

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND
ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Decision-making

The Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is obliged to consider all ethical and welfare aspects, as well as the scientific or educational value of the use of animals for research and teaching purposes, in accordance with the UNE AEC Constitution and associated Governing Provisions, and specifically, in accordance with the Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 2004 (Code). These terms of reference should be read in conjunction with the AEC Constitution. In particular, the AEC must:

- (i) approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes on behalf of the institution;
- (ii) examine all applications for the use of animals, and approve, modify or reject them in accordance with the Guiding Principles;
- (iii) approve only those studies for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the Code, taking into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated scientific or educational value;
- (iv) withdraw approval for any project which no longer complies with the Governing Provisions; or has been seen to be misleading to the AEC;
- (v) maintain a record of proposals and projects;
- (vi) comply with the reporting requirements of the University and the Code;
- (vii) monitor the acquisition, transport, production, housing, care of , use and fate of animals;
- (viii) ensure that any unexpectedly suffering animal is treated or humanely euthanased, and that the matter is reported to the AEC in a timely manner;
- (ix) examine and comment on all plans and policies of the University which may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes;
- (x) determine any measures, develop appropriate policies, make any recommendations or take any proper action needed to ensure that the standards imposed by the Governing Provisions are maintained;
- (xi) require that all members declare any Conflict of Interest and deal with situations in which a conflict of interest arises;
- (xii) perform all other duties imposed on the University by the Australian Code of Practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes; and
- (xiii) consider and report on any matter referred to it by the Vice-Chancellor or the Academic Board.

Reports to

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Chair

Appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Committee, following a selection process. The Chair is appointed in addition to the membership, for a two-year, once renewable term.

Deputy Chair

Appointed from the membership and elected by the AEC. The person must be a UNE employee (i.e. a Category B member). The Deputy Chair will hold office for the term of their appointment to the AEC.

Membership

The Governing Provisions currently stipulate four categories of AEC members:

- (i) three Category A members (persons 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.);
- (ii) three Category B members (persons 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.);
- (iii) three Category C members (persons with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who are not employed by or otherwise associated with the institution, and who are not involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, a person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of, and nomination by, such an organisation; and
- (iv) three Category D members (persons who are both independent of the institution and who have never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond their under-graduate 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).

Additional members may be included outside the above four categories.

Quorum

For a quorate meeting to be achieved, at least one member from each of the Categories A, B, C and D must be present.

Term of Membership

Category A to D members will hold office for a two-year period and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms unless invited by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) to continue as a member for an additional period, in the event that no suitably qualified alternative members can be identified. If a Category A to D member vacates office prior to the conclusion of their term, their replacement will be appointed for a new two-year term.

New members are recommended for appointment in writing to the DVC(R) by the AEC Executive, with the AEC's endorsement. For Category C members, this occurs after appropriate consultation with animal welfare organisations. 2.2.1 code Terms of Reference – must address retirement/resignation how it is done i.e. member advises DVC/AEC in writing.

Obligations of Members

Committee members are obliged to treat AEC business as confidential and to declare any conflict of interest to the Committee. Members are required to complete a Confidentiality Acknowledgement and Conflict of Interest Undertaking prior to their appointment. If members have any questions or concerns about an application they may seek clarification from the researcher, prior to the meeting, after consulting the Chair.

The Committee will deal with situations in which a conflict of interest arises by:

- Requiring members to disclose the nature of their interest and conflict as soon as practicable after they become aware of anything that may be reasonably considered to be a conflict of interest.
- Requiring a member whose objectivity may be influenced by an interest (including consideration of a proposal submitted by that member) to leave the meeting at an appropriate time (certainly during the decision making process).
- Considering and responding to any concern raised by a researcher or teacher that an AEC member has an interest that may have influenced the objectivity of an AEC decision. In this instance, the Chair must advise the complainant, in writing, of the AEC's response. If the complainant is not satisfied with the AEC's response, a grievance may be lodged, in accordance with the UNE AEC Grievance Procedures.

Executive

The AEC delegates certain powers to its Executive (Refer to UNE AEC Powers of Executive) which consists of the Chair, the Secretary and two other members. The members must be selected by the full AEC, so that the Executive includes someone from either Category A or B, and someone from either Category C or D. The Deputy Chair acts as a reserve member for the Chair. The Secretary serves on the Executive, as on the Committee, in a non-voting capacity.

The Executive may not approve new proposals but it may approve minor modifications to existing projects for review at the next AEC meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet once each month.

Self-Review

Once in every twelve-month period, the Committee shall devote at least part of one meeting to a review of its policies, practices and procedures over the preceding 12 months.

Support

Research Services will provide support.