



## SCU Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) Terms of Reference

### Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) role and scope of responsibility for ethical review

Southern Cross University has established an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) responsible for reviewing the ethical acceptability of research involving animals, and ensuring compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements and University policies.

All animal research projects conducted on behalf of the institution, by affiliated or non-affiliated researchers, require approval from the University's AEC before the research can commence.

The AEC, when considering animal research proposals conducted in a jurisdiction outside of Australia, will accept approvals granted by a local AEC or its equivalent if satisfied the outcomes would be equivalent to those expected through application of the Code, and that it is adequately monitored. It is the researcher's responsibility to assure that Research is done in a way equivalent to the minimum standard set by the Code or higher to comply with jurisdiction outside of Australia.

The AEC is a Committee of the Vice Chancellor, and comes directly under the auspices of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The principal point of reference for the AEC is the *Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW)*<sup>1</sup> and regulations<sup>2</sup>, and the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* 8<sup>th</sup> edition 2013<sup>3</sup>, further referred to as "the Code".

The AEC shall perform all responsibilities as outlined in the Code clause 2.3, which includes, but is not limited to:

- The review of all applications and of activities associated with the use, care and management of animals in facilities, and approval of only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
  - An executive function exists, as per the code, clause 2.2.23, for the approval of minor amendments to approved projects, for ratification at meetings
- The follow-up review of approved projects and activities and the monitoring of care and use of animals
- The taking of actions regarding unexpected adverse events and non-compliance
- The approval of guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the institution and provision of advice and recommendations to the institution
- The reporting on its operations to the institution.

### Mechanisms of reporting

Researchers are required to submit reports in accordance with the Code, Clause 2.4.30 – 2.4.34

- Annually, in line with institutional reporting to government bodies
- Upon completion of a project

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.animaethics.org.au/legislation/animal-research-act;>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.animaethics.org.au/legislation/animal-research-regulation>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.animaethics.org.au/code-of-practice>

- If adverse events occur
- If changes to the original research proposal occur
- Monitoring reports and any other reports as requested by AEC upon approval

AEC submits Annual Reports to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) QLD, Animal Welfare Victoria and the NSW Department of Primary Industries as well as annual reports to SCU as outlined in the Code, clause 2.3.29.

### **Institutional accountability**

The Vice Chancellor has full responsibility for all research conducted under the institution. The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor(S-DVC) and the Director, Office of Research oversee compliance of the AEC. The Ethics Manager administers all processes relating to Animal Ethics and together with the Chair of the AEC executes the institutional responsibilities as outlined in the Code, Clause 2.1. They report to the Director, Office of Research and the S-DVC and advise them in matters involving higher risk as well as complaints and adverse events that cannot be resolved at their level.

### **Membership and Quorum**

AEC membership underlies the guidelines outlined in the Code, Clause 2.2.4. Membership is for a three year term and the quorum for a meeting of the Committee must include at least one member from each Category A, B, C and D. Categories C and D together must represent at least one- third of those members present.

### **Frequency of meetings**

The Committee schedules eight (8) meetings throughout a calendar year and will hold a minimum of four meetings per year.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.animaethics.org.au/code-of-practice>