

Firearms Policy and Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('CDU', 'the University') is committed to providing a safe environment for all members of the University community. This Policy and Procedure sets out the requirements and minimum operational controls for the lawful, safe and risk-managed possession, use, transport, storage, acquisition and disposal of firearms and ammunition for University-related activities.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This policy outlines the University's obligations in terms of the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT) and [Firearms Regulations 1997](#) (NT), as well as the [Work Health and Safety Policy](#), and establishes

- a. the prohibition of the possession, carriage and use of personal firearms on University-owned or controlled premises; and
- b. the governance, control, and operational procedures for the lawful possession, storage, issuance, transport, use and return of firearms and ammunition held under the University's Corporate Firearms Licence.

(3) Where firearms usage occurs in jurisdictions outside the Northern Territory (NT), the legislation of the other jurisdiction takes precedence over NT legislation and this policy, where there are inconsistencies.

(4) The policy recognises that firearms and ammunition pose a significant risk to life, safety and the reputation of the University, if not properly handled and controlled. The policy therefore aims to manage and limit potential personal and/or corporate criminal liability for contravening or failing to comply with the requirements of the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), the [Firearms Regulations 1997](#) (NT), or any conditions of the University's Firearms Corporate Licence (Corporate Licence).

(5) Any actual or suspected breach of the firearms legislation, licence conditions, or this policy and procedure must be treated as serious and immediately reported to the Corporate Licence Holder, Deputised Officer or, where required by legislation, the NT Police.

Section 3 - Scope

(6) This policy applies to all members of the University community, including employees, students, contractors, volunteers, and visitors.

(7) This policy applies to all University premises, including University-controlled off-campus activities.

Section 4 - Policy

General Prohibitions

(8) The health and safety of all members of the University community is of utmost importance, and the University will

not tolerate the unlawful or unnecessary possession of firearms and ammunition on its premises.

(9) The use of firearms on University property is generally prohibited. However, the use of firearms on University premises for University activities is permitted only where the use of the firearm is demonstrably necessary to achieve a legitimate operational, research, biosecurity, animal welfare, safety or security outcome, and there is no reasonably practicable alternative that can achieve the outcome.

(10) The bringing or use of privately-owned firearms on any University property or in relation to any University activity is strictly forbidden.

(11) Firearms or ammunition must not be taken into student residential areas of campus. Firearms and ammunition must not be taken into administration and teaching areas unless being moved directly to, or stored within, a designated, Police-approved facility.

Katherine Rural Campus (KRC)

(12) The bringing on or possession of privately owned firearms and ammunition is generally not permitted on campus, with the exception of privately owned firearms and ammunition possessed by occupants of the residential properties on KRC, provided that the firearms and ammunition are the property of the residents and they are managed in accordance with the conditions of their private firearms licence.

(13) Personal firearms may not be used at KRC without approval from the Associate Vice-Chancellor Katherine and Big Rivers Region.

(14) The University reserves the right to withdraw authorisation for the possession and use of privately owned firearms on University property if the firearms licence holder is in breach of the conditions of their firearms licence or this policy and procedure.

Firearms Corporate Licence

(15) The University is mandated under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT) and [Firearms Regulations 1997](#) (NT) to hold a Corporate Licence to enable it to legally use firearms in the Northern Territory for University business.

(16) The Vice-Chancellor will assign a Firearms Corporate Licence Holder (Corporate Licence Holder) at each campus/site where University-owned firearm/s are located, as the designated contact for all licencing matters, and the operational control of firearms and ammunition.

(17) The Corporate Licence holder will nominate a Deputised Officer who will

- a. be responsible for the security of firearms possessed under the licence at the location where they are stored;
- b. have direct access to firearms possessed under the licence;
- c. be responsible for the maintenance and timely servicing of firearms to ensure they remain safe to use; and
- d. have control over issuing firearms possessed under the licence to University employees.

Employee Licences and HDR Permits

(18) Employees required to possess or use a firearm in the execution of their official University duties must be an approved firearms employee licence holder (employee licence holder) under Part 3 Division 7 of the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), and furthermore, adhere to the limitations and obligations created under Part 3 Division 13A – Firearms Corporate Licence.

(19) Applications for a firearms employee licence (employee licence) are overseen by the Corporate Licence holder, who:

- a. seeks endorsement from any relevant Senior Executive Team (SET) members;
- b. seeks approval from the Vice-Chancellor; and
- c. authorises the employee licence application for submission to the NT Police (which is carried out in person by the applicant).

(20) The University has absolute discretion to refuse to endorse or approve an application for an employee licence, and thereby prevent the employee from submitting an application for a firearms employee licence.

(21) Employees cannot possess or use firearms without having completed an approved NT Firearms Safety Training Course and holding a valid employee licence for the relevant firearm(s) category(s).

(22) The University requires employee licence holders to undertake a firearms competency check at least annually and whenever so directed by the Corporate Licence Holder. Competency checks will be organised by the Corporate Licence Holder.

(23) Holders of an employee licence are legally obligated under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT) to surrender their employee licence in the following circumstances:

- a. their employment no longer requires them to possess or use a firearm;
- b. they cease employment with the University;
- c. an offence is committed, or there is a directive to revoke or surrender a licence under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT). Actions involving a possible breach of criminal law must be reported to the Police; or
- d. they are the subject of a domestic violence order (including both interim and final domestic violence orders).

(24) The University may require employee firearms holders to surrender their employee licence in any other circumstances, at the discretion of the Corporate Licence Holder.

(25) Where necessary for approved research activities, and where the conditions of Section 31 of the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT) are satisfied, Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students may apply for a permit from the Northern Territory (NT) Police to become an authorised firearms permit holder. The HDR student must obtain approval from the Corporate Licence holder before applying for a permit. Approved HDR applicants are subject to the requirements of this policy.

(26) Research projects requiring the use of firearms or ammunition must have appropriate ethics clearance, if required.

Purchase and management of firearms

(27) All acquisition, sale, transfer or disposal of firearms and ammunition on behalf of the University must be managed by the Corporate Licence holder, which includes seeking the endorsement of any relevant Senior Executive Team (SET) members and approval by the Vice-Chancellor. Approvals of firearm purchases or use will be based on essential use only. The register of Corporate Firearms must be updated immediately.

(28) The Corporate Licence Holder must be consulted before any action is taken in relation to the firearms, ammunition or the locked storage facilities. The Corporate Licence Holder must then contact the NT Police to agree to the action(s) prior to the action(s) being taken.

(29) It is the responsibility of the Corporate Licence Holder to apply for a permit to acquire a firearm from the NT Police in accordance with Part 4 Section 35 of the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT).

Storage, transportation and disposal

(30) When a firearm and ammunition are not being used or carried, the firearm and ammunition must be separately stored in a locked storage facility that has been inspected and approved by NT Police and in accordance with Part 3 of the [Firearms Regulations 1997](#) (NT). Only the Corporate Licence Holder or their Deputised Officer is to manage access to the locked storage facility and maintain registrations with NT Police.

- a. Any other person requesting access to the firearms or ammunition must have completed an approved NT Firearms Safety Training Course and hold a valid firearms employee licence for the relevant firearms category.

(31) Approval from the Corporate Licence Holder is required before a firearm or ammunition is stored in an alternative location when the firearm or ammunition cannot be returned to the locked storage facility on campus. Alternative storage must comply with the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), including the requirement that it be stored in an approved case and out of public view.

(32) Firearms and ammunition must be transported in accordance with the [Firearms Regulations 1997](#) (NT). Firearms must be unloaded, locked in the vehicle's cargo area or other lockable securing device and out of public view. See [storage and safekeeping of firearms and ammunition](#) for advice.

(33) Ammunition being transported in a vehicle must be placed in a lockable compartment of the vehicle (other than the compartment in which the firearm is placed) or in a locked container secured in or on the vehicle.

(34) When transporting a firearm and ammunition on a commercial aircraft for the purpose of remote fieldwork, a person must obtain authorisation to carry a firearm and ammunition onboard from the operator of the aircraft or the pilot in command, in line with Civil Aviation Safety Authority legislation and regulations, as well as the individual airline requirements. Employee firearms licence holders should engage with the airline at the earliest opportunity to arrange transport and understand any additional requirements.

(35) The Corporate Licence Holder will coordinate with Finance and the Deputised Officer/s to perform a stocktake of all firearms and ammunition on an annual basis, including confirmation of servicing performed for the year to ensure firearms are in safe working condition.

(36) Disposal or sale of firearms and ammunition must be coordinated through the Corporate Licence Holder and completed in accordance with NT Police requirements.

Records and Reporting

(37) The University will maintain a register of all Firearms Employee Licence holders who, as a requirement of their employment, are required to use firearms, including details of licences and training received.

(38) The Corporate Licence Holder will maintain a register of:

- a. all University firearms, including date of purchase, make, calibre and serial numbers;
- b. when firearms or ammunition are taken out of, and returned to the locked storage facility;
- c. details of the annual stocktake of firearms and ammunition; and
- d. any breaches of this policy or offences committed under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), or directives to revoke or surrender a license.

(39) A copy of registers will be deposited on at least an annual basis with Records and Archives.

(40) The Corporate Licence Holder will provide the register to the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee annually.

Section 5 - Procedure

(41) Authorised Employee Licence Holders are responsible for:

- a. submitting their firearms employee licence application, complete with the authorisations outlined in this document, in person to the NT Police; and
- b. holding a valid firearms employee licence for the relevant firearms category, obtained in compliance with this policy and the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), which includes;
 - i. completing the approved NT Firearms Safety Training Course in compliance with this policy and the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT); and
 - ii. complying with all relevant aspects of the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT) and the Law to ensure safe and appropriate use;
- c. before accessing a firearm, filling out the firearms use register with the date, time, purpose of use, and their signature, and entering the date and time of return when returning a firearm to the safe to ensure continuous accountability;
- d. providing the Corporate Licence Holder or their Deputised Officer with up-to-date information about the location of firearms;
- e. notifying the Corporate Licence Holder if they are the subject of an interim or final domestic violence order;
- f. complying with all reasonable directions from the Corporate Licence Holder and participating in competency checks when required; and
- g. taking express care in handling and using firearms and ammunition.

(42) The Corporate Licence Holder is responsible for:

- a. liaising with the NT Police for all matters related to firearms employee licences and the CDU Firearms Corporate Licence, including audits and checks;
- b. managing applications for firearms employee licences, including consulting with the relevant SET members and the Vice-Chancellor for endorsement and approval (respectively), prior to authorising applications for submission by the applicant;
- c. consulting with the relevant SET members and the Vice-President Governance and University Secretary regarding breaches of this policy or offences committed under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), including directives to revoke or surrender a license;
- d. awareness of the location of all University-owned firearms at all times;
- e. reviewing employee firearms licence holder competence, and arranging competency checks at least annually;
- f. ensuring applicants for firearms employee licences have completed the mandatory training requirements in accordance with the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT);
- g. managing the acquisition, sale and disposal of firearms and ammunition in accordance with this policy;
- h. ensuring firearms and ammunition are maintained and services in a timely manner to ensure they remain safe to use; and
- i. complying with record keeping and Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee reporting requirements.

(43) The Vice-President Governance and University Secretary is responsible for:

- a. consulting with the Corporate Licence Holder around reports of offences, or directives to revoke or surrender a licence under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), or any breach of this policy and procedure; and
- b. overseeing requests by HDR students for a firearms employee permit.

(44) The relevant SET member is responsible for:

- a. consulting with the Corporate Licence Holder to review and endorse applications for employee licenses in accordance with this policy and procedure;
- b. consulting with the Corporate Licence Holder to review and endorse applications for the acquisition, sale and disposal of firearms in accordance with this policy and procedure; and
- c. consulting with the Corporate Licence Holder to escalate reports of offences, or directives to revoke or surrender a licence under the [Firearms Act 1997](#) (NT), or any breach of this policy and procedure.

(45) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for:

- a. appointing Corporate Licence holder/s;
- b. consulting with the Corporate Licence Holder to approve firearms employee licence applications in accordance with this policy and procedure; and
- c. consulting with the Corporate Licence Holder to approve the acquisition, sale and disposal of firearms in accordance with this policy and procedure.

Incident, loss, theft and emergency response

(46) In the event of an incident, loss, theft or an emergency situation, the following applies:

- a. For a life-threatening emergency, immediately call 000;
- b. Notify Campus Security as soon as possible;
- c. Notify the Firearms Corporate Licence Holder;
- d. Do not disturb the site unless required to preserve life or prevent further harm; and
- e. Report through the official CDU WHS incident reporting systems and cooperate with Police investigations, if any.

Section 6 - Non-Compliance

(47) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct - Employees](#) or the [Code of Conduct - Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025](#) and the [Code of Conduct - Students](#).

(48) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees](#) and [Complaints Policy - Students](#).

(49) All employees have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st September 2026
Review Date	1st September 2029
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	1st September 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Brendon Douglas Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Implementation Officer	Brendon Douglas Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Enquiries Contact	Brendon Douglas Vice-President Governance and University Secretary Governance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called 'governance documents' and are often referred to as 'policy' or 'University policy'.