

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Animal Ethics Committee

Terms of Reference

Ref: (Clause 2.2.18)

1. Purpose of the CIT Animal Ethics Committee (AEC):

The primary responsibility of the AEC is to ensure, on behalf of CIT, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the [Australian Code for the care and use of animals for Scientific purposes 8th Edition 2013 \(The Code\)](#). (Clause 2.3.1).

2. Responsibilities of the AEC:

The **responsibilities** of the Animal Ethics Committee include:

- reviewing applications for projects and activities associated with the care and management of animals and approving only those that are ethically acceptable (Clause 1.3) and conform to the requirements of the Code (Clause 2.3.3 – 2.3.16).
- conducting follow-up review of approved activities and projects (Clause 2.2.32 (ii)), and approving continuation only for those that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code
- monitoring the care and use of animals in CIT, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in a teaching school (Clause 2.3.17 – 2.3.23)
- taking appropriate action regarding unexpected adverse events (Clause 2.3.24).
- taking appropriate action regarding non-compliance (including complaints and incidents) (Clause 2.3.25).
- approving guidelines for the care and use of animals at CIT. (Clause 2.3.26)
- providing advice and recommendations to CIT. (Clause 2.3.27)
- reporting on its operations to CIT on an annual basis.
- reporting on its operations to the ACT Animal Welfare Authority, within Transport Canberra City Services (TCCS).

Reference: (Clause 2.3.2).

Accountability and Reporting (Chapter 2.3)

The Committee will ensure, on the behalf of the Institute, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

Legislation:

[Animal Welfare ACT 1992](#)

[Animal Welfare Regulation 2001](#)

[Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013 \(the Code\)](#)

Reporting mechanisms:

In accordance with the *Code for the Care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition 2013* 2.3.28 the AEC will submit a written report on its operations at least annually to the Animal Welfare Authority and an executive of the institution (s) for which it acts. The AEC will report to the Director of Health, Community and Science college, CIT.

The report will advise on:

- I. The numbers and types of projects and activities assessed, and approved or rejected
- II. The physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the institution
- III. Actions that have supported the educational and training needs of AEC members, AWLOs and people involved in the care and use of animals
- IV. Administrative and other difficulties experienced
- V. Any matters that may affect the institution's ability to maintain compliance with the Code and, if appropriate, suitable recommendations.

3. Conflict of interest

(Clause 2.2.21)

The Committee will require that all members declare any conflict of interest:

- Prior to their appointment - by making a signed declaration of all real or potential conflicts of interest as part of the member application process
- As matters arise - by declaring all real or potential conflicts of interest and the nature of that interest to either the chair or executive officer of the Animal Ethics Committee as soon as is reasonable after they become aware of the conflict
- At each meeting - by declaring as an early item of the meeting agenda all real or potential conflicts of interest and the nature of that interest. This must include all real or potential

- conflicts with any items on the meeting agenda or any other matter relating to membership of the Animal Ethics Committee
- All declarations of real or potential conflicts of interest (as part of the appointment process, between or at meetings) are to be recorded in the relevant meeting minutes.
 - Note: A conflict of interest arises where a member of an Animal Ethics Committee has an interest that may be seen to influence the objectivity of a decision [Section 2.2.10 (vi) of the Code]
 - The Animal Ethics Committee will deal with situations in which a conflict of interest arises, including any situation where a member of an Animal Ethics Committee has an interest that may be seen to influence the objectivity of a decision, by:
 - requiring a member whose objectivity may be influenced by an interest (including consideration of a proposal submitted by that member) to leave the room prior to any discussion of the identified item, returning only at the invitation of the remaining members to provide clarification on issues raised (after which the member will again be requested to leave) or returning only when a decision has been finalised
 - recording the method of dealing with any conflict in the relevant meeting minutes (e.g. recording that the member left and returned to the room)
 - considering and responding to any concern or claim raised by an activity leader or other party that an Animal Ethics Committee member has a conflict of interest that may have influenced the objectivity of an Animal Ethics Committee decision
 - advising complainants, in writing, of the Animal Ethics Committee's response to any concern or claim relating to a conflict of interest. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Animal Ethics Committee's response, a grievance may be lodged.

4. Privacy and Confidentiality:

(Clause 2.2.22)

Only relevant CIT Science staff members have access to any information collected and used regarding any AEC matters. This includes information collected for:

- consideration of a proposal application
- consideration of a registration application
- collecting annual animal statistics
- the monitoring of programs for the use of animals.

All CIT staff are bound by privacy and confidentiality whilst being employed at CIT and adhere to the “Australian Privacy Principles” guidelines. All information collected by CIT is regarded as confidential. CIT is committed to meeting the requirements of the “Information Privacy Act 2014”.

All information is stored securely and personal information won’t be disclosed to a third party without consent, unless required by law for the purposes of the “information Privacy Act”.

5. Dispute resolution

Decisions should be based on a thorough, fair and inclusive process of discussion and deliberation of AEC members and should be made only by those present throughout the discussion.

Decisions should be made based on consensus, and where consensus cannot be reached after reasonable effort to resolve differences, the AEC should explore with the applicant(s) ways of modifying the project or activity that may lead to consensus. [Section 2.3.11 of the Code].

6. Recruitment, appointment, and resignation of members

CIT is responsible for the recruitment and appointment of all CIT AEC members. The Chair is appointed by the Director of the Health, Community and Science College (HCSC). Suitable candidates for Categories A to D are recruited via the jobs@act.gov.au register. CIT Science Head of Department provides the applicants documentation to the Director HCSC for consideration. The final selection and approval of members is undertaken by the Director HCSC. Appointments are for an initial term of three (3) years.

Appointments, retirements and resignations of members will be acknowledged by the committee and CIT Science. All retirements and resignations are to be submitted in writing, advice by email is acceptable.

Prior to their appointment, all members of the Animal Ethics Committee must acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the Terms of Reference, Grievance Policy, and must sign the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement.

7. Committee Structure

Membership is determined by the animal welfare legislation and chapter 2.2 of the Code.

Chairperson (Clause 2.2.2)

Institutions must appoint a chairperson of the AEC. Institutions should consider appointing a chairperson who holds a senior position in the institution. If the chairperson is an external appointee, institutions must provide the chairperson with the necessary support and authority to carry out the role. The chairperson may be appointed in addition to Category A to D members. Institutions should consider appointing a chairperson who is independent of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

8. Members (Clause 2.2.4)

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 person who is suitably qualified 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 based on active membership of, and endorsement by, such organisation

Category D

A person not employed 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 CIT Animal Ethics Committee membership. (Clause 2.2.8).

The Animal Ethics Committee may invite people with specific expertise to provide additional advice. (Clause 2.2.6).

9. **Quorum** (Clause 2.2.25)

A quorum will be fulfilled when one member from each category (x4) attends the meeting in addition to the Chair or Deputy Chair (x1) (minimum total x5).

10. **Frequency and location** (Clause 2.2.25)

Under the Australian Code the Animal Ethics Committee is required to meet as often as required to discharge its responsibilities. Typically, the committee will meet once each school term, with a minimum of four meetings a year.

11. **Agenda and minutes** (Clause 2.2.26)

It is requested that all members have their agenda requests submitted two weeks prior to meetings.

Minutes will be circulated within two weeks after meetings for member endorsement and to be returned within three weeks to the CIT AEC secretariat.

12. **Out of session** (Clause 2.2.27-8)

Out of session decisions can be made by the Committee via email, with members casting a vote in writing and ensuring a quorum is still met in line with the Code of Practice. The AEC must commit to undertaking a minimum of two (2) inspections per year of the CIT Animal facilities. This would usually be undertaken once in each semester.

13. **Complaints** (Clause 2.2.29)

Terms of reference amendment, modification, or variation

The Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the Animal Ethics Committee membership.

The Animal Ethics Committee will review the Terms of Reference two yearly or following a change of legislation. CIT has created a complaints procedure for any grievances.