**Harvard University**

**Laboratory Safety Committee:**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Charter**

Issued September 9, 2013

Office of the Vice Provost for Research

**Environmental Health, Safety and Emergency Management**

**Purpose**

Harvard University (“University”) is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for its faculty, staff, students and visitors. Cultivating a culture of safety is a shared responsibility that requires the cooperation of all members of the community, but first and foremost requires that each individual within the University recognizes and ensures that her or his own practices, as well as those of others, create a safe working and learning environment, and comply with University safety policy.

This charter document defines the membership, authority, responsibilities and operat­ing rules of the Laboratory Safety Committee at Harvard University.

**Policy**

It is the University policy that members of the community comply with all applicable health, safety, and environmental protection laws, regulations and requirements to provide a healthy and safe working environment for all members of the University community. The Laboratory Safety Committee (“Committee”) is the governing body primarily empowered to promulgate policies, rules and proced­ures for laboratory safety across the University and is responsible for supervising an/or advising on all aspects of laboratory safety.

The Committee’s scope extends to all research conducted in laboratory research facilities owned or controlled by Harvard. The Committee is responsible for the oversight of laboratory activities and setting policy and guidance to comply with applicable federal, state and local health and safety regula­tions and practices. Accordingly, the Committee will work to advise and collaborate with other standing committees such as radiation safety, microbiological safety (which oversees the use of biological agents classified as biosafety level 2 or greater) and safety issues related to the care and use of animals or human subjects, to ensure and facilitate compliance. All other matters regarding laboratory safety that are not in the purview of the aforementioned standing committees are directly overseen by this Committee.

**Responsibilities and Authority**

The Laboratory Safety Committee (“Committee”), a Standing Committee at Harvard University (“University”), is the governing body for all aspects of laboratory safety. The Committee’s scope extends to all research conducted in laboratory research facilities owned or controlled by Harvard and conducted by Harvard faculty, students, post docs, etc.. The Committee is responsible for the oversight of laboratory activities and setting policy and guidance to comply with applicable federal, state and local health and safety regula­tions and practices. The Committee has the authority to deny, require changes, or withdraw permission for the conduct of laboratory activities within the University, to assure regulatory compliance and reasonable standards for health and safety in laboratory practice.

The Commit­tee reports to the Office of the Provost. In its oversight role of University's Laboratory Safety Program, the Committee is responsible for the following:

1. Evaluating and identifying potential hazards associated with research and teaching activities in the laboratory environment,
2. Establishing and facilitating training procedures and criteria;
3. Making recommendations to the University Administration on risk management issues related to Laboratory Safety
4. Establishing University policies related to Laboratory Safety;
5. Establishing training procedures and criteria to ensure that only qualified individuals are permitted to use hazardous materials;
6. Conducting an annual audit of the Laboratory Safety Program and make recommendations for programmatic changes, if any, to enhance the efficacy of laboratory safety at the University;
7. Reviewing the findings of laboratory inspections conducted by EHSEM, and monitoring timely and effective resolution of corrective actions to assure the effectiveness of the Laboratory Safety program;
8. Enforcing compliance with the program, including imposition of warnings and sanctions for non-compliance in cooperation with the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Dean at the appropriate School;

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To assist the Committee in achieving these responsibilities, the Environmental Health Safety and Emergency Management (“EHSEM”) Laboratory Safety Office will serve at the Committee’s secretary and will draft materials for consideration at Committee direction as well as maintain a list of the members and their appropriate training and experience;

**Membership**

Membership of the Committee includes the EHSEM Managing Director and Director of Laboratory Safety; representatives of the Office of the Provost, including the University’s Chief Compliance Officer; faculty who are knowledgeable in laboratory science and/or safety; senior administrative officers of the University; The Environmental and Safety Compliance Officers from the various University schools ; representatives of other University Committees with responsibilities in laboratory safety; be ; representatives from the post-doctorate and graduate student organizations of schools involved in laboratory science may be invited by the Office of the Provost as nonvoting members.

The Committee size and composition shall represent the spectrum of laboratory activities across the University. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the University Provost, who shall encourage the Offices of the Dean to nominate knowledgeable users from their schools’ research and academic community.

Members shall be appointed for a renewable term of two years.

**The Committee Chair**

The Chair has the responsibility to hold and oversee regular Committee meetings and to implement the control functions of the Committee. The Chair works closely with the EHSEM Director of Laboratory Safety to ensure that the EHSEM Laboratory Safety Office implements the directives of the Committee. The Committee Chair is appointed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research for a renewable two-year term.

**Attendance, Alternates, and Replacements**

Regular attendance shall be required at Committee meetings. In the event that a member does not attend four consecutive meetings, at the discretion of the Chair, the Committee may request that the Office of the Provost appoint a replacement member.

To plan for temporary absences, each Committee member may, with the consent of the Chair, appoint voting proxy for a particular meeting. An absent Committee member may designate another member of the Committee as their voting proxy for matters requiring a vote. The designee may represent the absent Committee member in all aspects of Committee participation, and shall have the responsibility and authority to act on behalf of that member.

A Committee member may nominate a qualified replacement at any time during the appointed term for the remainder of that term. A formal letter from the Office of the Provost to the Committee shall be required to document member appointment. In the event a member or designee leaves the University, membership is automatically terminated.

The Office of the Provost shall document changes to membership in writing.

**Meetings, Agenda and Quorum**

The Committee meets at least once during each calen­dar quarter, or more frequently, at the discretion of the Chair. A quorum consists of more than fifty percent of its then current membership, and must include the Chair and one of the representatives from the EHSEM. All members present are entitled to vote. Committee decisions are made by the majority vote of a quorum of committee members and members shall not vote on issues in which they have a personal involvement. In such a case, calculation of the quorum condition would not include the recused member. Between meetings, interim decisions may be made by estab­lished subcom­mittees or by a mailed ballot, but such decisions shall not be consid­ered final until rati­fied by vote at a called meeting of the Com­mittee. At these meetings, the Committee conducts the following activities, as appropriate:

1. Sets University laboratory safety policy,
2. Reviews records and reports from the EHSEM Laboratory Safety Office, results of regulator and outside inspections and audits, written procedures, incidents and laboratory audits, and reports or comments directed to the committee by faculty, staff, postdoctoral scientists or students involved in laboratory science.
3. Reviews and approves training programs,
4. Reviews organization and maintenance of records of the Committee’s proceedings, including Laboratory Safety evaluations,
5. Reviews and approves manuals and procedures issued by the EHSEM Laboratory Safety Office and emergency response plans, including agreements, if any, with offsite emergency response agencies,
6. Conducts reviews of laboratory performance and implements an enforcement program to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Laboratory Safety Program,
7. Makes changes in policies and procedures, as appropriate.

**Reports, Records, and Minutes**

The minutes of the Committee meetings, together with all reports submitted to the Committee, serve as the official documen­tation of the Laboratory Safety Program of the University. The minutes of each meeting shall include the date of the meet­ing, the members present and absent, a summary of delibera­tions and discussions, and recommended action items. Following each meeting, minutes shall be prepared in draft form and copies sent to all members for review and comment. A majority vote at the next meeting shall be taken to approve the minutes.

A copy of the minutes of all Committee meetings, with all subcommittee reports and attachments, shall be submitted annually to the University Archives or retained with EHSEM Laboratory Safety Office files for storage in accordance with University policy, where it shall be maintained until disposal as permitted by applicable policy.

**Subcommittees**

The Committee may establish subcommittees to perform specific functions. Each subcommittee shall submit a written report of its activities and actions to the Commit­tee for each calendar quarter in which it was active. Any authority granted to a subcommittee is subject to approval for action by the full Committee. As described above*,* each subcommittee report accepted by the Committee becomes part of the record filed in the University Archives or retained with the EHSEM Laboratory Safety Office files.