

Terms of Reference

University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (UniSQ AEC)



University of
Southern
Queensland

Responsible officer	Manager, Research Integrity & Ethics	Approval Date	16 September 2024
Committee Services Officer	Ethics Coordinator	Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)

1. Role

The University is a registered user of animals for scientific purposes. It is therefore obliged to comply with the requirements of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Qld) (the “Act”); the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition, 2013 (the “Code”). The University also complies with the legislation and other requirements governing the use of animals in other states and territories where a license to use animals is held.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Code, the University has established the University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (UniSQ AEC), which is tasked with ensuring that all activities relating to the care and use of animals are conducted in compliance with the Code.

2. Function

The UniSQ AEC, in accordance with the Code, must:

1. review applications for projects and approve only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
2. 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 Code;
3. not approve projects or activities involving the use of animals for testing of finished cosmetic products;
4. not approve projects or activities involving the use of a chemical ingredient unless the proposed use of animals is justified by a purpose other than use in a cosmetic;
5. conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities, and allow the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
6. monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities;
7. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events;
8. take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance;
9. in consultation with the University, develop and approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of the institution;
10. provide advice and recommendations to the institution as required;

11. report to the University and other regulatory bodies as required;

3. Authority

The Vice-Chancellor, as the authorised officer of the University of Southern Queensland, delegates to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) the responsibility to meet institutional responsibilities outlined with the Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th edition, 2013.

This includes, but not limited to:

1. ensuring the UniSQ AEC membership will allow the committee to meet its responsibilities;
2. ensuring the UniSQ AEC has terms of reference that are publicly available;
3. providing the UniSQ AEC with the resources required to carry out its responsibilities and to maintain the UniSQ AEC; and
4. establishing procedures for the effective governance and operation of the UniSQ AEC that enable the UniSQ AEC to comply with the Code and relevant University of Southern Queensland policies and procedures and promote competent and timely ethical review of animal care and use.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will meet with UniSQ AEC Chair on an annual basis to discuss matters such as the annual report from the UniSQ AEC to the University of Southern Queensland and any other issue that may impact on the compliance with the Code.

4. Membership

The minimum members of the University of Southern Queensland Animal Ethics Committee (UniSQ AEC) is defined by the Code and must consist of the following categories of membership:

- **Chairperson** – can be an external appointee or a person who holds a senior position in the institution. The Chairperson may be appointed in addition to Category A to D Members. Where possible, the Chairperson should be independent of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
- **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 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. 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 on the basis of active membership of, and endorsement by, such an organisation.
- **Category D** – a person 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, 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.

Full definitions and criteria for these categories is detailed within the Code. Additional members with specific expertise may be appointed to assist the UniSQ AEC to function effectively.

Initial appointment to the UniSQ AEC will be a period of up to three (3) years, with an initial three (3) month probationary period.

As the University of Southern Queensland does not currently have an animal facility, the UniSQ AEC does not appoint a person who is responsible for the routine care of animals within the institution (2.2.5).

4.1. Responsibilities of Committee Members

Each member is responsible for deciding whether, in their judgement, an application or other matter under consideration by the UniSQ AEC is ethically acceptable and meets the requirements of the Code.

To fulfil this responsibility, members should:

- be familiar with the Code and other policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to the business of the UniSQ AEC
- provide opinions with the ethical acceptability of application and other matters under consideration by the UniSQ AEC

During their appointment to the UniSQ AEC, and before any deliberations of the UniSQ AEC, members must declare any interest that could influence the objectivity of their decision making.

Members must maintain confidentiality regarding the content of applications and the deliberations of the UniSQ AEC, in accordance with the University requirements.

4.2. UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee Executive

The UniSQ AEC has established a UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee Executive (UniSQ AEC Executive).

The UniSQ AEC Executive includes the following member categories:

- Chairperson or UniSQ AEC endorsed nominee;
- Category A; and
- at least one member from Category C or D.

The UniSQ AEC Executive may approve exemptions and minor amendments to approved projects or activities for ratification at the next UniSQ AEC meeting. The UniSQ AEC Executive is not permitted to approve new applications, new procedures or major amendments.

5. Meetings, Reporting and Minutes

Frequency of Meetings:	The UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee meets at specific dates and times as outlined in the University Meeting Schedule.
Reports To:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).
Minutes:	UniSQ AEC meetings are recorded through minutes and Post Meeting Action (PMA) sheets.

A UniSQ AEC meeting shall be quorate with at least one member from each Category A, B, C and D, and where the Category C and D members represent at least one-third of members present throughout the meeting (2.2.5).

UniSQ AEC meetings are held face-to-face; however, in circumstances where a face-to-face meeting is not possible for all or some members, a meeting will be held in person and/or via Zoom (2.2.26 [ii]).

6. Reporting

An annual report will be submitted to the Council through the Research Committee and Academic Board. The annual report will contain information as described in the Code.

The UniSQ AEC reports to external regulatory bodies as required.

7. Secretary

The UniSQ AEC is serviced by the Ethics team in the Office of Research.

8. Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the UniSQ AEC

9. Modification History

Date	Source	Details
03.09.2013	VCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Terms of Reference and Membership
20.04.2014	DVC(R&I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of member names from the public document Expanded on AEC Executive role Removed section references to the previous edition of the Code
15.10.2014	Mgr (RI&E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of responsibilities 7,8 & 9 to provide clarification relating to the Code Added requirements of the annual reporting requirements for the UniSQ Council Clarified the role of the Research Ethics Coordinator in relation to the record-keeping on behalf of the UniSQ AEC Clarified the purpose relating to the Code Changed the Membership details and criteria to align with the Code Clarified the UniSQ AEC Executive role to align with the Code
30.01.2015	Mgr (RI&E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realign the responsibilities to reflect the Code Added in an accountability section to reflect the reporting requirements
12.02.2015	DAFFQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland Regulator Approval – Dr Robert Cassidy (Biosecurity Queensland) provided advice that the Terms of Reference are compliant with the Code
30.03.2015	DVC(R&I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UniSQ responsible officer approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
13.06.2018	DVC(R&I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee review and endorsement at scheduled meeting 07.06.2018

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UniSQ responsible officer approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
18.02.2019	DVC(R&I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realign accountabilities to directly reflect the Code • Revised internal reporting relationships • UniSQ responsible officer approval – Prof. Mark Harvey
02.07.2020	DVC(R&I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined the terms of reference, removed duplicate information and reduced detail around categories of membership which are detailed in the Code. • UniSQ responsible officer approval – Prof. John Bell
27.09.2022	Ethics Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted terms of reference to new UniSQ branding as per requirements of the University of Southern Queensland 2022 Brand Reputation Project. • Revised all references of USQ to UniSQ as per the rebrand requirements. • Moved trim location to the footer and replaced with Committee Services Officer details.
23.11.2022	UniSQ AEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UniSQ Animal Ethics Committee review and endorsement at scheduled meeting 17.11.2022 • Minor grammatical errors corrected, as noted by AEC. • Endorsed by UniSQ AEC Chair – Mr Bob Beattie
01.07.2024	IER Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised as per recommendations from the independent external review. • Endorsed by UniSQ AEC 15.08.2024