

## Terms of Reference

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# University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (USQ AEC)

Trim Location	12/G/6-3
Responsible Officer	Manager, Research Integrity & Ethics
Approval Date	1 July 2020
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)

### 1 Role

The University is a registered user of animals for scientific purposes. It is therefore obliged to comply with the requirements of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Qld) (the "Act") and the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2013 (the "Code").

In accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Code, the University has established the University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (USQ AEC), which is tasked with ensuring that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

### 2 Function

The USQ AEC, in accordance with the Code, must:

1. review applications for projects and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
2. review 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 approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
3. conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities (see Code Clause 2.2.32 [ii]), and allow the continuation of approval for only those

projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;

4. monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities;
5. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events;
6. take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance;
7. in consultation with the University, develop and approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the institution;
8. provide advice and recommendations to the institution as required;
9. report to the University and other regulatory bodies as required;

### **3 Authority**

The Vice-Chancellor, as the authorised officer of the University of Southern Queensland, delegates to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) the responsibility to meet institutional responsibilities outlined with the Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2013.

This includes, but not limited to;

1. ensuring the USQ AEC membership will allow the committee to meet its responsibilities;
2. ensuring the USQ AEC has terms of reference that are publicly available;
3. providing the USQ AEC with the resources required to carry out its responsibilities and to maintain the USQ AEC; and
4. establishing procedures for the effective governance and operation of the USQ AEC that enable the USQ AEC to comply with the Code and relevant University of Southern Queensland policies and procedures, and promote competent and timely ethical review of animal care and use.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will endeavour to meet with USQ AEC Chair on an annual basis to discuss matters such as the annual report from the USQ AEC to the University of Southern Queensland and any other issue which may impact on the compliance with the Code.

### **4 Membership**

The minimum members of the University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (USQ AEC) is defined by the Code and must consist of the following categories of membership:

- **Chairperson** – can be an external appointee or a person who holds a senior position in the institution. The Chairperson may be appointed in

addition to Category A to D Members. Where possible the Chairperson should be independent of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

- **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 institution’s activities or the ability to acquire relevant knowledge.
- **Category B** – a suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the institution and the business of the AEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience. If the business of the AEC relates to the use of animals for teaching only, a teacher with substantial and recent experience may be appointed.
- **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 institution, 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 endorsement by, such an organisation.
- **Category D** – 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. 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.

Full definitions and criteria for these categories is detailed within the Code. Additional members with specific expertise may be appointed to assist the USQ AEC to function effectively.

Initial appointment to the USQ AEC will be a period of up to three (3) years, with an initial three (3) month probationary period.

#### **4.1 Responsibilities of Committee Members**

Each member is responsible for deciding whether, in their judgement, an application or other matter under consideration by the USQ AEC is ethically acceptable and meets the requirements of the Code.

To fulfil this responsibility, members should:

- be familiar with the Code and other policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to the business of the USQ AEC
- provide opinions with the ethical acceptability of application and other matters under consideration by the USQ AEC

During their appointment to the USQ AEC, and before any deliberations of the USQ AEC, members must declare any interest that could influence the objectivity of their decision making.

Members must maintain confidentiality regarding the content of applications and the deliberations of the USQ AEC, in accordance with the University requirements.

#### **4.2 USQ Animal Ethics Committee Executive**

The USQ AEC has established a USQ Animal Ethics Committee Executive (USQ AEC Executive).

The USQ AEC Executive includes the following member categories:

- Chairperson or USQ AEC endorsed nominee;
- Category A; and
- at least one member from Category C or D.

The USQ AEC Executive may approve minor amendments to approved projects or activities for ratification at the next USQ AEC meeting. The USQ AEC Executive is not permitted to approve new applications, new procedures or major amendments.

### **5 Meetings, Reporting and Minutes**

**Frequency of Meetings:** The USQ Animal Ethics Committee meets at specific dates and times as outlined in the University Meeting Schedule.

**Reports To:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

**Minutes:** USQ AEC meetings are recorded through minutes, and Post Meeting Action (PMA) sheets.

A USQ AEC meeting shall be quorate with the presence of at least one member from each Categories A, B, C and D; and where the Category C and D members represent at least one-third of members present.

### **6 Reporting**

An annual report will be submitted to the Council through the Research Committee and Academic Board. The annual report will contain information as described in the Code.

The USQ AEC reports to external regulatory bodies as required.

### **7 Secretary**

The USQ AEC is serviced by the Ethics team in the Office of Research.

## **8 Review of Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the USQ AEC.

## Modification History

Date	Source	Details
<b>03.09.2013</b>	VCC	Revised Terms of Reference and Membership
<b>20.04.2014</b>	DVC(R&I)	Removal of member names from the public document Expanded on AEC Executive role Removed section references to the previous edition of the Code
<b>15.10.2014</b>	Mgr (RI&E)	Addition of responsibilities 7,8 & 9 to provide clarification relating to the Code Added requirements of the annual reporting requirements for the USQ Council Clarified the role of the Research Ethics Coordinator in relation to the record-keeping on behalf of the USQ AEC Clarified the purpose relating to the Code Changed the Membership details and criteria to align with the Code Clarified the USQ AEC Executive role to align with the Code
<b>30.01.2015</b>	Mgr (RI&E)	Realign the responsibilities to reflect the Code Added in an accountability section to reflect the reporting requirements
<b>12.02.2015</b>	DAFFQ	Queensland Regulator Approval – Dr Robert Cassidy (Biosecurity Queensland) provided advice that the Terms of Reference are compliant with the Code
<b>30.03.2015</b>	DVC(R&I)	USQ responsible officer approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
<b>13.06.2018</b>	DVC(R&I)	USQ Animal Ethics Committee review and endorsement at scheduled meeting 07.06.2018 USQ responsible officer approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
<b>18.02.2019</b>	DVC(R&I)	Realign accountabilities to directly reflect the Code revised internal reporting relationships USQ responsible officer approval – Prof. Mark Harvey

**02.07.2020** DVC(R&I) Streamlined the terms of reference, removed duplicate information and reduced detail around categories of membership which are detailed in the Code.

USQ responsible officer approval – Prof. John Bell

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