

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE**

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION ETHICS COMMITTEES

An Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee's composition, terms of reference, functions and responsibilities and method of operation must conform to the requirements of the current NHMRC/CSIRO/AAC *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* ("the Code of Practice") and the Victorian *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Regulations 1986* ("the Act").

1. Membership

1.1. The membership comprises:

- (a) a person with qualifications in veterinary science, preferably with experience relevant to the activities of the institution, or a person with qualifications and experience to provide comparable expertise
- (b) person(s) with substantial recent experience in animal experimentation (one senior member from each scientific establishment represented)
- (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 involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. The person should where possible be selected on the basis of membership of an animal welfare organisation.
- (d) an independent person who does not currently and who has not previously conducted experiments using animals, and who is preferably not an employee of the institution
- (e) person(s) responsible for the daily care of animals (one such member from each scientific establishment represented)

The Animal Welfare Officer shall be invited to meetings of the Committee.

Chairperson appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) from one of the categories listed above.

Category (b) members nominated by the person in charge of the scientific establishment (eg. Dean or Head of Department).

A Committee may co-opt additional members as necessary.

"Scientific establishment" as defined in the Victorian *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Regulations 1986*.³

1.2 Membership must be reported to and approved by The University of Melbourne Animal Welfare Committee (UMAWC).

³ Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, Act No. 46/1986, p.22-23.

2. Functions and responsibilities

- 2.1 To report to The University of Melbourne Animal Welfare Committee as required.
- 2.2 The Animal Experimentation Ethics Committees have the responsibility, on behalf of The University of Melbourne Animal Welfare Committee, to -
- (a) ensure that day-to-day care and management of all animals used for scientific purposes in the scientific establishment(s) is maintained according to the standards of the Code of Practice, the Act and any additional procedures approved by the UMAWC. This shall include the acquisition, transport, breeding and production, housing, care, use and disposal of animals;
 - (b) examine written proposals for experiments involving the use of animals in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Act, making an assessment of the scientific merit and ethical implications of any proposal. The committee may withdraw approval for any project or authorise the treatment or humane killing of any animal within its sphere of authority;
 - (c) discuss and make recommendations to the UMAWC on aspects of animal experimentation and welfare, including the consideration of alternatives to the use of animals, in research and teaching in the department;
 - (d) to ensure that research staff are appropriately qualified to perform animal experiments and that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements are adhered to;
 - (e) ensure that all animal experimentation, including the use of animals in undergraduate teaching, in the scientific establishment(s) has been approved by the AEEC, and is carried out in conformity with that approval;
 - (f) ensure, for all teaching and research proposals involving the use of animals for scientific purposes, that (i) these can be suitably accommodated and maintained within the relevant animal house, and (ii) any post-operative or other care dictated by the project will be available;
 - (g) to ensure that 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 for review by the chairperson of the AEEC;
 - (h) to ensure continuous, straightforward interaction between the scientific establishments and the AEEC and the UMAWC, so that compliance with the Code of Practice, the Act and University requirements can at all time be demonstrated to responsible external monitoring bodies.
- 2.3 All proposals involving the use of non-human primates must be assessed by the AEEC and comments, as appropriate, on the projects' scientific merit and ethical justification forwarded to the UMAWC with the AEEC's recommendation for approval. Appeals and proposals where the AEEC is unable to reach a decision should similarly be referred to the UMAWC.

3. Method of operation

- 3.1 Committees shall have formal meetings at least four times a year.
- 3.2 Minutes shall be maintained by the Melbourne Research and Innovation Office and provided to the UMAWC and to the relevant faculty/department offices. The AEEC is required to provide an annual report to the UMAWC on its activities, numbers and types of experiments approved and on the physical facilities for the care and use of animals within the scientific establishment(s).
- 3.3 An Executive comprising the Chairperson and two other members, at least one of whom must be the member described under clause 1(c) or 1(d) above, may be appointed to approve minor modifications to projects and deal with emergencies. The appointment of the Executive must be approved by the UMAWC.

The Executive may not approve proposals. Any decisions taken by the Executive must be reviewed by the AEEC at its next meeting.
- 3.4 The UMAWC expects that day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that high standards of animal care are maintained will rest with the head of the scientific establishment. A report on the animal house facilities should be made to each meeting of the committee and the animal house facilities should be available for inspection by the committee at the time of each meeting. A formal inspection by the committee of all animal housing and laboratory areas must be conducted at least once a year.
- 3.5 All members must have ready access to the faculty/department(s) animal house(s) at any reasonable time during the year and to experiments performed within the department. Such access must be arranged through the Chairperson of the Committee.