

University Animal Ethics Committee Charter

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The primary responsibility of the University Animal Ethics Committee is to ensure, on behalf of QUT, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals in research and teaching are conducted in compliance with the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (the Scientific Use Code). The functions of the University Animal Ethics Committee support compliance with the [QUT Code for Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

Section 2 - Accountability

(2) The University Animal Ethics Committee is a management committee accountable to the Vice-Chancellor and President through the Head of Research Portfolio.

Section 3 - Responsibilities

(3) The University Animal Ethics Committee will undertake the following:

- a. Compliance with legislation and standards:
 - i. perform the functions of an Animal Ethics Committee in accordance with the Scientific Use Code, the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Qld) and Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2023 (Qld) and any other applicable legislation.
 - ii. report on Committee operations to University Research Committee and University Academic Board.
- b. Policy, procedures and guidelines:
 - i. provide advice and recommendations to the University on policy, procedures and guidance relating to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
 - ii. approve procedures and guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the University.
 - iii. promote the Governing principles (section 1) of the Scientific Use code and support the implementation of the 3Rs.
- c. Review, approval and monitoring of animal care and use:
 - i. review applications for projects and activities and approve only those that are ethically acceptable (see clause 1.3 of the Scientific Use Code) and conform to the requirements of the Scientific Use Code.
 - ii. 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 Scientific Use Code.
 - iii. conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities and allow for the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Scientific Use Code, and may withdraw approval.
 - iv. monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities.

- v. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events.
 - vi. take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance.
 - vii. maintain a register of all applications to the Committee including outcomes of deliberations.
- d. Facilities and monitoring:
- i. examine and comment on all matters that may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes by the University, including the planning, building or modification of animal facilities or areas adjacent to animal facilities.
- e. Advice:
- i. provide advice and recommendations to the University, via the Head of Research Portfolio, regarding the care and use of animals for scientific purposes conducted on behalf of the University, and strategies required to ensure that the requirements of the Scientific Use Code are maintained and that matters affecting animal wellbeing are addressed.

Section 4 - Membership

(4) In accordance with minimum membership requirements of the Scientific Use Code, the University Animal Ethics Committee will have a Chairperson and members from each of the categories of membership – A, B, C and D. Categories C and D must together represent at least one-third of the University Animal Ethics Committee membership.

- a. a Chairperson, with suitable experience and senior academic standing (or equivalent), nominated by the Head of Research Portfolio. The Chair should be knowledgeable in the Scientific Use Code, University policy and procedure, standards and community issues.
- b. Category A: at least one 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, nominated by the Head of Research Portfolio.
- c. Category B: at least one person suitably qualified with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the University and the business of the University Animal Ethics Committee. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience (normally a Faculty Research Ethics Advisor and/or member of their faculty's research committee), nominated by the Executive Deans of the relevant faculties.
- d. Category C: at least one 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, nominated by the Head of Research Portfolio. 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.
- e. Category D: at least one person not employed by or otherwise associated with the University 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, nominated by the Head of Research Portfolio. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the University Animal Ethics Committee and must not fit the requirements of any other category.

(5) To enable the University Animal Ethics Committee to have available the skills and expertise necessary for matters under review, exact membership numbers have not been prescribed (in some categories). Exact membership numbers are determined by the Head of Research Portfolio.

(6) The University Animal Ethics Committee may appoint to the Committee a person responsible for the routine care of animals within the University and/or additional members with skills and background of value to the Committee.

(7) One member shall be nominated as Deputy Chair of the University Animal Ethics Committee by the Committee. In addition to the usual duties of a deputy chair, the Deputy Chair acts as Chair in the Chair's absence or while applications or other matters involving the Chair are under consideration.

(8) Nominated members of the Committee serve a term of office of up to two years. The length of a nominated member's term of office is recommended to the nominator by the Chair, on advice from the Secretariat.

Section 5 - Attendance

(9) The Animal Welfare Ethics Coordinator and Research Ethics Officer have rights of audience and debate only.

(10) The University Animal Ethics Committee may invite people with specific expertise to provide advice, as required.

Section 6 - Meeting frequency

(11) The frequency of meetings is approved by the Head of Research Portfolio. Additional meetings may be held at the discretion of the chair if urgent matters require review in advance of the next scheduled meeting.

(12) Meetings of the Committee should be held face-to-face, wherever possible in accordance with the Scientific Use Code (clause 2.2.26 (ii)). Video-conferencing and web-conferencing, or in special circumstance tele-conferencing, may be used on occasions when a member is required to achieve quorum or a face-to-face meeting is not reasonably possible.

(13) Justification for the use of video-conferencing, web-conferencing, or tele-conferencing should be documented in the meeting minutes.

Section 7 - Reporting and communication

(14) The University Animal Ethics Committee reports to:

- a. QUT Council, Risk and Audit Committee, University Research Committee and University Academic Board annually through the Head of Research Portfolio. Reports to Council should address matters including numbers and types of projects and activities assessed and approved or rejected, risk management, physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the University, actions that have supported the educational and training needs of Committee members and people involved in the care and use of animals, administrative or other difficulties experienced, and any matters that may affect the University's ability to maintain compliance with the Scientific Use Code.
- b. External bodies such as the administering agency for the annual Animal Use Statistics Report.

(15) The University Animal Ethics Committee may refer matters to the University Human Research Ethics Committee, the University Biosafety Committee, University Health, Safety and Environment Committee, faculty/institute/division health, safety and environment committees and the Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity as necessary.

(16) The University Animal Ethics Committee Chairperson meets with the Head of Research Portfolio as part of the annual review of the operation of the University Animal Ethics Committee.

Section 8 - Procedures

(17) The University Animal Ethics Committee is established in accordance with the Scientific Use Code and [Council Procedure 1 - Committee Operations](#).

(18) To comply with the operational requirements of the Scientific Use Code, the University Animal Ethics Committee has approved [Standard Operating Procedures](#) (QUT staff and student access only).

(19) The University Animal Ethics Committee is regulated by [Council Procedure 1 - Committee Operations](#), with the exceptions of sections 6.15 (the holding of multiple positions by a single member, 7.7 (quorum), 7.10 (determining questions before a committee) and 9 (decisions between meetings) which are inconsistent with requirements of the Scientific Use Code.

(20) At least one member of the University Animal Ethics Committee from each of the membership categories A, B, C and D must be present at meetings to establish a quorum for the conduct of a meeting and must be present throughout the meeting. Categories C plus D must together represent at least one-third of those members present.

(21) The University establishes an Animal Ethics Committee Executive (the Executive) which must include the Chairperson and at least one member from Category C or D. The Executive is delegated responsibility for approving minor variations to approved projects or activities, for ratification at the next Committee meeting. The Executive may also perform any other functions delegated to it by the University Animal Ethics Committee in conformity with the Scientific Use Code. The Executive must not approve new applications.

Consideration of Non-QUT Research

(22) The University Animal Ethics Committee normally considers applications only from QUT staff and students but may also consider submissions from external applicants wishing to conduct an activity on a QUT site where there is an agreement or will be an agreement in place, and any exceptional proposal or matter of issue referred to it by the Head of Research Portfolio.

Complaints

(23) Complaints relating to the research or teaching activities of any party or individual involved in the care and use of animals at QUT or the University Animal Ethics Committee review process should be directed to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity (OREI).

(24) The Manager, OREI or delegate is responsible for the initial review of complaints and will refer complaints to the relevant party, as appropriate.

(25) All complaints will be managed in a confidential manner that accords with procedural fairness, the principles of natural justice, protection of whistle-blowers and complies with Section 5 of the Scientific Use Code.

(26) Complaints or concerns about the conduct of the University Animal Ethics Committee's review or decision-making processes are directed to the Chair of the Committee in the first instance. If the complaint relates directly to the conduct of the Chair the matter will be referred to the Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity.

(27) The Committee's [Standard Operating Procedures](#) (QUT staff and student access only) provide further details regarding the complaints process.

(28) When investigating complaints, the University Animal Ethics Committee will:

- a. ensure the wellbeing of animals used is not compromised.
- b. ensure that activities that have the potential to adversely affect animal wellbeing cease immediately.

- c. ensure that the issue is addressed promptly by consulting with the person involved.
- d. determine whether approval for the project or activity should be suspended or withdrawn.
- e. refer matters to the University for further actions.

Non-compliance

(29) Suspected non-compliance with the Scientific Use Code, in connection with a project or activity should be referred to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, in accordance with the Committee's [Standard Operating Procedures](#) (QUT staff and student access only).

(30) Matters referred will be investigated to determine the nature and extent of the alleged non-compliance. Procedures will reflect the principles of fairness and be conducted in a manner to ensure minimal impact to animal welfare. The University Animal Ethics Committee will be informed of the outcome of any investigations.

Section 9 - Secretariat

(31) A nominee of the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar is secretary, on recommendation of the Head of Research Portfolio. The Office of Research Ethics and Integrity provides administrative support to the University Animal Ethics Committee and coordination of meetings.

Section 10 - Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|------|--|
| 3Rs | Means Replacement, Reduction and Refinement as defined in the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes. |

Section 11 - Delegations

(32) Refer to [Register of Authorities and Delegations](#) (VC189) (QUT staff access only).

Status and Details

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| Responsible Officer | Anne Walsh Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity |
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