

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE (AEC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Preamble

The University of Wollongong (UoW) has established an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013](#) (the Code) and the NSW Animal Research Act.

These Terms of Reference:

- Describe the purpose, scope and structure of the AEC, and outline roles and responsibilities.
- Have been developed in accordance with the Code (clause 2.2.18) and ensure provision for:
 - The AEC's responsibilities for ethical review, approval and monitoring of animal care and use;
 - The AEC's institutional accountability;
 - The AEC's mechanisms of reporting; and
 - The way in which the AEC meets the requirements for categories of minimum membership.
- Come into effect upon approval by the AEC.
- Are to be reviewed at least every three years from the date of approval.
- Are to be publicly available.
- Must be read in conjunction with the AEC's Operating Procedures.

Throughout this document:

- References to the Code are cited in brackets and indicate the relevant section or clause.
- The term 'research' also refers to teaching and other activities involving animals as defined in the Code where applicable.
- The term 'project' may refer to any activity in which animals are used in research or teaching as defined by the Code and relevant legislation.

Feedback on these Terms of Reference is welcome and will be considered by the AEC as appropriate.

Responsibilities of the AEC

Primary responsibility of the AEC

The primary responsibility of the AEC is to ensure, on behalf of UOW, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes are conducted in compliance with the Code (2.3.1), the *NSW Animal Research Act 1985* and the *NSW Animal Research Regulation (2010)*.

Responsibilities for ethical review and approval

The AEC's responsibilities for ethical review and approval of animal care and use are to:

- Review applications for projects and activities associated with the care and use of animals and approve only those that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code (2.3.2[i], [ii]; 2.3.5). Consideration of what is deemed to be ethically acceptable shall be guided by the ethical framework contained in Section 1 of the Code and requires that:
 - Respect for animals must underpin all decisions;
 - Methods that replace or partially replace the use of animals must be investigated, considered and, where applicable, implemented; and
 - Ethical review must balance whether the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved is justified by the potential benefits.
- Conduct follow-up review of approved projects when scheduled and when circumstances trigger additional review.

The AEC must only conduct ethical review and issue approvals in accordance with the Committee's Operating Procedures.

Responsibilities for monitoring the care and use of animals

- The AEC shall monitor the care and use of animals by inspecting animals, animal housing and the conduct of procedures, and reviewing records and reports (2.3.17).
- Monitoring shall be conducted in accordance with the Committee's Operating Procedures.

Responsibilities in relation to Unexpected Adverse Events

- The Code defines an Unexpected Adverse Event as "an event that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals and was not foreshadowed in the approved project or activity."
- The AEC shall respond to Unexpected Adverse Events in accordance with the Committee's Operating Procedures.
- The Committee's actions must be directed towards ensuring that animal wellbeing is not further compromised.

Responsibilities for approval of guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures

- UoW must develop, implement and promote Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as applicable to promote compliance with the Code in accordance with the Committee's Operating Procedures.
- Guidelines and SOPs must be developed in consultation with and approved by the AEC.
- Guidelines and SOPs must not lessen the rigor applied by the AEC when evaluating procedures involving the care and use of animals.
- Topics covered by Guidelines and SOPs should include those required by the Code as a minimum.
- Development and implementation of Guidelines and SOPs must be in accordance with the Committee's Operating Procedures.

Responsibilities in providing advice and recommendations to the institution

The AEC must provide advice and recommendations to the institution regarding the care and use of animals for scientific purposes conducted on behalf of the institution, and strategies required ensuring that the requirements of the Code are maintained and that matters affecting animal wellbeing are addressed (2.3.27).

The AEC must be consulted during the planning of new facilities or refurbishment or modification of existing facilities for the care and use of animals used for scientific purposes. New, refurbished or modified facilities must be inspected and approved for use by the AEC prior to housing animals to establish that the facility meets the Code's requirements for animal housing (2.1.6[v], 3.2.14, 3.2.17-20) and environmental conditions (3.2.17[i]).

Institutional accountability

For the purpose of these Terms of Reference:

- The Governing body (as defined by the Code) shall be the UoW Council.
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) representing the Vice-Chancellor shall be the person responsible for overall institutional governance with respect to the care and use of animals. This includes providing adequate resources to ensure that the AEC and people involved in the care and use of animals can meet their responsibilities, including monitoring animals and managing adverse impacts on their wellbeing (2.1.5[i]).

AEC membership and procedures

Membership and procedures followed by the AEC must be in accordance with the requirements of the Code and relevant legislation.

The Committee's Operating Procedures shall include provision for the following in relation to membership:

- Details of membership criteria.
- Appointment of the chairperson.

- Procedures for appointment and retirement of members.
- Responsibilities of members.
- AEC Executive.
- AEC Sub-Committee.

The Committee's Operating Procedures shall include provision for the following in relation to the AEC's procedures:

- New applications.
- Amendment of applications.
- Forms.
- Management of complaints and non-compliance relating to the care or use of animals.
- Communication with researchers.
- Complaints about the AEC process.
- Keeping of records of the AEC's business.
- Research involving more than one institution.

Reporting

The AEC Chair and the Research Ethics and Integrity Manager shall meet at least annually with the DVC(R&I) to report on the activities of the AEC.

The AEC Chair may directly notify or meet with the DVC(R&I) on matters relating to the AEC at other times at his or her discretion.

The AEC must submit a written report on its operations at least annually to the Vice-Chancellor through the DVC(R&I) (2.3.28).

The content of the AEC's report to the Vice-Chancellor should be in accordance with the Committee's Operating Procedures.

UoW must ensure that the AEC's reporting obligations to the NSW Department of Primary Industries are met.