

ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

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ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) was established by University Council in 1991. The AEC is an independent committee directly responsible to University Council and provides an annual report to University Council on its activities.

The primary role of the AEC is to ensure, on behalf of ECU, that all care and use of animals is conducted in compliance with the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition (2013)* [the Code of Practice], and any subsequent editions that may come into effect.

The AEC is also required to be compliant with *Animal Welfare Act (2002)* [the Act]. The AEC is responsible for determining that staff and students are experienced and competent in the uses of animals for scientific purposes, and in caring for and handling animals of the kind to be used or supplied.

The primary responsibility of each member of the AEC is to apply a set of principles, outlined in the Code of Practice, that govern the ethical conduct of people whose work involves the use of animals for scientific purposes. The AEC must ensure that the use of animals is justified, provides for the welfare of those animals and incorporates the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The AEC shall examine written proposals relevant to the use of animals for scientific purposes that conform to the requirements of the Code and:
 - approve the proposal;
 - approve the proposal subject to modification; or
 - reject the proposal.
2. Approval shall only be granted for those studies for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the Code of Practice and the Act. This should take into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated scientific and educational value.
3. The AEC shall be responsible for monitoring the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals.
4. The AEC will monitor approved projects to allow continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that conform to the Code.
5. The AEC shall withdraw approval for any project that is determined to no longer comply with the Code of Practice or the Act.
6. Where necessary, the AEC may authorise the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal.
7. The AEC shall maintain a record of proposals and projects. Applications for ethics approval submitted to the AEC are considered confidential and access to records is restricted.
8. The AEC will act when:
 - 8.1. Unexpected adverse events occur; and

- 8.2. Research is no longer compliant with the Code.
9. The AEC may review, develop and/or approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes on behalf of ECU.
 10. The AEC shall be responsible for examining and commenting on all ECU plans and policies which may directly affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes.
 11. The AEC shall recommend to the Academic Board any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code of Practice and/or the Act are maintained.
 12. The AEC shall have oversight of the provision of University policy and procedures relating to animal care, animal welfare, and the use of animals for scientific purposes, including teaching in order to ensure that all persons with responsibility of animal care and welfare are informed.
 13. The AEC is responsible for complying with the reporting requirements of ECU, the Code of Practice and the Act.
 14. The AEC will perform all other duties required by the Code of Practice and/or the Act.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the AEC are appointed by Academic Board. The AEC must have a membership that will allow it to fulfil the Terms of Reference. Membership of the AEC is as outlined in the Code of Practice (AC 2.2.4 (i – iv)).

Membership will comprise the following categories:

1. The Chair, who should be a person holding a senior position in the University. This person is to be named on the ECU Research Services intranet page.
2. At least one person from each of the following Categories, who will remain anonymous:
 - Category A
A person with qualifications in veterinary science and with experience relevant to the activities of the ECU.
 - Category B
A suitably qualified person with substantial recent experience in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities.
 - Category C
A person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, and who is not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution, and who is not involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
 - Category D
A person who is both independent of 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.
3. The person in charge of the routine care of the animals housed at ECU (or appropriate delegate).

Members shall be appointed for a three year term, except where this may lead to all members becoming eligible for reappointment at the same time. In this case, some members may be appointed for a shorter term. All members may be reappointed to serve further terms of office.

Members are required to acknowledge in writing that they will comply with the Code of Practice and the Act, accept the Terms of Reference and the Confidentiality Policy. The identity of AEC members shall remain confidential.

Members are also required to declare to the AEC where any potential conflict of interest may arise. Any member of the AEC who is listed as an investigator or supervisor on an application will be required to be absent during the final discussion of that application and is not able to vote on that application.

The AEC reserves the right to appoint as members, persons with skills and background of value to the AEC, which may be in addition to the members required for Categories A to D. The AEC may also invite people with specific expertise to provide advice as required.

I have read and accept the above Terms of Reference of the Animal Ethics Committee.

Signed:

Version History

Version	Date approved	Approver	Next Review Date
V1	19 April 2018	AEC	October 2019
V2	20 March 2020	AEC	October 2021