ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

1.1 The terms of reference of the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee include those described in the relevant code(s) of practice of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes and must comply with any relevant Act of Parliament or Regulations pertaining thereto.


1.3 In accordance with the above, the Committee is required:

(a) on behalf of the University to provide general oversight of all matters pertaining to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes within the University;

(b) to approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes (including teaching) on behalf of the University

(c) to recommend to the University any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code of Practice are maintained.

(d) to monitor the acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and disposal of animals for scientific purposes within the University;

(e) to examine all proposals for the use of animals for research and teaching within the University and to approve only those that comply with relevant legislation, codes of practice and University regulations. The Committee may withdraw approval for any project or authorise the treatment or humane killing on any animals;

(f) to maintain a register of approved research proposals in accordance with the requirements of the relevant code of practice;

(g) to ensure, through Heads of School and Department, Directors of Centres and Institutes

   (i) that adequate records are kept on the acquisition, breeding, health, care, use and disposal of animals and the condition of animals during experiments;

   (ii) that research staff are appropriately qualified to perform animal experiments and that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements are adhered to;

   (iii) that the use of animals is restricted to those investigations which conform to the relevant code of practice;
(iv) that all animal housing and laboratory areas comply with the standards required by the relevant code of practice;
(h) to comply with the reporting requirements of the University and the relevant Code(s);
(i) to examine and comment on all institutional plans and policies which may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific and teaching purposes.

2 Composition

2.1 The Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee will comprise

(a) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Development) or Nominee—Chair

(b) At least four persons appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Development), after receiving advice from the Committee. More than one member may be appointed from each category. The Committee shall, in making its recommendations, pay due attention to the current requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council –
(i) a veterinarian (or person with qualifications and experience to provide comparable experience) (Australian code of practice, section 2.2.2, Category A).

(ii) a person with substantial recent experience in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities (Australian code of practice, section 2.2.2, Category B).

(iii) a person with demonstrable commitment and experience in furthering the welfare of animals (not involved with the University or involved in care and use of animals for scientific purposes) (Australian code of practice, section 2.2.2, Category C).

(iv) a layperson (Australian code of practice, section 2.2.2, Category D).

(v) a person responsible for the daily care of animals (Australian code of practice, section 2.2.3).
(vi) additional members to ensure the effective functioning of the Committee, if required (Australian code of practice, section 2.2.4).

2.2 If the Committee has more than four members, categories C and D should represent no less than one third of members.

2.3 The Pro Vice Chancellor (R&D) will appoint, from the Committee members, a Deputy Chair who will have authority to act for the Chair in his or her absence.

2.4 Members will normally be appointed for a 3 year term, and may reappointed for a second 3 year term. Further consecutive appointment should only be made where the members expertise or qualifications are considered essential to the functioning of the Committee.
2.5 Members are required to observe any conditions of confidentiality imposed by the Committee or by University policy and practice.

3. Meetings
3.1 Meetings are to be scheduled at least 4 times per year.
3.2 Quorum is 4, with a member of each Category A, Category B, Category C & Category D in attendance. The Chair may act as one of the category members if appropriately qualified. In exceptional circumstances, in order to achieve quorum teleconferencing or similar technology may be used to conduct the meeting.
3.3 Where possible, decisions should be made by a consensus of members; where a consensus cannot be reached the members in attendance will vote, with a majority of members present. In the event of a tied result, the Chair will have a casting vote.
3.4 Members must declare any conflict of interest and absent themselves from the meeting during discussion and voting on any application on which they are named as an Investigator. The member may be recalled to the meeting to answer questions.

4. Executive
4.1 An Executive of the Committee may be formed by the Chair and one each of the Category C and Category D members. Other members may also join the executive if required, and invited to do so by the Chair.
4.2 New applications cannot be approved by the Executive, but other business including ‘minor amendments to applications’ may be considered and approved. It is expected that any decisions made by the Executive will be considered by the full Committee for ratification at the first opportunity.

5. Grievances
5.1 A member of the Committee, staff member or student may discuss any grievance, in confidence, with the Chair of the Committee. If the grievance concerns ‘due process’ and cannot be resolved in discussion with the Chair, it may be referred to the Chair of the University Research Committee. Decisions on ethical matters, for example, applications, are binding and can only be overturned by the Committee itself. However, a researcher may request that the Committee reconsider a decision, and may submit additional material to support their case. This resubmission should be done in consultation with the Chair. The Committee may seek expert advice if required. The Chair should notify the University Research Committee of any dispute, and of its resolution.