

Animal Care and Ethics Committee - Membership and Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

(1) The Animal Care and Ethics Committee is established in accordance with the provisions of the [Animal Research Act 1985 No 123](#) (the Act), [Animal Research Regulation 2010](#) (the Regulation) and the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013).

Purpose

(2) The Animal Care and Ethics Committee is established to ensure the respectful use of animals in teaching and research and to ensure compliance with the relevant legislative instruments.

Section 2 - Glossary

(3) For the purpose of this document:

- a. Committee - means Animal Care and Ethics Committee;
- b. Presiding Officer- means the Presiding Officer of The Animal Care and Ethics Committee;
- c. Deputy Presiding Officer- means the Deputy Presiding Officer of The Animal Care and Ethics Committee;
- d. the University- means Charles Sturt University;
- e. the Code- means the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013).

Section 3 - Membership

Composition

(4) The membership of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee (the Committee) shall be:

- a. Presiding Officer; as nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry);
- b. Deputy Presiding Officer; as nominated by the Committee;
- c. three members from Category A;
- d. three members from Category B;
- e. three members from Category C; and
- f. three members from Category D.

Category A

(5) 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.

Category B

(6) 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.

Category C

(7) 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.

Category D

(8) 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 Committee, and must not fit the requirements of any other Category.

Term of Office

(9) The term of appointment for members of the Committee shall be two years.

(10) Members are appointed by invitation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry) of Charles Sturt University (the University) following consultation with the Presiding Officer and their appointment approved by the Animal Research Review Panel.

(11) The two-year term of the office of the Committee members shall end on 30 June of the relevant year.

(12) Re-appointment is by invitation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry) and approval by the Animal Research Review Panel.

Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer

(13) The Presiding Officer shall hold a senior position in the University and be an additional appointment to Category A to D members.

(14) The Presiding Officer shall be appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry) of the University for a term of no more than three years.

(15) The Presiding Officer shall have an understanding of the ethical and animal welfare issues involved in the use of animals for scientific purposes. It is desirable that the Presiding Officer shall also have a background in research.

(16) The Deputy Presiding Officer shall be elected by the Committee at its first meeting of the new term of office.

(17) The Deputy Presiding Officer will act in the role of Presiding Officer in the Presiding Officer absence as required

Executive of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee

(18) The Committee shall appoint an Executive which shall comprise the Presiding Officer, one Category A member, one Category C member and one Category D member.

(19) The Executive of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee shall be appointed by the Committee at its first meeting of the new term of office.

Right of Audience and Debate

(20) The following position holders shall have right of audience and debate at meetings of the Committee:

- a. Faculty Technical Manager, Faculty of Science;
- b. Manager, Preclinical Centre, School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences; and
- c. Animal Welfare Officer, Ethics and Compliance Unit

Section 4 - Functions and Responsibilities

(21) The Committee is responsible for ensuring that all activities relating to the care and use of animals for teaching and research at Charles Sturt University or involving Charles Sturt University staff or students are conducted in compliance with the legislation and the Code.

(22) The Committee shall:

- a. provide oversight of activities relating to the care and use of animals, as specified by the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013) (the Code) and any other required statutory instrument, and advise the University on identified compliance issues;
- b. recommend for approval and implementation by the relevant University delegate guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes by researchers and teachers in the University;
- c. monitor the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals;
- d. recommend to the University any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code are maintained;
- e. require that all members declare any conflict of interest;
- f. examine, review and approve, request amendments to, or reject written proposals relevant to the use of animals for scientific purposes;
- g. 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;
- h. investigate any matters pertaining to non-compliance including complaints submitted to the Committee;
- i. suspend or withdraw approval for any project found to be non-compliant;
- j. recommend further investigation or action to be undertaken with respect to disciplinary action relating to non-compliance;
- k. authorise an appropriate plan of action for the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal;
- l. examine and comment on all institutional plans and policies that may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes;
- m. maintain a record of proposals and projects;
- n. maintain minutes that record decisions and other aspects of the Committee's operation;
- o. comply with the reporting requirements of the University and the Code as follows:
 - i. submit a written report on its activities at least annually to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of the University Council through the Faculty Manager, Faculty Officer, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry); and
 - ii. submit a written report at least quarterly on issues relevant to compliance in the area of animal care and ethical use for scientific purposes to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of the University Council through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry);
- p. deal with instances of non-compliance with the Code to ensure that the processes are fair and effective, and that there is appropriate reporting to the University;

- q. refer irreconcilable differences between the Committee and an investigator or teacher to the University Council for review of the due process. The ultimate decision of the Committee after such review must not be overridden; and
- r. perform all other duties imposed by the [Animal Research Act 1985 No 123](#) or the [Animal Research Regulation 2010](#), including the Code prescribed under the Regulation.

Presiding Officer

(23) The Presiding Officer shall:

- a. guide the operations of the Committee with impartiality;
- b. ensure that the Committee operates in accordance with the principles and requirements of the Code, the relevant policies of the University and the agreed Committee procedures;
- c. ensure that proposals are considered by the Committee and the outcomes conveyed to investigators and teachers in a timely manner;
- d. advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry) regarding the level of resourcing required by the Committee;
- e. represent the Committee in any negotiations with management;
- f. oversee all requirements of the Committee to report and reviews its operation, as outlined in the Code;
- g. ensure that Committee records are maintained and made available for review by the University and authorised external reviewers; and
- h. comply with the reporting requirements of the University and the Code as follows:
 - i. meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry) annually to report on the operations of the Committee and raise any issues.

Deputy Presiding Officer

(24) The Deputy Presiding Officer shall preside at meetings from which the Presiding Officer is absent.

Executive of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee

(25) The Executive of the Committee may approve minor modifications to projects for review at the next Committee meeting.

(26) The Executive of the Committee may not approve new proposals.

(27) Members of the Committee shall:

- a. read applications, reports and documentation provided in the meeting agendas;
- b. attend scheduled meetings to deliberate on the ethical acceptability of agenda items for approval;
- c. engage in informed and thorough discussion of ethics implications;
- d. provide brief responses as required to minuted items between meetings; and
- e. complete regular training.

Administrative support

(28) The Ethics and Compliance Unit will provide administrative support to the Committee.

(29) A Governance Officer will be appointed to support the Committee in the administration of its business, including the following responsibilities:

- a. being the first point of contact for applicants wishing to make application or liaise with the Committee;
- b. ensuring that proposals are considered by the Committee and that the decisions of the Committee are conveyed to investigators and teachers in a timely manner;
- c. ensuring that Committee records are maintained and made available for review by the University and authorised external reviewers;
- d. ensuring that the University submits the appropriate licence applications, renewals and reports as required; and
- e. where requested by the Committee, arranging inspections for Committee members of the facilities that house and use animals for scientific purposes at least annually, or prior to use in the case of any proposed new facility

Section 5 - Meetings

Quorum

(30) The Committee shall require the presence of at least one member from Categories A-D to establish a quorum. If more than four members are present, Categories C plus D should constitute not less than one third of the members present.

(31) A quorum may be established through teleconference or video links.

(32) Only a quorate meeting of the Committee shall consider and approve new applications or consider the renewal of existing projects.

Meetings

(33) Committee meetings will be scheduled on the second Thursday of each month except January, when no meeting will be held.

(34) At least one meeting will be scheduled face to face annually.

(35) A schedule of meeting dates and agenda closing dates is posted on the [Animal Care and Ethics Committee website](#) by the beginning of the academic year.

Agendas and Minutes

(36) The agenda should be circulated to all members at least seven days prior to the scheduled meetings

(37) The minutes of the committee meeting are circulated to members following meetings in a timely manner.

Related Expenses

(38) External members may claim a meeting allowance in accordance with the [Compliance Committee Policy - External Members Allowance](#).

Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

(39) Matter which are discussed and papers which are considered during a committee meeting are confidential to all Committee members and those with the Right of Audience and Debate.

(40) Specific papers considered during a meeting and records of specific meeting discussions may be shared by the Presiding Officer with authorised Officers of the University who can demonstrate a need to access the relevant information for the performance of their duties with the written permission of the Presiding Officer.

(41) Members must declare any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest, as described in the University

Conflict of Interest Procedure, at the start of the meeting.

(42) For Committee decision making, members with a conflict of interest must withdraw from the meeting on matters that relate to that conflict of interest. Once such members have withdrawn the remaining members must constitute a quorum.

Variations

(43) Variations to the terms of reference and/or membership of the Committee must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Industry).

Status and Details

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