THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEES


1. **Membership**

1.1. The Committee must comprise at least four persons, including a separate person appointed to each of the following categories in accordance with the requirements of the Code:

i. **Category A**: a person with qualifications in veterinary science that are recognised for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia and with experience relevant to the activities of the University. Veterinarians who lack this experience must familiarise themselves with the biology and clinical characteristics of the species of animals used;

ii. **Category B**: a suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience;

iii. **Category C**: 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 University, and who is not currently 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; and

iv. **Category D**: a person not employed by or otherwise associated with the University 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 AEC, and must not fit the requirements of any other category.

1.2. In addition to the prescribed membership Categories A to D, a person responsible for the routine care of animals from within the University shall be invited to meetings of the Committee.

1.3. To assist the Committee to function effectively, the University may appoint as members, people with skills and background of value to the Committee. These members may be additional to the members required by Categories A to D.

1.4. If the Committee has more than four members, Categories C and D together must represent at least one-third of the AEC membership.

1.5. The Animal Welfare Officer shall be invited to meetings of the Committee.
1.6 Category B members are nominated by the Nominated Person of the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence.

1.7 Appointments are made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or nominee and are effective for the period of 1 January to 31 December in any given year. Vacancies are filled on a casual basis for the remainder of a position’s normal period of appointment to 31 December in any given year. Members are eligible for re-appointment on an annual basis at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or nominee.

1.8 Membership must be reported to and endorsed by The University of Melbourne Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee.

1.9 Members are required to acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the terms of reference of the AEC and any requirements for confidentiality.

1.10 Members must declare any conflicts of interest before any business pertaining to a particular interest is considered by the Committee. The affected member(s) must absent themselves from any decision pertaining to their particular conflict of interest and, albeit at the Committee’s discretion, shall ordinarily not be present at a meeting when any such decision is determined.

2. Chairperson

2.1 A Chairperson is appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Chairperson may be an additional appointment to Category A to D members.

3. Functions and responsibilities

3.1 To report to The University of Melbourne Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee (AWEC), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and regulatory authorities as required.

3.2 To determine, based on information provided in the Animal Ethics Committee application form, that the day-to-day care and management of all animals used for scientific purposes in the scientific procedures premises is according to the standards of the Code, the Act and Regulations, and any additional procedures approved by the AWEC. This shall include the monitoring of acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals.

3.3 To examine and approve, approve subject to modification, or not approve written proposals relevant to the use of animals for scientific purposes. This means approving only those studies for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the Code and the Act and Regulations. The committee may withdraw approval for any project or authorise the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal within its sphere of authority.

3.4 To discuss and make recommendations to the AWEC on any aspect needed to ensure that the standards of the Code and the Act and Regulations are maintained. This includes examination and comment on all University plans and policies, within its sphere of authority, which may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes.

3.5 To determine, based on information provided in the Animal Ethics Committee application form, that the research and teaching personnel are appropriately qualified
to perform animal experiments and that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, are adhered to.

3.6 To ensure that a record of proposals and projects is maintained and available for review by regulatory authorities.

3.7 To require accurate daily records of all animals used for scientific purposes held in the faculty/department(s), including any instructions for special care that may be necessary, are maintained.

4. **Method of operation**

4.1 Committees shall meet at least quarterly.

4.2 Minutes shall be maintained by the Office for Research Ethics and Integrity and provided to the AWEC, as required.

4.3 The Committee is required to provide a written report to the AWEC on its activities at least annually in accordance with the Code.

4.4 The Committee may establish an Executive that must include one member from Category C or D.

4.5 The Executive may approve minor modifications to projects and deal with emergencies. The Executive may not approve new proposals. Any decisions taken by the Executive must be reviewed by the Committee at its next meeting.

4.6 The AWEC expects that day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that high standards of animal care are maintained will rest with the Nominated Person of the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence(s). A report on the animal facilities should be made to each meeting of the Committee and the animal facilities should be available for inspection by the Committee at the time of each meeting. A formal inspection by the Committee of all animal facilities and laboratory areas from within the relevant Scientific Procedures Premises Licence(s) must be conducted at least once a year.

4.7 All members must have ready access to the faculty/department(s) animal facilities at any reasonable time during the year and to experiments performed within the relevant department. Such access must be arranged through the Chairperson of the Committee or nominee.