

Cannabis High THC Cultivation and Research Licences

Key Information

Overview

The High THC Cultivation & Research Licence allows the indoor cultivation and scientific research of cannabis plants containing more than 0.2% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Licensees are authorised to harvest, possess, and store cannabis biomass and plant parts obtained from cultivation.

Licence Scope

This licence is required for:

- Commercial cannabis cultivators producing biomass for extraction or manufacturing purposes, whether operating under GSC or DHSC manufacturing frameworks
- Research organisations conducting studies on cannabis cultivation, product development, or related scientific investigations
- Businesses developing proprietary strains or cultivation technologies, including genetic research, agronomic optimisation, or innovation in growing methods

Licensees may also apply for supplementary licences to support their operations, such as:

- Manufacture & Extraction Licence – for processing cannabis biomass into oils, concentrates, or finished products
- Transport & Storage Licence – for secure movement and warehousing of cannabis materials
- Export Licence – for authorised international distribution of cannabis products or research materials

Licence Type

Class 3 – Cultivation Licence - Female plants only

Designed for commercial growers producing cannabis biomass for cannabinoid extraction or plant parts for sale. This licence supports full-scale cultivation and product packaging. There are no limits on maximum THC content, other than those dictated by market access requirements.

Allows:

- Indoor cultivation of female cannabis plants only
- Harvesting and possession of cannabis biomass
- Drying, curing, and storage of harvested material
- Sale of biomass (flowers, leaves, buds)
- Sale of seedlings and propagated plant parts

Restrictions

- While Class 3 licence holders may sell seedlings and propagated plant parts, the production and sale of seeds is not permitted under this licence due to the exclusion of male plants from cultivation
- Due to the absence of male plants, seeds should not be produced or sold, as this does not fall under the scope of the GSC licence

Class 4 – Research Licence – Male and female plants allowed

Ideal for breeders or researchers developing new strains or validating plant genetics. Allows for controlled experimentation and limited distribution.

Allows:

- Indoor cultivation of male and female cannabis plants
- Sale of seeds, seedlings, and propagated plant parts
- Limited sample supply of biomass (e.g. flowers, leaves, buds) for testing or cultivar validation

Restrictions

- Licensees cannot sell biomass in bulk
- Intended for research and breeding, not commercial production
- Research Licence permits limited sample supply of biomass for testing or cultivar validation
- Distribution volumes must remain small-scale and may be subject to GSC approval depending on the nature and purpose of the supply

Dual Licensing (Class 3+Class 4)

Holding both licences allows:

- Full flexibility in cultivation
- Sale of all plant parts, including seeds and biomass
- Use of male plants for breeding while still commercially selling biomass

Facility Requirements

Indoor Growing Only - All cultivation must take place within enclosed, indoor facilities.

Glazing Limit - A default maximum of 20% glazing is permitted. Any exceptions must be approved by the GSC.

Applicants should also consider environmental management measures, including odour control, waste disposal, and energy efficiency. These factors may be reviewed during facility assessment and ongoing supervision.

Facilities must comply with Isle of Man standards for fire safety, health and safety, and security. This includes adherence to:

- Any relevant regulations and guidance for fire risk assessments
- The [Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#), overseen by the Isle of Man Health and Safety Inspectorate
- Security measures aligned with [Secure By Design](#) principles, including physical protection systems, secure storage, and access control
- As part of the application process, applicants must comply with Secure By Design guidelines and obtain any necessary accreditation relevant to their facility type and operations

Applicants must demonstrate and provide evidence of the safe use of machinery and hazardous materials. Where machinery involves extremes of temperature or pressure, or where hazardous substances are used, supporting documentation must include:

- Evidence of equipment safety
- A risk assessment addressing safe operation and mitigation measures

Applicants must also consider applicable guidelines from the [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency \(MHRA\)](#), including:

- **Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)** – ensuring consistent, high-quality production standards
- **Good Distribution Practice (GDP)** – ensuring safe and compliant storage, handling, and transportation of products

Application Requirements

Please refer to the overview of the [application process](#) to ensure all requirements are met.

Licence Fees

<u>Licence Type</u>	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2+</u>
<u>Cultivation (Class 3)</u>	£47,250	£36,750
<u>Research (Class 4)</u>	£21,000	£12,600
<u>Maximum Annual Cap</u>		£62,500

Licences operate on a rolling 12-month basis. The cap is automatically applied when each fee is paid.

Contact & Application

Please refer to the [Full Guidance Document](#)

If, after reviewing the guidance, you require further assistance, you may contact us by telephone or email. Contact details are provided in the footer of this page.