

DEPARTING FROM THE LABORATORY

Off-Boarding Guide

Document Reference: Laboratory Off-Boarding Guide

Version No: Draft

# Introduction

It is the responsibility of both the supervisor and the person who is departing from a laboratory to ensure that appropriate handover measures are put in place, and that materials or assets which are no longer required are disposed or redistributed appropriately.

The actions outlined in this guide to departing from a laboratory represent the minimum reasonable expectation of a member of the laboratory community.

This procedure should be read in association with the University’s Decommissioning Laboratory and Associated Facilities Procedure which outlines the requirements when a laboratory is vacated and/or decommissioned.

# Research / Grant Compliance Activities

In some instances, particularly where research has been published or samples collected under specific contract terms and condition, research materials will need to be retained or turned over to specific entities for further use.

Longitudinal research studies, or studies where the samples or product of research retain significance may include contract terms and conditions specifying actions to be taken at the end of a study.

Similarly, studies from which research papers have been accepted and published may require the relevant sources from which the publication data was generated to be retained for future verification or repetition of findings or use in subsequent studies.

It is the responsibility of the relevant Chief Investigator to ensure such requirements are met as part of their departure from the University.

As a recipient of a research grant you must consult with Research & Innovation Services to ensure that all matters relevant to the closure or transfer of that grant are considered and actioned prior to leaving the University.

# WHS Compliance Activities

Where equipment, materials or research activities are subject to external compliance requirements, then the Wellbeing, Health and Safety (WHS) team must be consulted to ensure the appropriate actions are taken to satisfy the relevant legislative requirement.

Instances where this applies would include but not be limited to:

* Genetically modified materials
* Security sensitive biological agents
* Sealed / unsealed radiation sources
* Equipment subject to specific compliance requirements – e.g. ionising radiation; lasers
* Chemical materials of security concern – dangerous goods, explosives or fireworks
* Prohibited or restricted carcinogens and restricted hazardous chemicals
* Dangerous goods – Packing group 1
* Scheduled drugs – S4 / S8 / S9

# Set Up:

This procedure relies on the person departing the laboratory notifying their supervisor at least one month in advance of their expected final day so that the relevant activities can be completed.

# Laboratory Departure Checklist

A checklist is provided as Appendix A to this procedure to be used to ensure these minimum activities are actioned prior to departure. This checklist is a guide only and can be modified to align with the needs of particular labs / Schools and the type of work conducted in the laboratory.

The checklist should be accessed as soon as it is identified a person is departing from the laboratory and be signed off by the Supervisor as completed prior to a person’s final day.

# Biological Products

## General Biological products

General biological products which are no longer required should be disposed as per normal laboratory practices.

* Diagnostic / clinical / research specimens are disposed into contaminated waste bins.
* Micro-organisms including liquid and solid cultures must be inactivated prior to disposal. i.e. inactivation via autoclaving or treatment with bleach or disinfectant agents.

## Samples covered by a Dealing

Biological products covered by a dealing must be inactivated prior to disposal as described above. The disposal of all samples covered by a dealing must be notified to the WHS team so the dealing can be closed out in their records and where necessary with the OGTR.

# Chemicals / Gases

## Reagents

Any reagents which you have prepared must either be discarded or allocated to a co-worker.

* Check the appropriate MSDS for the recommended disposal procedure for each reagent and follow this procedure.
* Wash and return glassware to storage cupboards.
* If allocating reagents to a co-worker ensure that the reagent is appropriately labelled, remove your name from the reagent bottle and replace it with that of the person now responsible.
* Prepare a list of all enduring reagents and copy to both supervisor and relevant co-worker.

# Radiation Sources

Consult with the WHS team in regard to any radiation sources which need to be disposed or reallocated to other laboratory personnel.

When disposing sources, the standard procedures that are already in place for such disposal must be followed.

If radiation sources are to be reallocated to others, the appropriate approvals must be in place before this can occur.

# Other Materials

## Refrigerated Storage

All stocks, specimens or chemicals which you have in refrigerated storage must either be discarded or allocated to a co-worker as described above. If allocating these items to a co-worker remove your name from both the item and the Fridge/Freezer List and replace it with that of the person now responsible.

Prepare a list of all stored items, including the description, date of preparation and current location. This list should be given to your supervisor and to any co-worker who has been allocated items.

## Experimental Products

Ensure that all products from your experiments are reviewed and an action plan developed to address each product. For example:

* gels and blots should either be discarded or filed appropriately
* experimental apparatus may be re-used by new HDR students or research personnel and might be handed back to your supervisor in their current state

# Laboratory Equipment

Laboratory Equipment is ‘owned’ by the University, not by individual researchers or research groups. Only in exceptional circumstances would a person departing the University be permitted to take equipment with them to a new destination. Any person contemplating this need must liaise in the first instance with their Head of School or Divisional Director.

Laboratory equipment must be appropriately cleaned and decontaminated to ensure it is safe. Return all equipment that has been assigned to you by passing it to your Laboratory Supervisor or the Laboratory Manager as appropriate.

Equipment which is no longer required at a local level should be advised to the Head of School for redistribution to other laboratories, or for sustainable disposal. Any equipment for redistribution or disposal must be decontaminated prior to its removal from the laboratory. Refer to Appendix B for guidance on decontamination.

If equipment is no longer required a Maximo request may be submitted to request its removal from the laboratory area – this must be accompanied by the completed decontamination certificate. IFS will either dispose of the equipment if non-functional or may facilitate other sustainable disposal options.

# Work area

Ensure that your laboratory work area has been cleared and the area thoroughly decontaminated. This includes the workbench, shelving and any drawers or cupboards which have been allocated to you.

# Lab Notebooks, Related Documentation and Records

All paper product from your work, whether this is a workbook, record of experiments or printouts should be presented to your Supervisor. A decision as to what should happen to this documentation can then be determined between the two of you.

Electronic notebooks / records should also be presented to your Supervisor who may then determine what they wish to retain.

# Keys and Access Cards

All keys must be returned to the IFS Reception prior to departure. It is not acceptable to hand keys over to other personnel as these have been issued to you as an individual and you are responsible to ensure they are returned.

Electronic access to areas via means of an access card should be automatically stopped on your separation from the University.

# Failure to follow Off-Boarding Procuedures

It is acknowledged that on occasion a person departing the laboratory may be unable to complete their off-boarding obligations.

In this instance personnel affected by the materials and assets which have not been actioned will need to take action to clear space and remove unwanted materials.

All efforts should be made to contact the person responsible for the materials or assets to ensure they have the opportunity to fulfil their obligation and manage the handover or disposal of materials and assets.

Failing being able to make contact, or if the relevant person fails to address the matter after being contacted, then the relevant Senior executive should be contacted to obtain their approval to dispose of materials and assets.

It is important that a documentation trail is created and retained to demonstrate that all reasonable measures were taken to request the relevant person act to clear their materials and assets. This document trail should also demonstrate that permission was provided by the Head of School or equivalent to take measures to remove / dispose the materials and assets.

Disposal procedures should follow the processes provided in this document.

# Reference

1. University of Newcastle Laboratory Decommissioning Laboratory and Associated Facilities Procedure <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/327667/Decommissioning-Laboratory-and-Associated-Facilities-Procedure.pdf>

# Document Control

## Version History

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date | Description | Prepared by: | Checked by: | Approved by: |
| Draft | 15/02/22 |  | L. Herd |  |  |
| v1 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Appendix A – Laboratory Departure Checklist

Departing Laboratory member\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Building \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Room Number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chief Investigator / Lab Manager \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

| **Item** | **Activity** | **Date completed** | **Supervisor sign-off** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grant Compliance** | | | |
| 1 | All grant-related activities regarding retention of research samples have been actioned |  |  |
| 2 | Incomplete research activities will be completed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |  |
| 3 | R& Services have been contacted regarding outstanding grants and a plan has been agreed and is in place for the closure / transfer of these grants. |  |  |
| **Laboratory Materials** | | | |
| 4 | I have contacted the WHS Team have been contacted and I have received advice in relation to: |  |  |
| a | * Genetically modified materials |  |  |
| b | * Security sensitive biological agents |  |  |
| c | * Sealed / unsealed radiation sources |  |  |
| d | * Equipment subject to specific compliance requirements – e.g. ionising radiation; lasers |  |  |
| D | * Chemical materials of security concern – dangerous goods, explosives or fireworks |  |  |
| f | * Prohibited or restricted carcinogens and restricted hazardous chemicals |  |  |
| g | * Dangerous goods – Packing group 1 |  |  |
| h | * Scheduled drugs – S4 / S8 / S9 |  |  |
| Chemicals | | | |
| 5 | Chemicals and reagents to be retained have been transferred to another lab member, are appropriately labelled, and now bear the name of the new owner |  |  |
| 6a | I have prepared a list of all chemicals for disposal. |  |  |
| 6b | They are appropriately labelled and clearly identify they are for disposal. |  |  |
| 6c | They are stored in appropriate DG cabinets. |  |  |
| 6d | I have notified to the WHS team where these chemicals are located and requested they be included in the next chemical waste collection. |  |  |
| 7 | All laboratory beakers, flasks and other containers are emptied, cleaned and returned to general storage |  |  |
| 8 | All chemicals and samples have been removed from refrigerators, freezers, bench tops, and fume hoods. |  |  |
| Biological Materials | | | |
| 9 | All biological samples for retention have been clearly identified and allocated to the person responsible by inclusion in the fridge/freezer register and other registers as applicable. |  |  |
| 10 | All biological samples which are no longer required have been disposed via: | | |
| 10a | Diagnostic / clinical / research specimens have been disposed into contaminated waste. |  |  |
| 10b | Micro-organisms including liquid and solid cultures have been inactivated prior to disposal. i.e. inactivation via autoclaving or treatment with bleach or disinfectant agents. |  |  |
| 10c | Biological products covered by a dealing have been inactivated prior to disposal as described above. |  |  |
| 10d | The disposal of all samples covered by a dealing have been notified to the WHS team so the dealing can be closed out in their records and where necessary with the OGTR. |  |  |
| 11 | Frozen or preserved specimens for transfer to another institution have been clearly marked and segregated from waste. |  |  |
| 12 | Arrangements for shipping biological materials to another institution have been made. |  |  |
| Gases | | | |
| 13 | Compressed gas cylinders have been returned to the vendor or reassigned to another investigator. |  |  |
| 14 | Cylinders scheduled for vendor pick-up are disconnected from equipment, regulators removed, capped, and secured. |  |  |
| Radioactive Materials / Sources | | | |
| 15 | I have consulted with the WHS team in regard to all radiation sources which need to be disposed or reallocated to other laboratory personnel. |  |  |
| 16 | The standard procedures that are already in place for disposing of sources have been implemented. |  |  |
| 17 | The appropriate approvals are in place for radiation sources reallocated to other personnel. |  |  |
| **Work Area** | | | |
| 18 | Work bench, drawers, cabinets and shelving have been cleared, with materials either disposed as per waste management process; or allocated to other lab personnel. |  |  |
| 19 | All bench tops have been cleaned and disinfected with agents appropriate to potential contaminants. |  |  |
| **Equipment** | | | |
| 20 | All equipment assigned to me has been emptied, decontaminated and cleaned according to manufacturer’s directions. |  |  |
| 21 | Glassware remaining in the lab has been cleaned and placed in cabinets or drawers. |  |  |
| 22 | The Head of School has been advised of equipment which is no longer required in the laboratory, with advice that the equipment has been decontaminated and the decontamination certificate completed. |  |  |
| 23 | Old and broken equipment which is not suitable for further use, has been decontaminated and a maximo submitted for IFS to recycle or dispose. |  |  |
| 24 | Broken glass has been appropriately disposed. |  |  |
| 25 | The transfer and relocation of equipment to another institution has been approved following consultation with the Head of School / Divisional Director, with that equipment decontaminated and contamination certificate completed; and appropriate shipping arrangements have been made. |  |  |
| **Records** | | | |
| 26 | All paper work-records have been passed to my Supervisor. |  |  |
| 27 | All electronic notebooks and records have been passed to my Supervisor. |  |  |
| **Keys** | | | |
| 28 | All keys assigned to me have been returned to the IFS Reception area. |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**This checklist should be reviewed with your Supervisor as soon as you notify that you are leaving and completed and signed-off on your final day in the Laboratory.**

# Appendix B: decontamination certificate – laboratory equipment to be disposed or Repurposed.

**SECTION 1 Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the instrument user/owner to ensure equipment to be disposed or repurposed is decontaminated in relation to its exposure to any hazardous material prior to leaving a laboratory and to:

1. Remove all substances which are dangerous/harmful for human health from the instrument so that the instrument is safe for other personnel to handle.

*Note – this requirement includes ionising / non-ionising radiation sources.*

1. Choose the appropriate decontamination method depending on what substances the instrument has been exposed to.
2. Complete this certificate and;

* Email a copy to Infrastructure and Facilities Services (IFS): [16500@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:16500@newcastle.edu.au) with an image of the equipment (to assist with identification)
* Attach a copy to the equipment
* Retain a copy of this declaration in the local records

**SECTION 2 Contaminate Identification**

Tick the relevant boxes the equipment to be disposed may possibly have been exposed to:

**Biological material, including:**

GMOs (including if equipment is located in a certified PC1 or PC2 facility)

Microorganism/biotoxin

Animal

Human

**Chemically hazardous materials**

**Radioisotopes / unsealed sources**

**Nanoparticles or nanomaterial**

**Other** – please specify -

**SECTION 3 Equipment Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current location:** |  |
| **Description** |  |
| **Make** |  |
| **Model number:** |  |
| **Serial number:** |  |
| **Asset number:** |  |

**SECTION 4 Decontamination Details**

**Biological and Chemical Contamination**

I confirm that the instrument as described above has not been contaminated by any of the listed biological materials or chemically hazardous materials.

I confirm that the instrument as described above has been decontaminated and can be handled without exposing individuals to health hazards.

Contaminants and methods of decontamination used [Type here]

Place [Type here]

Date [Type here]

Time Click or tap to enter a date.

Person completing decontamination [Type here]

**Radiation Contamination and Radiation apparatus**

Ionising (Sealed source)\*

Ionising (Unsealed source)

X-ray equipment etc\*

Non-ionising (lasers)\*

\* **Radiation apparatus including imaging equipment and apparatus containing sealed sources have specific disposal requirements and Health and Safety** [**Healthandsafety@newcastle.edu.au**](mailto:Healthandsafety@newcastle.edu.au) **need to be consulted on this and also in relation to them being removed from the University Radiation Management Licence before disposal (requires EPA pre-approval)**

I confirm that the instrument as described above has not been contaminated by any radioactive materials

The unit has been used with radioactive materials.

I confirm that the instrument as described above has been decontaminated and can be handled without exposing University staff to health hazards.

Methods of decontamination used [Type here]

Place [Type here]

Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Time [Type here]

Person completing decontamination [Type here]

**Nanoparticles or nanomaterial**

I confirm that the instrument as described above has not been contaminated by nanoparticals or nanomaterial.

I confirm that the instrument as described above has been decontaminated and can be handled without exposing individuals to health hazards.

Contaminants and methods of decontamination used [Type here]

Place [Type here]

Time [Type here]

Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Person completing decontamination [Type here]

**SECTION 5 Declaration**

1. I certify that the instrument as detailed above has been fully and appropriately cleaned and decontaminated from bacteriological, virological, chemical or radioactive contamination.

Upon request I agree to provide the required documented evidence for proof that the decontamination method used has been appropriate.

1. I certify that the instrument as detailed above **has not been** exposed to any hazardous substances.
2. Therefore I can certify that the instrument is safe for human handling.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | [Type here] |
| **Faculty** | [Type here] |
| **Unit** | [Type here] |
| **Email** | [Type here] |
| **Telephone** | [Type here] |
| **Office Location** | [Type here] |
| **Laboratory Location** | [Type here] |
| **Date** | Click or tap to enter a date. |