

Animal Ethics Committee terms of reference

The primary function of the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is to consider the ethical implications of proposed research and teaching projects involving animals, for which staff and students at Federation University Australia and Federation Training are responsible.

The Committee must ensure ethical standards are maintained in research and teaching projects involving animals, in accordance with relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation and the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*, in particular:

- approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes on behalf of the University
- monitor through the receipt of reports and spot checks, the acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and disposal of animals
- recommend to the University any measures needed to ensure that the standards of this *Code* are maintained
- describe how members are appointed, re-appointed, or retired, according to procedures developed by the University in consultation with the AEC
- require that all members declare any conflict of interest
- deal with situations in which a conflict of interest arises
- examine written proposals relevant to the use of animals for scientific purposes and approve only those projects for which animals are essential, and which conform to the requirements of the *Code*, taking into consideration ethical and welfare aspects as well as scientific or educational value
- approve only those studies for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the *Code*. This should take into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated scientific or educational value
- withdraw approval for any project where concerns arise about the project breaching the *Code* and its ramifications that come within the authority of the committee
- authorise the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal;
- examine and comment on all University plans and policies which may affect animal welfare
- maintain a record of proposals and projects
- comply with the reporting requirements of the University and the *Code*.

In addition, the Committee must:

- ensure that all persons involved in animal care and use are appropriately trained and competent and that they maintain adequate records of animal usage
- promote understanding within the University and the broader community of the ethical issues raised by research, teaching and related academic activities

- report, and provide advice, to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and the Research Committee on ethical matters related to research and teaching involving animals
- inform and work with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and the Research Committee to ensure the adoption of, and compliance with, appropriate codes of practice for the conduct of research involving animals.

Other than as specified in these Terms of Reference or in the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* the Committee may determine its own procedures and establish its own *ad hoc* committees and working parties as necessary.

Membership

The primary responsibility of members is to ensure that the use of animals for research and teaching is ethically justified, provides for the welfare and incorporates the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement based on collective experience and knowledge, and not to represent any particular interest group.

Chairperson

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall appoint a Chairperson of the Committee who holds a suitably senior position in the University.

Category A–D members

In accordance with the minimum requirements for membership of an AEC as specified in the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition 2013*, the University will appoint at least four members, including:

A)	a person with qualifications in veterinary science and with experience relevant to the activities of the institution. Veterinarians who lack this experience must familiarise themselves with the biology and clinical characteristics of the species of animals used
B)	a suitably qualified person with substantial recent experience in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities. This will usually entail possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience
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 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
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. 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.

Observers

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) may appoint other persons as observers, including a member of the University who has responsibility for care of animals.

Deputy chairperson

A deputy chairperson shall be elected by the Committee from its Category A–D members.

Executive

An executive of the committee shall be appointed by the Committee comprising the Chairperson and one member of each of categories C and D to make decisions on minor amendments of approved and provisional projects. These decisions will be ratified at a subsequent Committee meeting. A quorum shall be two members.

Conflict of interest

A member of the Committee who is aware of having a direct or indirect interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in a matter being considered, or about to be considered, at a meeting of the Committee must disclose the nature of the interest at or before the meeting. This disclosure must be recorded in the minutes of the Committee meeting. The member should not normally be present during any deliberation about the matter, except to give information as requested by the Committee, unless the Committee deems the conflict does not warrant a member's exclusion, but instead the member is not permitted to debate or vote on any resolution concerning the conflict.

Indemnity

The University shall indemnify and keep indemnified each member of the Committee against all actions, suits, claims and demands whatsoever (whether arising during or after the term of office of that member) in respect of any act or thing done by that member in good faith in the exercise or purported exercise of any power or duty conferred or imposed upon the Committee or upon any member by the Federation University Australia.

Meetings

The Committee shall meet at least twice each year. For the purposes of a meeting, a quorum will require the presence of at least one member from each of the four categories.

Reporting

The minutes of Committee meetings will be tabled for discussion and/or action at the subsequent meeting of the Research Committee. The Committee will also report relevant matters via the Chairperson to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Membership appointment, re-appointment and renewal

Members are appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) with the approval of the Licensing and Audit, Agriculture and Rural Division Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), for a four-year term with an option for up to two four-year extensions. Members are re-appointed on the Chairperson's recommendation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). Members may retire from the Committee by notifying the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). Vacancies will be advertised, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) will establish a selection panel to advise on suitable appointments whose names are then submitted to DEDJTR for final approval.