or staff involved in the classes.

#### **Responsibilities**

The following groups should read and use these guidelines:

- Course Convenors
- Practical class coordinators and demonstrators
- Technical staff associated with practical classes.
- Undergraduate students

The **Head of School** is responsible for implementing and maintaining occupational health and safety standards and practices in laboratories and teaching facilities under their control. The following should be ensured:

- Building and equipment provided are safe and suitable for the type of work to be carried out.
- Practical classes are run by persons competent in occupational health and safety matters.
- Staff and students receive appropriate information and training necessary for them to perform their work safely.
- Safety rules and regulations are prepared and enforced for students undertaking practical classes.

The **Course Convenor** is responsible for providing a healthy and safe environment for students. The following should be ensured:

- Health, safety and environmental aspects of the practical are considered.
- Students receive the appropriate information and supervision necessary for them to carry out their studies safely.
- Students are warned about particular hazards, and how to avoid, eliminate or minimize their exposure to them.
- Proper attitudes towards health and safety are practiced and transferred to the students.
- Students under their control are using and /or wearing safety equipment when necessary.
- Accidents and Incidents are reported on the Figtree workplace safety incident & hazard reporting tool (<https://services.anu.edu.au/information-technology/software-systems/figtree-workplace-safety-incident-hazard-reporting-tool>)

- Students understand the safety information by signing the Student Declaration Form for Practical Class Work

**Students** also have responsibilities under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, 1995. Students are required to:

- Avoid, eliminate or minimize hazards of which they are aware
- Comply with all occupational health and safety instructions
- Make proper use of all safety devices and personal protective equipment (PPE). Failure to bring required PPE (e.g. lab coat, closed footwear, safety glasses) to the class could result in being refused participation in that practical class.
- Not wilfully place at risk the health and safety of themselves or any other person
- Seek information or advice when in doubt or before carrying out new or unfamiliar work
- Read any MSDS sheets associated with the practical class
- Report all accidents and near miss incidents

### **General Laboratory Rules**

Any scientific laboratory presents potential hazards. Staff will insist that students behave sensibly and professionally and follow general rules of laboratory conduct. Failure to comply could result in exclusion from the laboratory and therefore from the course.

1. **Students are not permitted in the laboratory unsupervised.** A Convenor or suitably appointed Academic must be present at all times.
2. **Do not eat, drink or smoke in the laboratory.** This includes water bottles.
3. **Personal protective equipment must be worn** (e.g. lab coat, covered footwear and safety glasses). Students should be aware that prescription glasses do not offer the same level of protection as proper safety glasses.
4. **Long hair should be tied back.**
5. **Report all spillages.** If you spill something, warn those around you and seek the assistance of a Demonstrator or a member of the Technical Staff to clean up immediately.
6. **Report all accidents.** No matter how trivial, all accidents must be reported immediately.
7. **Place all broken glassware in the specially marked bins.** Do not put glass into 'general' rubbish bins as this may cause injury to persons emptying the bins.
8. **Reagents, solutions, cultures and equipment must not be removed from the laboratory.**
9. **Always wash hands thoroughly in soap and water before leaving the laboratory.**

**Report potential hazards.** If you have any doubts about the safety of any equipment, or about any other aspect of the laboratory work which you suspect may constitute a hazard to your safety or that of a colleague, **please report it to a Demonstrator or the Convenor.**

## Student Safety Declaration Form for Practical Class Work

This form must be completed and signed by the Student during the first practical class for each course. No experimental work should start until this form has been completed.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number \_\_\_\_\_

Course Code \_\_\_\_\_

	YES	NO
I understand due to <b>COVID-19</b> that I must maintain social distancing of 1.5M wherever possible and practice good hand hygiene.		
I am aware to help stop the spread of <b>COVID-19</b> to cough or sneeze into my arm and to remain at home if I am feeling unwell.		
I have read and understand the Occupational Health and Safety in the Laboratory Guidelines for Undergraduate Students		
I am aware of my Workplace Health and Safety responsibilities		
I agree to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)		
I understand that if I am not wearing appropriate PPE, I can be excluded from the practical class		
I agree to follow all safety procedures explained to me by the Lecturer or Demonstrator		
I understand that I must not eat food or drink in the laboratory		
I understand that inappropriate conduct can result in the denial of further laboratory access		
I understand that all accidents, including 'near miss' incidents need to be reported to the Convenor or Demonstrator immediately		
I understand that all faulty or broken equipment needs to be brought to the attention of the Convenor or Demonstrator immediately		

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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I understand that all faulty or broken equipment needs to be brought to the attention of the Demonstrator immediately		

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **Disclosure of Health Conditions**

In order to promote the Health & Safety of students whilst studying within the Research School of Biology, the school undertakes (or teaches students to undertake) risk assessments for laboratory work. A part of this includes being aware of any pre-existing health conditions (pregnancy, epilepsy, allergies, heart conditions etc.) which may be adversely affected by some conditions or reagents in the laboratory. Pre-existing conditions should not mean exclusion from the practical components of your course, but we may find it best for your safety to plan your labs around such issues.

As such, whilst we cannot legally compel you to disclose any such issues, please be aware that the school only has a legal duty of care about these specific issues once the school has been notified of the condition/s.

Should you have a concern that a pre-existing health condition may be adversely affected in the lab, we ask that you either:

- Advise the University Disability Services Unit of your condition, and ask that they make disclosure to the school on your behalf, or
- Make your own confidential disclosure to either your Course Convener or a member of the Teaching Lab Staff. They can then work with you to manage your lab risk appropriately and discreetly.

Once again, such disclosures are not mandatory, but are highly helpful in ensuring that you enjoy a safer, better risk managed time in your studies.

Many thanks

Teaching Lab Staff