

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the CIT Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)

Under clause 2.3.1 of the [Australian Code for the care and use of animals for Scientific purposes 8th Edition 2013 \(The Code\)](#), the primary responsibility of the Animal Ethics Committee is to ensure that all Canberra Institute of Technology activities involving the care and use of animals comply with the Code, applicable Australian Capital Territory legislation and relevant licence conditions.

1. Responsibilities of the AEC

The responsibilities of the Animal Ethics Committee include:

- reviewing applications for projects and activities associated with the care and use of animals and approving only those that are ethically acceptable and consistent with the requirements of the Code (Clauses 1.3 and 2.3.3–2.3.16)
 - conducting follow-up reviews of approved activities and projects and approving continuation only where activities remain ethically acceptable and compliant with the Code (Clause 2.2.32(ii))
 - monitoring the care and use of animals at CIT, including housing conditions, husbandry practices and procedures associated with animal care and teaching activities (Clauses 2.3.17–2.3.23)
 - monitoring animal welfare outcomes associated with CIT teaching activities involving animals under approved AEC projects, including identifying and responding to any emerging welfare concerns (Clauses 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 regarding animal welfare and the care and use of animals (Clause 2.3.27)
 - reporting annually on its operations to CIT (Clause 2.3.28)
 - reporting annually on its operations to the ACT Animal Welfare Authority (Clause 2.3.28)
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Legislation and Regulatory Requirements

The AEC operates in accordance with:

- [Animal Welfare ACT 1992](#)
- [Animal Welfare Regulation 2001](#)
- [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013 \(the Code\)](#)
- Conditions attached to CIT's:
 - Animal Use Research and Teaching Licence
 - Pet Business Licence

Reporting Mechanisms

In accordance with Clause 2.3.28 of the Code, the AEC will submit a written report on its operations at least annually to the ACT Animal Welfare Authority and to an executive of the institution for which it acts.

The AEC will report to the Director, Health, Community and Science College.

The annual report will advise on:

1. The number and types of projects and activities assessed, approved or rejected.
2. The physical facilities used for the care and use of animals.
3. Actions that have supported the education and training of AEC members, Animal Welfare Liaison Officers and personnel involved in the care and use of animals.
4. Administrative and operational issues experienced by the AEC.
5. Any matters that may affect CIT's ability to maintain compliance with the Code, together with any recommendations.

2. Conflict of Interest (Clause 2.2.21)

The AEC will require all members to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest:

- prior to appointment, through completion of the conflict of interest declaration included in the Animal Ethics Committee Membership Application Form
- as conflicts arise, by advising the Chair or Executive Officer as soon as reasonably practicable
- at each meeting, through declaration of any conflicts relevant to agenda items or other committee business.

All declarations of conflicts of interest must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

A conflict of interest arises where a member has an actual, potential or perceived interest that could influence, or reasonably be seen to influence, their impartiality or objectivity in relation to an AEC matter. Members must declare a conflict prior to appointment, as soon as it arises, and at the beginning of any meeting where it relates to an agenda

item or other Committee business. A conflict may also be raised by the Chair, another Committee member, the Executive Officer or another person.

Where a conflict of interest exists, the AEC will:

- require the member to withdraw from discussion and decision-making relating to the matter
- permit the member to return only to provide clarification if requested by the Committee
- record the management of the conflict in the meeting minutes
- consider and respond to concerns or claims that a conflict of interest may have affected a decision
- provide a written response to any complainant raising a conflict of interest concern.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they may access the CIT Animal Complaints Procedure.

3. Privacy and Confidentiality (Clause 2.2.22)

Access to information relating to AEC matters is restricted to authorised CIT personnel.

This includes information collected for:

- proposal applications
- registration applications
- annual animal statistics
- monitoring activities relating to the care and use of animals.

All CIT employees are required to maintain confidentiality and comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and the Information Privacy Act 2014 (ACT).

Information collected by CIT is stored securely and will not be disclosed to a third party without consent unless required by law.

4. Dispute Resolution

AEC decisions must be based on a thorough, fair and inclusive process of discussion and deliberation and may only be made by members present throughout the discussion.

Decisions should be made by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached after reasonable efforts to resolve differences, the AEC will work with the applicant to identify modifications to the project or activity that may facilitate consensus. (Section 2.3.11 of the Code)

5. Complaints (Clause 2.2.29)

Complaints relating to animal welfare, animal use, AEC processes, or non-compliance with the Code will be managed in accordance with the CIT Animal Use Policy and the CIT Animal Complaints Procedure.

The AEC will ensure that concerns relating to the care and use of animals are considered promptly, confidentially and fairly, and that appropriate action is taken where required.

6. Recruitment, Appointment and Resignation of Members

CIT is responsible for the recruitment and appointment of AEC members.

Suitable candidates for Categories A to D are recruited through appropriate recruitment processes.

The Head of Department, Science will provide candidate documentation to the Chair for consideration.

Appointments are approved by the Chair and the Head of Department, Science. The Secretariat will provide written confirmation of appointment to each member. Appointments remain in effect while the member continues to actively participate in Committee activities and remains eligible to serve. Membership may conclude where a member resigns, retires, ceases to actively participate, is no longer eligible to serve, or the appointment is otherwise concluded by CIT

Prior to appointment, all members must:

- complete the Animal Ethics Committee Membership Application Form
- acknowledge acceptance of these Terms of Reference
- sign a Code of Conduct
- sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

CIT will provide members with appropriate induction, information and opportunities for ongoing training to enable them to effectively discharge their responsibilities under the Code.

7. Committee Structure

Membership is determined by the requirements of the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, relevant ACT legislation, and any applicable licence conditions governing the care and use of animals at CIT.

Chairperson (Clause 2.2.2)

The institution must appoint a Chairperson. The Chairperson may be appointed in addition to Category A to D members and should be provided with sufficient authority and institutional support to carry out the role effectively.

Where possible, CIT will appoint a Chairperson independent of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

8. Members (Clause 2.2.4)

Category A

A veterinarian qualified for registration as a veterinary surgeon in Australia, 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.

Where the business of the AEC relates solely to teaching activities, a teacher with substantial and recent experience may be appointed.

Category C

A person with a demonstrable commitment to animal welfare 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.

Category D

A person who is 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 beyond their undergraduate education.

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

The AEC may invite individuals with relevant expertise to provide advice where required.

9. Quorum (Clause 2.2.25)

For CIT business, a quorum consists of at least one member from each of Category's A, B, C and D. A minimum of four members must therefore be present, with Categories C and D together representing at least one-third of the members present. The Chair, or a person authorised to act as Chair, will preside.

10. Frequency and Location of Meetings (Clause 2.2.25)

Under the Code, the AEC must meet as often as required to discharge its responsibilities. The Committee will meet twice each year and undertake two inspections of the CIT animal facilities annually, with one inspection conducted in conjunction with each meeting.

Additional meetings or inspections may be scheduled where required.

11. Agenda and Minutes (Clause 2.2.26)

Members are requested to submit agenda items at least two weeks before a scheduled meeting. Draft minutes will be distributed within four weeks following each meeting for comment and endorsement. Members are requested to return comments within three weeks of receiving the draft minutes.

12. Out-of-Session Consideration (Clauses 2.2.27–2.2.28)

Where necessary, proposals, amendments or urgent matters may be considered out of session.

Out-of-session consideration must:

- occur in writing, including email correspondence
 - include input from at least one member from each membership category
 - comply with the requirements of the Code
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13. Amendment of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference may be amended following consultation with, and agreement of, the AEC membership.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required following legislative, regulatory or licence requirement changes.

Version 4.0

Sam Mills – Director, Health, Community and Science College, Canberra Institute of Technology.