

Temperature Controlled Environments Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (the University) is committed to research that delivers innovation and drives global and regional impact. The [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#) articulates the University's intent to provide systems, facilities and procedures for the safe and secure storage of research materials and for the maintenance of accurate associated records. The loss of temperature sensitive research materials can have a significant impact on research, the researcher(s) and the University, and cause disruption to the University's research endeavours.

(2) The University is committed to protecting research or teaching materials in temperature controlled environments in accordance with regulatory, commercial and stakeholder requirements.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) In the context of this policy:

- a. "research or teaching materials" refers to materials that are:
 - i. used for the purposes of research and/or teaching;
 - ii. is / are contained in a temperature controlled environment where the total value of the contents of the device is equivalent to, or greater than \$50,000; and may include, but is not limited to:
 - biological samples;
 - chemical reagents;
 - genetically modified materials;
 - plants;
 - radioactive materials;
 - soil samples;
 - animals;
 - bio-security materials.
- b. "research group(s)" refers to any group that conducts research under the auspices of the University of Newcastle.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all temperature controlled environment devices ("device(s)") that are University assets and are used by the University to store research or teaching materials that are temperature sensitive, including but not limited to:

- a. refrigerators;
- b. cool rooms;

- c. incubators;
- d. freezers;
- e. liquid nitrogen freezing or cooling systems;
- f. plant growth cabinets;
- g. glasshouses; and
- h. temperature controlled rooms.

(5) Devices may be situated in diverse locations and may also be subject to local infrastructure and support mechanisms in addition to the requirements of this policy.

(6) As this policy also applies to information and contents that are stored in devices, it should also be read in conjunction with:

- a. [Information Security Policy](#) and its associated documents;
- b. [Records and Information Management Policy](#) and its associated documents; and
- c. [Research Data and Primary Materials Management Procedure](#).

Section 4 - Audience

(7) This policy should be read and understood by:

- a. person's holding roles with responsibilities outlined in this policy, or its associated documents;
- b. research, college and research group staff who purchase or use devices;
- c. students and conjoints who use devices;
- d. research supervisors;
- e. Security personnel;
- f. Digital Technology Solutions staff; and
- g. Infrastructure and Facilities Services staff.

Section 5 - Policy

Storage of Temperature Sensitive Research Materials

(8) Research and teaching materials that are temperature sensitive must be stored in a device and in a manner that meets the requirements of this policy.

(9) In the event that research and teaching materials (including Research Higher Degree candidature research materials) of a value less than \$50,000 require protection under this policy and a University insurance policy, they must be stored in a device where the total value of the device contents is greater than \$50,000.

Purchasing

(10) Purchasing of devices must be in accordance with the University's [Procurement Policy](#).

(11) Devices purchased by the University, regardless of the source of funding, that are to be used to store temperature sensitive research or teaching materials must:

- a. be of a scientific / biomedical grade and be fit for purpose;
- b. contain appropriate shelving and racking, or other suitable features that allow for inventory management;

- c. comply with all relevant Australian Standards;
- d. be able to:
 - i. meet the requirements of the University's [Information Security Policy](#) and its associated documents;
 - ii. contribute to the objectives of the University's Environmental Sustainability Plan;
 - iii. be connected to the University's alarm monitoring system when stored on a University campus or facility, or allow for a level of monitoring commensurate with the risk of loss of materials if located in a facility owned by a third party; and
- e. be compatible with the facility in which it is to be located in terms of access, space, power supply, heat and weight load, work health and safety, and environment.

(12) Devices purchased by the University must be assessed against the requirements of this policy prior to purchase, and purchasing should only proceed where all requirements can be met.

Commissioning

(13) Devices must only be installed on the University premises where it is verified that the requirements of this policy can be met.

(14) The installation of devices must ensure:

- a. connection of the device to an appropriate alarm monitoring system in accordance with Clause 11d iii;
- b. optimal operation of the device accounting for temperature / air changes and consideration of other equipment in the area;
- c. compliance with the University's [Information Security Policy](#) and its associated documents;
- d. restricted access wherever possible;
- e. safe and effective management of unplanned spills and/or device failure;
- f. that effective maintenance and testing of the device can be carried out; and
- g. inclusion of the device in the University Disaster Recovery plan.

Device Accountability

(15) A University staff member must be identified as holding accountability for the device, at the time of commissioning. This person will be contacted in the event of an alarm response, and is accountable for taking action should they receive notification that the device has failed, or has otherwise been impacted.

(16) Clear signage must be applied to the device to identify the accountable person for the device, and clearly show their name and contact phone numbers during business hours and after hours.

Device Maintenance Planning

(17) At the time of commissioning, a maintenance schedule must be documented to ensure that:

- a. the device is maintained in accordance with the products recommended maintenance activities and schedule;
- b. person's responsible for undertaking maintenance, and their contact details, are able to be identified; and
- c. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP(s)) for undertaking maintenance are developed.

Device Monitoring

(18) At the time of commissioning SOPs, in accordance with Clause 26, must be documented to ensure that on a regular basis:

- a. the alarm monitoring system is tested to verify that the internal alarm system generates a signal;
- b. the device is subject to regular disaster recovery testing;
- c. operating temperatures are monitored;
- d. the device's operation is reviewed and tested; and
- e. the signage on the device is current and up to date (see Clause 16, 23 to 25).

Device Failure Planning

(19) At the time of commissioning, a SOP must be developed to establish actions required in the event of failure of the device. Failure of the device should include consideration of a device defect or malfunction and any outside events that may prevent access to or operation of the device. In addition to Clause 26 requirements, this SOP should include:

- a. an alternate mechanism to achieve the required temperature, or identification of a suitable alternative space to re-store the device's inventory according to its needs;
- b. procedures to respond to the device failure;
- c. communication protocols in the event of device failure;
- d. person's responsible for responding to the device failure; and
- e. person's to be notified in the event of device failure.

(20) A SOP for device failure must be developed in accordance with the College, School, Division or Units Business Continuity Plan.

Device Signage

(21) In addition to Clause 16, devices must be appropriately labeled to:

- a. identify the device's asset number; and
- b. clearly display the certification signage if the device is:
 - i. a certified physical containment facility with the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator; or
 - ii. a Biosecurity Facility (Approved Arrangement) with the Department of Agriculture.

(22) At each occurrence where new material is placed into the device, the signage must be reviewed to ensure it is appropriate to meet any safety or compliance requirements relating to that material.

Device Management

(23) A person holding technical responsibilities ("technical officer") must be appointed to the device for the purposes of ensuring appropriate maintenance, monitoring and failure planning in accordance with this policy.

(24) Colleges and research groups using devices must maintain a register of all devices under their oversight. The register will identify:

- a. the technical officer for each device;
- b. the device maintenance schedule and arrangements; and
- c. the contents of the device and the value of the contents.

(25) Devices not included on the above register, or materials without adequate protection, will not be subject to an insurance claim by the University in the event of a device outage.

Standard Operating Procedure Inclusions

(26) SOPs for maintenance, monitoring and failure planning must identify:

- a. the device that they apply to, its location and its alarm point;
- b. the person accountable for the device;
- c. when the SOP should be implemented, and if on a cycle, what the agreed cycle is;
- d. the role responsible for undertaking the procedure;
- e. the steps involved in carrying out the procedure;
- f. any work health and safety considerations;
- g. the steps required to record evidence of actions undertaken; and
- h. the person responsible for updating the SOP when changes occur, and on a regular review cycle.

Inventory Management

(27) Materials stored in devices must be:

- a. appropriately assessed prior to storage in a device, to identify and manage:
 - i. work health and safety risks;
 - ii. compliance and regulatory risks;
 - iii. obligations; and
 - iv. risks to the devices operation in the event of spillage
 - v. please also refer to Clause 22 of this policy, the [Responsible Conduct of Research policy](#), and [Managing Health and Safety Risks](#) and Health and Safety - Laboratory Safety;
- b. appropriately marked to enable identification of:
 - i. information regarding the research that it relates to (e.g. a G-number or an IBC Safety Approval Reference Number for genetically modified material);
 - ii. the material owner;
 - iii. the date it was first stored in the device;
 - iv. a review date for when the materials continued usefulness will be assessed; and
 - v. a disposal date for all research or teaching materials that relate to completed or published research, in accordance with the [Records and Information Management Policy](#).

(28) Where the owner of the material is no longer associated with the University the material must be “handed over” to ensure continuity of management. The material label must be updated accordingly when this occurs.

(29) A SOP should be developed to document how inventory stored in the device is managed including steps for storing, recording a chain of custody, and disposal.

Decommissioning

(30) Decommissioning of the device or facility must meet the relevant University requirements, including where applicable:

- a. the University’s requirements for e-waste; and
- b. the [Decommissioning Laboratory and Associated Facilities Procedure](#).

Section 6 - Training

(31) Persons holding roles that are accountable for devices, and technical officers assigned to devices must, as a minimum, complete the [Temperature Controlled Environment Training Module](#) to ensure that the requirements of this policy and the requirements of each device for which they are accountable for are understood, as well as undertake any further necessary training.

(32) Persons accessing devices must undergo training to ensure that SOPs are clearly understood and able to be implemented.

(33) Persons storing materials in devices must complete applicable training regarding safe material management (see [Laboratory Safety Training](#)).

(34) Training, as outlined in Clause 31 to 33, must be undertaken at least every two years.

(35) Records of training completed must be maintained, and made available to the following when requested:

- a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation);
- b. Insurance Officer;
- c. Internal Auditors;
- d. the assigned technical officer (see Clause 23); and
- e. the person accountable for the device (see Clause 15).

Section 7 - Responsibilities

(36) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will be responsible for monitoring compliance with the policy.

(37) The College Pro Vice-Chancellors will be responsible for:

- a. ensuring that a complete and accurate college register, as outlined in Clause 24, is:
 - i. maintained; and
 - ii. provided to the University's insurance team in Governance and Assurance Services by 15 July each year;
- b. responding to and rectifying matters that are identified to be non-compliant with this policy or its associated documents; and
- c. providing an annual attestation to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) confirming compliance with this policy for all devices and materials contained within each device.

Section 8 - Essential Supporting Documents

(38) [Temperature Controlled Environment Training Module](#)

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	18th November 2019
Review Date	18th November 2022
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	11th November 2019
Expiry Date	17th September 2023
Responsible Executive	Warwick Dawson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Enquiries Contact	Research and Innovation Division

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.