

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

Purpose of Committee

To fulfil the role of an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) for the University of Canberra, as required by the [*Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition \(the "Code"\)*](#), published by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). References within the text relate to the Code.

Terms of Reference

The role of the Animal Ethics Committee is to:

- i. review applications for projects involving experiments using animals for scientific purposes and other activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities - including breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line - and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable and confirm to the requirements of the Code;
- ii. conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities, and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
- iii. monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities;
- iv. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events;
- v. take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance;
- vi. approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes on behalf of the University;
- vii. provide advice and recommendations to the University on any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code are maintained;
- viii. examine and comment on all institutional plans and policies that may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes;
- ix. maintain a record of proposals and projects;
- x. inform the DVC (Research) of instances of apparent misconduct in the use of animals which comes to its notice and ensure actions are taken to ensure that animal wellbeing is not compromised, the issue is addressed promptly, and activities that have the potential to adversely affect animal wellbeing cease immediately. Actions must be undertaken in consultation with the researcher(s) involved, and may include suspending or withdrawing approval for the project or activity as well as appropriate follow-up investigations
- xi. Submit a written report, annually, to the University Research Committee and Academic Board on:
 - numbers and types of projects assessed and approved or rejected;

- the physical facilities for the care and use of animals
- actions that have supported the educational and training needs of AEC members and people involved in the care and use of animals;
- administrative and other difficulties experienced; and
- any matters that may affect the University's ability to maintain compliance with the Code and any suitable recommendations.

Scope of Responsibilities

The Committee will ensure, on behalf of the University, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

Accountability

The AEC is responsible to the University Research Committee through the DVC (Research).

The University of Canberra accepts legal responsibility for decisions and advice received from the Committee and indemnifies members for any action taken against them in respect of Committee business.

The University Research Committee conducts an annual review of the operation of the AEC to ensure that it is effective and consistent with the Scientific Use Code and institutional policies. The annual review process includes consideration of the annual report from the AEC and meeting with the Chairperson as required.

Conflict of Interest

Prior to appointment, all persons nominated to the Committee must declare any conflicts of interest. In addition, any perceived conflicts of interest regarding specific issues must be declared at the beginning of meetings and will be dealt with in accordance with the Committee's working procedures.

Committee Structure

Membership of the Committee will comply with the Code.
Chair and Members will be appointed by the DVC (Research).

Membership must comprise at least five persons selected from each of the following categories:

Chair. A member of the academic staff nominated by the DVC (Research).

Category A. A person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, and with experience relevant to the University's activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge;

Category B. A suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the University and the business of the AEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience. If the business of the AEC relates to the use of animals for teaching only, a teacher with substantial and recent experience may be appointed;

Category C. A person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who is not employed by or otherwise associated with the University, and who is not involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this Category. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, the person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of, and nomination by, such an organisation; and

Category D. A person not employed by or otherwise associated with the University and who has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their under-graduate education. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the AEC and must not fit the requirements of any other Category.

Animal Welfare Officer: A person responsible for the routine care of animals within the institution.

The DVC (Research) may appoint a Deputy Chairperson, who must be a member of the University staff.

Tenure of Membership

The term of office for all members of the Committee will be two years. Multiple / consecutive terms are possible. The DVC (Research) may appoint members for further terms. Members are appointed according to their qualifications and experience. Before appointment all members must acknowledge, in writing, their acceptance of the terms of reference of the AEC and acknowledge the confidentiality required by the University. The University requires that neither the names of applicants nor the substance of the application be discussed with any person outside the Committee.

Members may resign from the AEC at any time by advising the Research Ethics & Integrity Unit in writing with a minimum two month notification period. The Research Ethics & Integrity Unit will advise the Chair and the DVC (Research) of the resignation.

On the recommendation of the AEC Chair and the Research Ethics & Integrity Unit, the DVC (Research) may request a member of the AEC to resign from the AEC.

Committee Support

The Research Ethics & Integrity unit will provide secretariat support to the Committee. Duties will include administering the Committee process, overseeing minutes of meetings, preparation of advice to researchers following meetings, and management of records.

Quorum

A quorum consists of at least one member from each of Categories A, B, C and D. If more than four AEC members are present Categories C plus D must represent not less than one third of those members present.

Remuneration

Committee members will not be remunerated.