

Procedure: Vacating research facilities

Purpose

To describe the process and responsibilities when vacating a research facility at the Australian National University (ANU). This procedure is intended to comply with requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)* and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)* and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Cth) (SRC Act)*. This procedure is linked to the University's Work health and safety Policy and is one of the Safe Work Procedures within the WHS Management System.

Definitions

Departure Checklist is a document required to be completed by workers or a research group prior to vacating a research facility.

Hazard is an occurrence with potential to harm a person, the environment or property.

Local area is the relevant College/Research School/Service Division.

Research Facility a University facility where research is undertaken including laboratories, greenhouses, workshops and animal care facilities.

Procedure

1. A research facility may be vacated when a research group closes down, moves to a different location or key workers leave.
2. When a research facility is vacated it must be left in a clean and safe state.
3. Chemical, radiation and biological hazards must be removed, eliminated or made safe before the area can be handed back. This is the responsibility of the research group vacating the research facility and the associated local area and must be recorded using the [Research facilities departure checklist form](#).
4. Any hazardous chemicals shall be disposed of, or transferred, unless a prior arrangement to keep these hazardous chemicals has been made with the local area or new research group who will occupy the facility. This is the responsibility of the research group vacating the research facility.
5. Other hazards shall be eliminated or minimised and material and equipment should be made safe by appropriate competent persons.

6. Only once a research facility has been inspected and confirmed safe by the Research Group Leader and the local area manager it can be returned to the local area for another research group or be handed over to the Facilities and Services (F&S) Division.

7. Any outstanding issues must be raised with:

- * School Manager, Building Custodian;
- * Facilities and Services (F&S) representative; and
- * the Work Environment Group (WEG) or nominee.

These parties shall meet and determine what actions are required to ensure the research facility is made safe.

8. Once a research facility has been cleared, cleaned and assessed, the area shall be secured from unauthorised access by the local area Manager or nominee.

9. A notice signed by the relevant Research Group Leader or their supervisor shall be placed on the entrance declaring:

- * that it has been cleaned and made safe;
- * any conditions or outstanding issues; and
- * the contact details of appropriate people in order to gain access.

10. Where appropriate, details of the access contact and conditions should be communicated to relevant stakeholders (including those listed in point 7 above).

Responsibilities

Facilities and Services

11. F&S representatives are responsible for the building infrastructure except items to be addressed by the local area or Group below. For example, asbestos containing building materials and polychlorinated biphenyl oils (PCBs) in light fittings are the responsibility of F&S.

Local area Manager

12. The local area Manager, Building Custodian or nominated representative is responsible for:

- * organising the transfer of equipment, materials and chemicals where required;
- * making safe any plant/equipment or the services to the plant/equipment;
- * arranging through F&S the emptying and flushing of all laboratory sinks' 'S' bend/trap;

- * inspecting the laboratory and confirming the area is clean and in a safe state; and
- * securing the area from unauthorised access after it has been vacated.

13. The local area Manager, Building Custodian or nominated representative is also responsible for the update and removal of signage in the laboratory, specifically:

- * chemical signage on the laboratory door and any fixed cabinet must be removed once the area is cleared of chemical substances;
- * radiation signage on the laboratory door, work surfaces and any storage location must be removed once the area is cleared of materials and a radiation survey has been conducted to confirm the absence of radiation;
- * biological signage may only be removed once the area has passed the requirements of the Department of Agriculture for biosecurity and/or the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) for decontamination of, and surrendering the certification for, a registered area or facility; and
- * signage relating to other hazards such high voltage, hot surfaces/heat, noise, mechanical hazards shall be removed once relevant equipment or machinery has been removed from the laboratory.

Research Group leader

14. The Research Group Leader or, where they have departed without carrying out these responsibilities, their Department Head or immediate supervisor, is responsible for:

Table 1 Research group leader responsibilities

Category	Responsibilities
General	Completing section 1 of the Research facilities departure checklist form for any departing staff and research students, and ensuring the remainder of the form is completed and submitted.
	Arranging for the removal/disposal of ALL items, apparatus and non-fixed equipment belonging to the group, unless agreed otherwise with the local area Manager and F&S.
	Arranging the general cleaning and decontamination of all surfaces in fume cupboards, biosafety Class II or Laminar flow cabinets, sinks, storage cabinets and shelves.

Chemicals	Arranging the disposal of all unwanted chemicals. Other chemicals should be returned to the Local area store or transferred to another Research Group.
	Clearly labelling research chemicals (e.g. synthesised compounds) according to GHS and entering chemicals into the Chemical Management System (CMS) before transferring to the Local area store or another group.
	Updating the University's CMS.
Radiation	Consulting with the Local area's Coordinating Radiation Safety Officer, ASNO local Contact Person or the University's radiation safety officer (whs.@anu.edu.au).
	Arranging the correct disposal or transfer of radioactive materials or equipment.
	The disposal of radioactive materials is in accordance with University's Radiation safety procedure and completed according the approved Local area/Area Radiation Waste Management Plan lodged with the WEG.
	Completing the characterisation, labelling, packing and documentation of any radioactive materials to be held in the local area or University's radiation material stores. This is to be completed in accordance with the University Radiation safety procedure.
	Equipment used for radioactive work is cleaned and free of radioactive contamination before leaving the radiation area. The equipment is inspected by the local radiation safety officer.
	The disposal or transfer (off campus) of ionising (X-ray apparatus) and non-ionising radiation apparatus (e.g. Lasers, UV light sources etc.) requires prior approval from the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).

	<p>The transfer of ionising (x-ray apparatus) and non-ionising radiation apparatus (e.g. Lasers, UV light sources etc.) within the University requires updating the ARPANSA inventory as soon as practicable.</p>
Biological	<p>Consulting with the local area's biological safety officer, the local area member responsible for materials subject to quarantine, and the University Institutional Biosafety Committee/Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee. The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources have specific requirements for the decommissioning/surrendering of a Physical Containment (PC) certified location (see: https://researchservices.anu.edu.au/ori/rdna/surrendering.php) and local area Biosecurity Administrative Arrangement ((A) facility/laboratory (refer: http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/arrival/arrangements);</p>
	<p>Arranging the correct disposal, destruction or transfer of any biological materials or samples.</p>
	<p>Arranging the cleaning and disinfection of equipment used for biological materials, imported materials and recombinant DNA materials using approved disinfectants and methods.</p>
	<p>Arranging cleaning of all surfaces within the laboratory using approved disinfectants.</p>
	<p>Coordinating (through the relevant University office(r)) the inspection of the laboratory by external organisations.</p>
	<p>Attending any external inspection of the laboratory.</p>
Other hazards	<p>Review all other potential hazards present in the research facility including (but not limited to): cryogenic vessels; gas supply systems; other ventilation systems and filters; and appliances.</p>

Training and competency requirements

15. There are no training requirements for this procedure, however this process is included in the University Chemical Safety Training, and is recommended to be incorporated in to local area inductions.

Sources

Legal and other requirements
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)</i>
<i>Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)</i>
<i>Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Cth)</i>

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