

Terms of Reference

Adelaide University Animal Ethics Committee

Establishment

By what authority: Adelaide University Research Committee

For what period: Indefinite

Terms of Reference

Nature: Regulatory, decision making and advisory

Introduction: The University has established Animal Ethics Committees (AECs). The AEC is responsible for reviewing and overseeing research projects and other activities involving the care and use of animals, and for approving only those that are ethically acceptable and compliant with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition, 2013 (updated 2021)* (the Code), and relevant legislation. The AEC is also responsible for promoting the responsibilities of researchers to undertake ethical research in compliance with the Code and applicable legislation.

The AECs are established in accordance with the provisions of the *South Australian Animal Welfare Act 1985* (the Act) (as may be amended from time to time) and the Code and that of any states/territories where the University is licensed to undertake animal-based research.

Adelaide University is licensed under the Act to acquire and use animals for the purposes of teaching, research and/or experimentation when approval has been granted by its AEC or an AEC approved by the University.

All members of the Adelaide University Community who wish to use animals for teaching, research or experimentation must obtain ethical approval in accordance with the requirements of the Code, prior to any use or involvement with animals and prior to commencing

the research. No animal may be held or used for scientific purposes in the University until written approval has been obtained from the AEC. The AEC must ensure that all animal care and use is conducted in compliance with the Code, the approved protocol, and that it incorporates the principles of the three R's - Replacement, Reduction and Refinement at all stages of animal care and use.

In compliance with the Code, the University prohibits animal use for cosmetic testing. The University also prohibits the use of the forced swim test.

AEC approval is one aspect of the University's governance processes. Researchers must satisfy all other institutional and external compliance and research governance requirements prior to commencing research.

Responsibilities:

The responsibilities of the University AECs are prescribed by the Act. In accordance with these requirements, the AEC:

1. review applications for all proposed research and teaching activities and approve only those activities that conform to the requirements of the Code
2. reviews applications for activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities, including procedures applicable to breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line, and approves only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code
3. monitors all research and teaching activities that involve the care and use of animals.
 - a. The AEC monitors approved research projects through a range of mechanisms, including, without limitation, regular review of progress and final reports, scheduled and random facility inspections, and review of unexpected adverse event notifications. These activities are conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with the Code and the ethical standards approved by the Committee.
 - b. Monitoring may also involve site visits, and consultation with investigators and animal care staff. All monitoring activities are documented and reviewed by the AEC.
4. supports and promotes the education, training and competency of all personnel involved in the care and use of animals for teaching and scientific purposes.
5. takes appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events, non-compliance, or other matters involving the care and use of animals.

6. maintains a record of all proposed and approved research projects, ensuring confidentiality and data security, and archives in accordance with University procedures, as well as maintaining appropriate minutes in accordance with relevant regulatory requirements.
7. approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the institution
8. provides advice to the institution on any matters that relate to or may affect the welfare of animals used for research and teaching.
9. undertakes all duties and responsibilities as specified by the Code.

The Committee will reach decisions by consensus, as required by the Code (2.3.11). If consensus cannot be reached, the Chair will determine the steps to be taken, which may include further discussion, seeking additional information, or deferring the decision.

The AEC may delegate specific administrative functions to an Executive of the AEC, in accordance with the Code and approved operating procedures.

Reporting line:

The Committee reports to and is accountable to the Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research and Innovation (DVCRI) and the Adelaide University Research Committee (RC).

The Chair has a dotted line to the Pro Vice Chancellor Research Performance (PVC RP). The Chair will meet with the Pro Vice Chancellor annually, as a minimum, as a function of the Research Compliance Committee (RCC).

Annual reporting is a requirement to the Minister as specified in the Act, to other regulatory bodies, and to the University as specified in the Code.

Quorum:

The quorum of the Committee is prescribed in accordance with both the Act and the Code. A quorum for a meeting is at least one person from each of the specified categories and where Categories C plus D must represent no less than one third of the members.

Quorum must be maintained for all deliberations and decisions. If the exclusion of members due to conflicts of interest results in quorum not being met, consideration of the matter must be deferred until quorum can be achieved.

Conflict of Interest:

Each member, external expert or any other person consulted by the Committee must declare any conflicts or affiliations as they arise, to ensure appropriate management. Members with a conflict will be excluded from deliberation and decision-making on the relevant

proposal, as determined by the Chair. Quorum must be maintained in accordance with the requirements set out in the Quorum section.

Where a member is involved in a research project submitted to the Committee, then that member shall not take part in the assessment of that research project but may provide information about a research project in which they are involved to the Committee on request from the Chair.

Operating procedures prescribed/determined itself:

The AEC conducts its business in accordance with this Terms of Reference and any Standard Operating Procedures, and consistent with the requirements of the Act.

Frequency of meetings:

The AEC meets regularly as stated on the website or as determined by the Chair.

Meetings may be held either face-to-face, online, or in hybrid format, as appropriate to support participation and operational needs.

Sub-committees:

Sub-committees may be established with the approval of the DVCRI or at the direction of the RC.

Recognition of Prior Approvals and Ongoing Monitoring of Research Projects:

Adelaide University AECs recognise ethics approvals granted by the AECs of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia prior to the disestablishment of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia (**Prior Ethics Approvals**). Research projects subject to a Prior Ethics Approval will, in general, not require re-review by an Adelaide University AEC, provided there are no substantive changes to the approved protocols.

Each Prior Ethics Approval will be deemed to be an ethics approval made by an Adelaide University AEC. The responsibilities under these Terms of Reference apply to each previously approved research project as if an Adelaide University AEC had granted the approval. The Adelaide University AECs have authority to suspend or revoke a Prior Ethics Approval as if an Adelaide University AEC had granted the approval.

Membership

Size and Membership:

The composition of the Committee is prescribed in accordance with both the Act and the Code. Each AEC must consist of at least five members, including at least one member from each of the categories defined in the Act.

In accordance with the Code, members from Categories C

and D must together represent at least one third of the AEC membership.

The Committee may invite or co-opt any person with requisite expertise to attend, to participate in, or to both attend and participate in any of its meetings. Such persons shall not be eligible to vote. The Committee may also call upon experts for specialist advice, as determined by the Chair.

External volunteer members of the Committees are entitled to an honorarium for each meeting attended. The honorarium is offered in recognition of the time given by volunteer members in attending meetings and for possible out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of attending meetings.

Appointment and Term of Office:

Members are appointed for a maximum initial period of three years. Subsequent reappointment will occur subject to committee requirements. Members are nominated through the Chair and are appointed by the DVCRI. Nominations are made to fill vacancies as required.

In circumstances where membership requires review, including where it may require conclusion before the end of the appointed term, the DVCRI will determine the action (if any) in relation to the membership. The DVCRI may consider any information they determine as relevant, including recommendations from the Chair. The decision, including whether to withdraw or conclude membership, rests with, and is at the discretion of, the DVCRI.

Details regarding lapses, termination, resignation, or extended leave from the Committee are outlined in the Care and Use of Animals in Research and Teaching Procedure. This includes expectations for attendance, training, conduct, and notice periods.

The Deputy Chair is nominated through the AEC Chair and is appointed by the DVCRI.

The Chair is appointed by the DVCRI on the recommendation of the PVCRRP.

Training:

As per the Code, all members are required to undertake any induction and required training.

Proxies:

If a member is unable to attend, the meeting must still meet the minimum quorum requirements with appointed members, not substitutes. To support a quorum, an alternate may be drawn from the pool of appointed members. This is a separate arrangement and not considered a proxy.

<i>Administration:</i>	Research Compliance, Ethics, and Integrity
	The Animal Ethics Officers provide administrative and project lifecycle support to the AECs, act as the first point of contact for enquiries related to animal research, and communicate on behalf of the AECs with applicants, regulatory bodies, institutional management, and other stakeholders.
Contact person and phone/email	
CM REF	
Review of Terms of Reference	These Terms of Reference will be reviewed after the first 12 months of Adelaide University's operation.