

Surgical Skills and Anatomy Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy specifies the requirements for receipt, handling, storage, tracking, recording and disposal of Bodies/Human Tissue in the Surgical Skills Centre and Anatomy Laboratory (SSAC) in the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences.

Background

(2) Macquarie University (the University) conducts teaching and research activities in the fields of health sciences, including surgical skills training, medical research and anatomy. Some of these activities require Anatomical Examinations, which are carried out in the SSAC, using Human Bodies/Human Tissues that have been provided for Anatomical Examination through its [Body Donation Program](#) or other sources.

(3) The University recognises the magnitude and solemnity of the contribution that is made by those who donate their Bodies for medical or scientific purposes and is committed to treating the human remains entrusted to its care with the utmost respect and professionalism and in accordance with Relevant Laws and, where applicable, its [Body Donation Program](#).

(4) The SSAC is used:

- a. for learning and teaching in the University's undergraduate and postgraduate courses;
- b. by internal and external clients running educational surgical skills workshops; and
- c. by internal and external researchers.

(5) Surgical skills training is analogous to human surgery using similar anatomical approaches, techniques and equipment to that used in a hospital operating theatre.

Scope

(6) This Policy applies to all University staff, students and visitors to the University.

Section 2 - Policy

Legislation and Licensing

(7) The University will only conduct Anatomical Examinations, or allow other parties to do so, when the person in charge of the conduct of Anatomical Examinations at the University is in possession of a valid and current Anatomy Licence.

(8) The University must not operate the [Body Donation Program](#) unless it holds an Anatomy Licence.

(9) The University must comply with the terms and conditions of the Anatomy Licence.

(10) SSAC Staff, Students and Authorised Users are required to comply with the Relevant Laws, public health and ethical standards and guidelines associated with the receipt, handling, storage, tracking, recording and disposal of Bodies and Human Tissue.

(11) The Executive Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences is responsible for monitoring the University's compliance with the terms and conditions of the Anatomy Licence and ensuring that the Licence is renewed on time. The Director, Surgical Skills Centre and Anatomy Laboratory is responsible for assisting the Executive Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences.

Approvals

Consent

(12) The University must have the Tissue Suppliers' approval for Anatomical Examinations using internationally sourced Human Tissue.

(13) The University will only perform Anatomical Examinations of a Body/Human Tissue when consent has been given in accordance with the Relevant Laws, and only in accordance with the terms of that consent.

(14) The University will only use transferred Human Tissue for Anatomical Examination when consent has been obtained in accordance with the Relevant Laws, and only in accordance with the terms of that consent.

(15) The University will establish the terms of the consent from the University's [Body Donation Program](#) consent forms or an equivalent form from the institution from which a Body/Human Tissue is transferred to the University.

(16) If the Anatomical Examination is for research purposes, the research must have had prior approval of a human research ethics committee if required.

Transfer of a Body/Human Tissue

(17) Bodies/Human Tissue will only be transferred to another Anatomy Licence holder and only if this is in accordance with the relevant consent.

(18) Bodies/Human Tissue will only be transferred within Australia with the prior approval of an Inspector and only if this is in accordance with the relevant consent of the donor or the donor's Senior Next-of-Kin.

(19) If a Body/Human Tissue is transferred to another Anatomy Licence holder within Australia, when it is time for disposal it must be returned to the University for disposal in accordance with the consent of the donor.

Ethics

(20) Where it is not clear that the Anatomical Examination is within the boundaries of consent, the matter must be referred to the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical Sciences) for advice.

(21) The boundaries of consent in the [Body Donation Program](#) may only be expanded after referral to the Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical Sciences) for advice.

Access to Anatomy Facilities

(22) The SSAC facilities are to be secured at all times.

(23) Only SSAC Staff, Students and Authorised Users are permitted to access SSAC facilities.

(24) Access and supervision of Students and Authorised Users is at the discretion of the Director, Surgical Skills Centre and Anatomy Laboratory.

Induction

(25) SSAC Staff, Students and Authorised Users are required to complete an induction prior to being admitted to the SSAC if they are likely to see and/or handle a Body/Human Tissue.

Receipt, Handling, Storage, Tracking, Recording and Disposal of Bodies / Human Tissue

Receipt

(26) A Body/Human Tissue will be obtained:

- a. from an Australian institution which holds a current Anatomy Licence; or
- b. internationally, from a Tissue Supplier; or
- c. via the University's [Body Donation Program](#).

(27) Only SSAC Staff are authorised to receive a Body/Human Tissue.

(28) A Body/Human Tissue must be screened for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and/or such other diseases as are specified as conditions to the Anatomy Licence prior to transfer to SSAC. If the screening for those diseases is positive, the Bodies/Human Tissue will not be accepted into the SSAC, except where the Body/Human Tissue has been bequeathed to the University under the [Body Donation Program](#), in which case the screening will occur after the Body is accepted into the SSAC. If that Body/Human Tissue screens positive, it must be dealt with in accordance with the [Surgical Skills and Anatomy Procedure](#).

(29) Bodies/Human Tissue will not be accepted if the SSAC has reason to believe that the Body/Human Tissue is infected with any other Prescribed Infectious Disease or Notifiable Disease.

Handling

(30) SSAC Staff, Students and Authorised Users must wear appropriate personal protective equipment when handling a Body/Human Tissue.

Storage

(31) SSAC Staff are the only persons authorised to:

- a. receive a Body/Human Tissue into the mortuary;
- b. retrieve a Body/Human Tissue from storage; and
- c. return a Body/Human Tissue to storage.

Tracking

(32) A Body/Human Tissue must have a unique identification number. Human Tissue from the same Body must have the same identification number.

Recording

(33) The Director, Surgical Skills Centre and Anatomy Laboratory must give prior written approval for recording, by any means, of a Body/Human Tissue.

(34) 'Recording' includes capturing images, data or information by any electronic or other means including by use of a camera or digital recording device.

(35) Authorised Users are not permitted to bring recording equipment into the SSAC unless such prior written approval has been obtained.

(36) Recording is only permitted if allowed under the relevant consent of the donor or their Senior Next-of-Kin and the recording is:

- a. used for diagnostic, demonstrative or teaching purposes; and
- b. of a Body/Human Tissue that has been de-identified.

(37) Anatomical sketches, such as those used for course notes, are permitted, provided they do not identify the donor.

Disposal

(38) A Body/Human Tissue must be disposed of within four (4) years of the donor's death, or according to written authorisation by an Inspector and in accordance with the Relevant Laws.

(39) Disposal of a Body sourced within New South Wales will be in accordance with the relevant consent.

(40) A Body/Human Tissue sourced internationally or from within Australia will be disposed of in accordance with the agreement with the Tissue Supplier and the requirements of NSW Health.

Body Register

(41) The SSAC will maintain a current and complete Body Register for five (5) years from the date of the last entry.

Section 3 - Procedures

(42) Refer to the [Surgical Skills and Anatomy Procedure](#).

Section 4 - Guidelines

(43) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(44) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Anatomical Examination means the examination of a Body/Human Tissue, including the dissection of a Body/Human Tissue, for medical or scientific purposes, but not including post-mortem examination.
- b. Anatomy Licence means a licence to conduct Anatomical Examinations, as issued by the Director-General of NSW Health in accordance with the [Anatomy Act 1977](#).
- c. Authorised User means a person who is authorised by any SSAC Staff member to access SSAC facilities.
- d. Body/Bodies means a deceased human body.
- e. Body Register means a register as prescribed by the [Anatomy Act 1977](#) and that records:
 - i. receipt of a Body/Human Tissue;
 - ii. transfer of a Body/Human Tissue; and
 - iii. disposal of a Body/Human Tissue.
- f. Human Tissue means part of a deceased human Body.
- g. Inspector means an officer of NSW Health.

- h. Notifiable Disease is as defined in the [Public Health Act 2010](#) (NSW).
- i. NSW Health means the New South Wales Ministry of Health.
- j. Prescribed Infectious Disease is as defined in the [Public Health Regulation 2012](#).
- k. Relevant Laws means the [Anatomy Act 1977](#), the [Human Tissue Act 1983](#), the [Public Health Regulation 2012](#) (NSW), the [Anatomical Examinations and Anatomy Licensing Policy Directive 2023](#) and any associated subordinate legislation or guidelines.
- l. Senior Next-of-Kin is as defined in the Relevant Laws.
- m. SSAC Staff means a Macquarie University staff member employed at the SSAC.
- n. Student means a student of Macquarie University or another institution who requires access to the SSAC for the purpose of their training/research.
- o. Tissue Supplier means an interstate or international Body donation facility authorised by NSW Health that holds a valid import licence from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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