Animal Ethics Terms of Reference

_____

1. Definitions

2. Functions and Duties within the Animal Ethics Review Process

3. Composition of the Committee

4. Procedures

5. Reporting

_____

1. **Definitions**

   In this Terms of Reference, unless the contrary intention appears:

   "ToR" means Terms of Reference,
   "RHDC" means Research and Higher Degrees Committee,
   "Code" means the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition (2013; updated 2021),
   "Act" means the WA Animal Welfare Act (2002)
   "AEC" means Animal Ethics Committee,
   "Committee" means AEC,
   "DPIRD" means Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development,
   "RET" means Research Ethics Team.

2. **Functions and Duties within the Animal Ethics Review Process**

   The Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) was established by the University Council in 2006 (previously the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee established in 1991). The AEC is an independent committee that directly reports to Research and Higher Degrees Committee (RHDC).

   The primary role of the AEC is to ensure, on behalf of ECU, 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 8th Edition (2013; updated 2021) [Code], and any subsequent editions that may come into effect.

   The AEC is also required to ensure that research projects and teaching activities involving the use of animals comply with the Animal Welfare Act 2002 (WA) and Animal Welfare (General) Regulations 2003 (WA) which provide for the welfare, safety and health of animals, and regulate the use of animals for scientific and related purposes (collectively referred to as [Act]).

   These functions and duties encompass the following:

   - The primary function of the AEC is to apply a set of principles, outlined in the Code, that govern the ethical conduct of people whose work involves the use of animals for scientific purposes.

   Current as of July 2025

- The AEC shall examine written proposals requesting the use of animals for scientific or educational purposes, with a view to ensuring that they conform to the requirements of the Code.

- Approval shall only be granted for those studies or activities for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the Code and the Act.

- The AEC shall be responsible for oversight and monitoring of activities relating to the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals.

- The AEC will act in accordance with the *AEC Procedure for dealing with complaints concerning the care and use of animals and possible non-compliance*, when it is made aware of:
  - unexpected adverse events; and/or
  - activities that are potentially non-compliant with the Code and the Act.

- The AEC reviews, develops and/or approves guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific or educational purposes on behalf of ECU.

- The AEC shall have input when ECU develops or reviews policies which may directly affect the welfare of animals used for scientific or educational purposes.

- The AEC shall recommend to RHDC any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code and/or the Act are maintained.

- The AEC supports the licence holder to comply with the reporting requirements of ECU, the Code and the Act.

- The AEC will perform all other duties required by the Code and/or the Act.

3. **Composition of the Committee**

The composition of the Committee is as prescribed by the Code and as outlined as per the Animal Ethics Committee Procedures. At least two thirds of the ECU members of the Committee should be level D or E. The Chair must be level E or D. Every effort will be made to apply the principles of Athena Swan accreditation.

4. **Procedures**

Membership of the Committee, the method of appointment and terms of office of members and all other matters necessary to ensure the effective exercise of the functions of the Committee shall be prescribed in Procedures approved by RHDC for that purpose.

5. **Reporting**

The AEC reports to RHDC.

Current as of July 2025