

'Animal Care and Ethics Committee' - Membership and Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

Background

(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 \(2013\)](#).

(2) The Animal Care and Ethics Committee (the Committee) reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of the University Council.

Purpose

(3) 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

(4) For the purpose of this document:

- a. Committee - means the 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

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

- a. Presiding Officer, as nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research);
- 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

(6) A person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, and with experience relevant to the institution's activities or the ability to acquire knowledge.

Category B

(7) A suitably qualified person with substantial recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the institution and the business of the Committee. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience.

(8) If the business of the Committee relates to the use of animals for teaching only, a teacher with substantial and recent experience may be appointed.

Category C

(9) 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.

(10) 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

(11) A person not employed by or otherwise associated with 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.

(12) 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

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

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

Appointment of Members

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

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

Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer

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

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

(19) 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.

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

(21) The Deputy Presiding Officer will act in the role of Presiding Officer in the absence of the Presiding Officer.

Executive of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee

(22) 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.

(23) 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

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

- a. Faculty Technical Manager, Faculty of Science; and
- b. Animal Welfare Officer, Research Integrity, Ethics and Compliance Unit

Section 4 - Functions and Responsibilities

(25) 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 relevant legislation and the Code.

(26) The Committee is responsible to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) reports to the Vice-Chancellor who has overall institutional responsibility for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes at the University.

(27) The Committee is required to report annually to the NSW Department of Primary Industries on research involving animals for the previous calendar year. The Presiding Officer is required to sign parts B and C of this report (Form L).

(28) The University is required to meet with the Presiding Officer of the Committee annually.

(29) The Committee is required to report annually to government departments in other jurisdictions where this is a requirement for the maintenance of licensing for scientific animal use within that jurisdiction.

(30) The Committee shall:

- a. ensure, on behalf of the institution for which it acts, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code;
- b. provide advice and recommendations to the institution;
- c. 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;
- d. monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals on a regular and ongoing basis to assess compliance with the [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition \(2013\)](#) and decisions of the ACEC;
- e. recommend to the University any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the code are maintained;

- f. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events;
- g. require that all members declare any conflict of interest;
- h. examine, review, request amendments to, approve or reject written proposals relevant to the use of animals for scientific purposes;
- i. approve only those studies that are ethically acceptable and which conform to the requirements of the Code. This includes procedures applicable to breeding programs integral to the maintenance of an animal line. This should take into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated scientific or educational value;
- j. conduct follow-up reviews of approved projects and activities and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
- k. take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance;
- l. investigate any matters pertaining to non-compliance including complaints submitted to the Committee;
- m. promptly suspend or withdraw approval for any project found to be non-compliant;
- n. ensure that activities that have the potential to adversely affect animal wellbeing cease immediately;
- o. ensure that animal wellbeing is not compromised;
- p. consult with the person/s involved to address any issues;
- q. recommend to the University any investigation or action to be undertaken with respect to disciplinary action relating to non-compliance;
- r. authorise the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animals;
- s. examine and comment on all University plans or policies that may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes;
- t. maintain a record of proposals and projects;
- u. maintain minutes that record decisions and other aspects of the Committee's operation;
- v. deal with instances of non-compliance with relevant legislation or the Code to ensure that the processes are fair and effective, and that there is appropriate reporting to the University;
- w. refer irreconcilable differences between the Committee and an investigator or teacher to the relevant internal University process; and
- x. perform all other duties imposed by the Act or the Regulations, including the Code prescribed under the Regulation.

(31) The Committee is required to report to the University annually on its activities and comply with the reporting requirements of the University and the Code as follows:

- a. submit a written report on its activities at least annually to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of the University Council via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Vice-Chancellor, including details about:
 - i. the numbers and type of projects submitted for review, and approved or rejected;
 - ii. the University's facilities provided for the housing, care and use of animals;
 - iii. training and education for the Committee and others involved in the care and use of animals;
 - iv. administrative and other difficulties encountered; and
 - v. matters which may affect the University's ability to comply with the Code, and suitable recommendations for mitigation where appropriate.
- b. 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 via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Vice-Chancellor.

Member Responsibilities

(32) Members of the Committee shall:

- a. read applications, reports and documentation provided in 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.

Presiding Officer

(33) 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) 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 review 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) annually to report on the operations of the Committee and raise any issues.

Deputy Presiding Officer

(34) The Deputy Presiding Officer will act in the role of Presiding Officer in the absence of the Presiding Officer.

Executive of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee

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

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

Governance and Administrative Support

(37) The Research Integrity, Ethics and Compliance Unit will provide administrative and secretariat support to the Committee, and can be called upon for protocol and procedural advice.

(38) 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 provided to the Committee for consideration;
- c. ensuring that the decisions of the Committee are conveyed to investigators and teachers in a timely manner;

- d. ensuring that Committee records are maintained and made available for review by the University and authorised external reviewers;
- e. ensuring that the University submits the appropriate licence applications, renewals and reports as required; and
- f. where requested by the Committee, assist with arranging audits and 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.

(39) Decisions about allocation of Committee tasks to the Governance Officer/s is the responsibility of the Manager, Research Integrity, Ethics and Compliance, who may seek advice from the Presiding Officer.

(40) Governance Officer/s who attend Committee meetings have the right of audience and debate, particularly in relation to providing advice on procedural matters and corporate knowledge.

Section 5 - Meetings

Quorum

(41) 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.

(42) A quorum may be established through telephone or video conference links.

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

Meetings

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

(45) At least one meeting each year will be scheduled face to face.

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

(47) In exceptional circumstances, the schedule of meetings may be altered by the Presiding Officer, in consultation with the Governance Officer.

(48) Applications are allocated to an agenda based on their submission date and agenda closing dates.

(49) If required, the Governance Officer of the Committee may, on behalf of the Presiding Officer, convene an extraordinary meeting of the Committee to review urgent Committee business.

Agendas and Minutes

(50) The agenda should be circulated to all members at least one week prior to the scheduled meetings

(51) The minutes of the committee meeting are circulated to members within two weeks the following meeting.

Related Expenses

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

Conflicts of Interest

(53) Where a member has a perceived or material conflict of interest as described in the University's [Conflict of Interest Procedure](#), they must declare this to the Presiding Officer and at the Committee meeting prior to discussion to the item of business.

(54) The Presiding Officer will determine if members with a conflict of interest will remain present for the discussion of the item but not participate in a decision, or if the member must withdraw from the meeting for the discussion of matters that relate to that conflict of interest. Once such members have withdrawn, the remaining members must still constitute a quorum.

Confidentiality

(55) Matters 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.

(56) Specific papers considered during a meeting and records of specific meeting discussions may be shared by the Presiding Officer, or by the Governance Officer with the permission of 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.

Variations

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

Status and Details

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