



Terms of Reference

University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (USQ AEC)

Trim Location	12/G/6-3
Responsible Officer	Manager, Research Integrity & Ethics
Approval Date	18 February 2019
Date of Next Review	October 2020
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)

1 Purpose

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, 8th 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, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

2 Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the USQ AEC is to ensure, on behalf of the institution, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

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 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. approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the institution;
8. provide advice and recommendations to the institution;
9. report on its operations to the institution;
10. provides advice in accordance with the Code on policy relating to activities involving animals for recommendation through to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and Research Committee to the Academic Board;
11. advise the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) on issues arising from activities involving animals, including on procedural matters and physical facilities available for activity involving animals, whether at the University or elsewhere, and recommends measures to safeguard the standards of the Code

3 Accountability

The Vice-Chancellor, as authorised officer of the University of Southern Queensland, delegates to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) the responsibility to meet institutional responsibilities outlined within the Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 2013, 8th edition. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. ensuring the USQ AEC membership will allow the committee to meet its responsibilities;
2. ensuring the USQ AEC has a terms of reference that is 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 will enable the committee to meet its responsibilities under the Code and relevant University of Southern Queensland policy and procedures, and to promote competent and timely ethical review of animal care and use.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will meet with the USQ AEC Chair at least 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 compliance with the Code.

4 Membership

In accordance with the membership provisions of the Code, the USQ AEC will comprise at least one person from each of the four (4) categories of membership (A – D).

Membership Category	Membership Criteria
Chairperson	A senior officer of the University
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.

Categories C and D must together represent at least one-third of the AEC membership.

The USQ AEC may invite people with specific expertise to provide advice, as required.

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

3.1 Animal Ethics Committee Executive

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

In accordance with the membership provisions of the Code, the Animal Ethics Committee Executive will comprise the chairperson 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 AEC meeting. The USQ AEC Executive must not approve new applications, new procedures, or major amendments.

The Ethics Coordinator on behalf of the USQ AEC will maintain a register of proposed and approved activities involving animals.

3.2 Quorum

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

3.3 Frequency of Meetings

The USQ AEC will meet at least quarterly.

3.4 Decisions between Meetings

The USQ AEC may delegate authority to the USQ AEC Executive to approve minor amendments to approved projects or activities, for ratification at the next USQ AEC meeting. A minor amendment may include a change to an approved project or activity where the proposed change is not likely to cause harm to the animals, including pain and/or distress.

The USQ AEC Executive must not approve new applications, new procedures, or major amendments.

4 Reporting

An annual report will be submitted to Council through the Research Committee and Academic Board.

The annual report will contain the information described in the Code and addresses the numbers and types of activities considered for approval and the outcomes, risk management, the physical facilities available for activities involving animals, any administrative or other difficulties being experienced, and any requirements for training staff.

The USQ AEC reports to external regulatory bodies as required.

Modification History

Date	Source	Details
03.09.2013	VCC	Revised Terms of Reference and Membership
20.04.2014	DVC(RI)	Removal of member names from public document Expanded AEC Executive role Removed section references to previous edition of the Code
15.10.2014	MRIE	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 Exec role to align with the code
30.01.2015	MRIE USQ	Re aligned the responsibilities to directly reflect the Code. Added in an accountability section to reflect the reporting requirements.
12.02.2015	DAFFQ	Queensland Regulator Approval – Dr. Robert Cassidy (Biosecurity Queensland) provided advice that the Terms of Reference are compliant with the Code.
30.03.2015	DVC(R&I)	USQ Responsible Officer Approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
13.06.2018	DVC(R&I)	USQ Animal Ethics Committee review and endorsement at scheduled meeting 07.06.2018. USQ Responsible Officer Approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
18.02.2019	DVC(R&I)	Re aligned accountabilities to directly reflect the Code. Revised internal reporting relationships. USQ Responsible Officer Approval – Prof Mark Harvey