

Terms of Reference Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee

Purpose Statement

The primary responsibility of the Australian National University (ANU) Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee (AEEC) is to ensure, on behalf of the University, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 2013* (NHMRC, CSIRO, UA).

The Committee also ensures that the University operates within the *ACT Animal Welfare Act 1992* and the legislation of other jurisdictions where the ANU is licenced to undertake animal based research. The broad functions of the Committee are to review proposals, emphasise the responsibilities of both investigators and institutions using animals and to ensure compliance of research with animals undertaken at the ANU with relevant legislation.

Terms of Reference

The ANU AEEC's terms of reference conform with the NHMRC's *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition 2013* (the Code), and the *ACT Animal Welfare Act 1992*.

The AEEC Terms of reference include, on behalf of the Institution, the provision to:

- In accordance with the Code, approve and monitor all research and teaching activities undertaken by ANU staff and students that involve the care and use of animals.
- Review applications, procedures, policies and guidelines for activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities and approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable as specified by clauses 2.1.5, 2.3.2, and 2.3.26 of the Code.
- In the process of examining and approving written proposals to use animals for scientific purposes, require modifications to proposals, and place conditions on approvals or reject proposals.
- As per section 2.3.2 of the Code, conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities through post approval monitoring (i.e. through the review of annual reports, inspections, veterinary reports, meetings and other communications), and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code.
- Take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events (UAEs) in line with 2.3.24 of the Code.
- Suspend or withdraw the approval of any project not being undertaken in accordance with the approved protocol and/or the Code.
- Take appropriate action regarding non-compliance as per 2.3.2vi and 2.3.25 of the Code.
- Approve the procedures for authorising the humane euthanasia or emergency treatment of any research animal.
- Inspect and approve facilities where research animals are to be housed including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities. Examine and comment on all institutional plans and policies which may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes. Inspections should include Category C or D members as per 2.3.20.

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- Examine and endorse plans to modify existing animal facilities and construct new facilities to ensure animal welfare requirements have been met as set out in the Code; this includes communicating any concerns to the University. Provide advice and recommend to the University any measures needed to ensure that the requirements of the Code are upheld.

In addition the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee must:

- Maintain a record of proposals, projects and minutes from every formal AEEC meeting.
- Declare any conflicts of interest and manage conflicts of interest in accordance with the Code, AEEC Operating Procedures and University Policies.
- Monitor the University's compliance with meeting reporting obligations as required by the Code and state and territory Governments.
- Report directly to the Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) on all matters affecting research and teaching involving animals at the University. The AEEC directly accountable to the Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation).
- Submit a written report annually on its activities to University Council. The report will be in accordance with clause 2.3.29 of the Code.
- Undertake a review of the operation of the AEC annually with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and the Chair of the Committee as per section 2.1.9 of the Code.
- Undertake all duties and responsibilities as specified in the Code.
- Act in line with its Operating Procedures

In order to meet the requirements of the Code the ANU will arrange an independent external review at least every four years to assess the institution's compliance as per Section 6 of the Code.

Animal Ethics Committee Membership

Membership is determined by the ACT animal welfare legislation and that of any states/territories with ethics agreements in place in addition to chapter 2.2 of the Code. The ANU Research Services Division (RSD), Research Ethics Office in close consultation with the Chair, monitors the membership of the ANU AEEC to ensure it meets the requirements of legislation and the Code at all times.

Mandatory Membership

Chair - Institutions must appoint a chairperson of the AEEC. Institutions should consider appointing a chairperson who holds a senior position in the institution. If the chairperson is an external appointee, institutions must provide the chairperson with the necessary support and authority to carry out the role. The chairperson may be appointed in addition to Category A to D members. Institutions should consider appointing a chairperson who is independent of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

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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 institution'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 institution 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 institution, and who is not currently 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 endorsement by, such an organisation.

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

Other Membership

Animal Care Technician - Institutions should appoint to the AEEC a person responsible for the routine care of animals within the institution.

Special members - Institutions may appoint additional members with skills and background of value to the AEEC

Advisors - non-voting members that can advise the AEEC on specific aspects of animal based research. Advisors may include the ANU Veterinarian and experts in fields such as alternatives to the use of animals and wildlife studies.

In order to ensure compliance with the Code, and ensure an effective quorum the ANU appoints at least two members per mandatory category with at least one third of the membership being Category C & D members at all times. Formal meetings of the AEEC must be quorate in order to proceed, at least one member from each mandatory category must be present. Attendance of members is formally recorded in the official Minutes of each meeting.

Committee Executive

The AEEC may agree to establish an AEEC Committee Executive as per 2.2.23 of the Code. This must include the Chairperson and at least one member from Category C or D. The Committee Executive is approved to review minor amendments that are **not likely to cause harm to animals or change the level of the pain and distress as outlined in the original**

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application. The operation of the Committee Executive is detailed in the ANU AEEC Operating Procedures.

Version	Date	Author	Approved By	Date
1.0	19 August 2016	Research Services Division	DVC-R	27 August 2016
2.0	12 March 2020	Research Services Division	DVC RI	20 March 2020
3.0	31 March 2021	Research Services Division	DVC RI	28 April 2021