

 **DUAL USE RESEARCH OF CONCERN (DURC) COMMITTEE**

Despite its value and benefits, certain types of research conducted for legitimate purposes can be utilized for both benevolent and harmful purposes. Such research is called “dual use research.” Dual use research *of concern* (DURC) is a subset of dual use research defined as: “life sciences research that, based on current understanding, can be reasonably anticipated to provide knowledge, information, products, or technologies that could be directly misapplied to pose a significant threat with broad potential consequences to public health and safety, agricultural crops and other plants, animals, the environment, materiel, or national security.”

*The United States Government* [*Policy*](https://www.phe.gov/s3/dualuse/Documents/durc-policy.pdf) *for Institutional Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern* went into effect September 24, 2015, and is complimentary to the *March 2012 DURC Policy*. The 2015 Policy addresses institutional oversight of DURC which includes policies, practices and procedures to ensure DURC is identified and risk mitigation measures are implemented, where applicable, and reminds all involved parties of the shared duty to uphold the integrity of science and prevent its misuse.

The 2015 DURC Policy requires that institutions receiving federal funds establish an Institutional Review Entity (IRE) empowered to execute the requirements described in Section 7.2.B.i- iii, v, and viii of the Policy. To meet this requirement, Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) has established the DURC Committee. The scope of this committee’s authority is limited to the use of 15 specific agents and toxins and seven categories of experiments listed and described in Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 of the DURC Policy, respectively.

Responsibilities of the IRE include:

 i) Identification of life sciences research that utilizes any of the agents listed in section

 6.2.1 of the DURC Policy;

ii) Assessing whether research that uses any of the agents or toxins listed in Section 6.2.1 also produces, aims to produce, or is reasonably anticipated to produce one or more of the effects listed in Section 6.2.2 of the DURC Policy;

iii) Determining if research anticipated to produce at least one of the effects listed in Section 6.2.2 of the DURC Policy meets the definition of DURC described above;

iv) Identifying the anticipated benefits of the research identified as DURC; and

v) Implementing measures to mitigate the risk that DURC is used in a manner that results in harm.

The IRE must be composed of at least five members with sufficient breadth of expertise to assess the dual use potential of the range of relevant life sciences research conducted at WesternU and with knowledge of relevant U.S. Government policies and understanding of risk assessment and risk management considerations, including biosafety and biosecurity. The IRE may be composed of members of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) who have the required scientific and technical expertise; however, IRE and IBC meetings shall be held separately with minutes of IRE meetings remaining separate from minutes of IBC meetings.

IRE members shall be appointed by the Vice President for Research and Biotechnology who shall designate one of the members as Chair and another as Vice Chair. The terms of membership shall be 3 years with staggered terms.