

1. Purpose

The Animal Ethics Committee at Melbourne Polytechnic is responsible for ensuring, on behalf of the institute that all activities involving the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Victorian Legislation, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and Regulations 2019 (the Act and Regulations) and Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th edition (the Code).

The Animal Ethics Committee reviews and approves applications that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code. The Committee conducts follow-up review of approved projects and activities and monitors the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities. It addresses complaints, non-compliance with the Code and unexpected adverse events that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals.

2. Membership

The Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) membership comprises:

- Head of School as Chair or delegate;
- One member from Category A: Veterinary surgeon who is eligible to be registered in Australia and with experience relevant to the activities of the institution;
- One member from Category B: Scientist or teacher with substantial recent experience in animal-based research or teaching;
- One member from Category C: a person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals and who is independent of the institution;
- One member from Category D: Layperson who has never engaged in animal experimentation beyond their under-graduate education and who is independent of the institution;
- One member from Category E - senior staff members of the animal care staff at Melbourne Polytechnic. A person from this category need not be present to make up a quorum.

An Acting Chair (from within its membership) must be appointed to cover short-term absences by the Chair.

The executive office is a nonvoting member of the AEC and is appointed to the role by the Head of School.

Prior to appointment, AEC members will acknowledge, in writing that they will accept:

- the Terms of Reference of the AEC
- sign a Confidentiality Agreement as members may be asked to assess information that is commercial 'in confidence'. Members must use the information provided only for the purpose of carrying out their responsibilities as AEC members.

Committee members will undergo an appropriate induction and have access to appropriate education programs and resources.

The terms of membership for those appointed to the AEC shall normally be for a three-year period. This period is deemed to be sufficient to permit new members to become familiar with operational procedures. A member can be re-appointed for an additional period as agreed.

Members may resign from the AEC at any time by advising the Chair or executive officer in writing with a minimum two-month notification period. The AEC Chair may request a member of the AEC to resign due to conflict of interest.

An AEC Executive will be established and consist of either a category C or D member and the Chair. The Executive has the authority to make decisions on issues that arise between meetings. Any decision made by the Executive must be reviewed by the AEC at the next meeting.

AEC Executive cannot approve new Project Proposals but if a Project Proposal requires only minor amendments, the amended version can be approved by the Executive. New and amended Project Proposals must be reviewed by the full AEC.

3. Conflict of Interest

All persons nominated to the AEC must declare any conflict of interest prior to their appointment. Any apparent conflict of interest regarding specific proposals or issues will be declared at the beginning of a meeting, or as soon as an apparent conflict is noted, and will be dealt with as specified in the Animal Ethics Procedures.

Members of the AEC whose objectivity may be influenced by an interest (including consideration of an application submitted by that member or by a colleague) are required to leave the meeting during the decision making process.

Refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy for additional information.

4. Functions and Responsibilities

The AEC is responsible for deciding whether an application or other matter under consideration by the AEC is ethically acceptable and meets the requirements of the Code.

The Committee reviews and approves applications and seeks clarification on a case by case basis concerning the purchase, transport, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals.

The AEC will:

- Inspect all animal houses at least once per year;
- Recommend to the CEO any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code are maintained;
- Approve only those studies for which animals are considered essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the Code.

- Promote the 3 R's relating to decisions around the use of animals; replacement, reduction and refinement.

This should take into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal/s and the anticipated scientific or educational value. The AEC will withdraw the approval of any project based on detection of non-compliance or serious misconduct.

5. Frequency of Meetings

The Animal Ethics Committee will meet quarterly, four meetings a year, and additionally as the Chair decides in order to fulfil its duties. Meetings of the Committee are to be held at the times and places determined by the Committee or directed by the Chair.

The Agenda and papers will be distributed five working days prior to the meeting.

The Licence nominee for Melbourne Polytechnic, the chair of the AEC and representative of Parks Victoria will hold a meeting in March of each year to review the operations of AEC.

6. The Executive Officer will record meeting proceedings and circulate draft minutes and action list to members within two weeks of the meeting. Draft minutes will be subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Animal Ethics Committee. Records and Reporting

The AEC must submit a written report on its activities at least annually to the AEC Chair and to the CEO and the Board of Melbourne Polytechnic. This will take place once Animal Usage Returns have been submitted to The Agriculture Victoria - Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR).

The report should include information on:

- Numbers and types of projects assessed and approved or rejected;
- The physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the institution;
- Activities that have supported the educational needs of AEC members, and of personnel involved in the care and use of animals;
- Administrative or other difficulties being experienced; and
- Any matter that may affect the institution's ability to maintain compliance with the code and if necessary the provision of suitable recommendations.

The AEC will maintain all records of proposals, approved projects and related correspondence.

Minutes are to be maintained with a record of decisions taken and all other aspects of the Committee's operation.

All Principal Investigators will receive a letter of approval from the Executive Officer of the Animal Ethics Committee within two weeks of the Animal Ethics Committee meeting at which the submission is made.

7. Operation

At least one member 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 and D together must represent at least one-third of those members present.

Decisions by the AEC in regard to approval, modification or rejection of a proposal, or withdrawal of approval of a project, should be made on the basis of consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached after reasonable effort to resolve differences, the AEC should explore with the applicant(s) ways of modifying the project that may lead to consensus. If consensus is still unachievable, the AEC should only proceed to a majority decision after members have been allowed a period of time to review their positions, followed by further discussion.

The AEC may invite people with specific expertise to provide advice as required. The AEC should reach agreement on how advice can be sought from outside experts without breaching confidentiality.

All Project Proposals involving animals, are to be submitted on the AEC approved form at least 10 working days before the scheduled meeting.

8. Related Policies and Procedures

- Animal Ethics Policy
- Animal Ethics Procedure
- Animal Ethics Complaint, Non-Compliance and Adverse Events Procedure
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy

9. Procedure Control

Approving authority	<i>Academic Board</i>
Date approved	
Date effective	

Approving authority	<i>Animal Ethics Committee</i>
Date approved	13 th March 2019
Date effective	

Procedure owner	<i>Justin Blake Executive Director Academic Operations</i>
Procedure adviser	
Procedure category	
Edition	<i>1</i>
Review date	

10. Version History

Edition	Approved by	Approval Date	Summary of changes/Notes