

<b>Policy Hierarchy link</b>	<a href="#">UNSW Research Code of Conduct</a>		
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<b>Superseded Documents</b>	Nil		
<b>File Number</b>	2014/0562-001.		
<b>Associated Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007</li> <li>• Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013</li> <li>• Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW)</li> <li>• Animal Research Regulation 2010 (NSW) Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 (NSW)</li> <li>• Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 (NSW) Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW)</li> <li>• UNSW Procedure for Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct</li> <li>• UNSW Animal Research Adverse Event Reporting Standard Operating Procedure</li> </ul>		
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## 1. Purpose and Scope

This document sets out the responsibilities and authorities governing animal research and its ethical considerations in accordance to the requirements of the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (henceforth referred to as the Code) and other relevant codes and legislation. The content of the document applies to all staff and research trainees at UNSW and affiliated centres and institutes involved in animal research in Australia and overseas.

## 2. Preamble

The use of animals in research and teaching is a privilege that brings with it special considerations on whether their use is justified and ethical and whether animal welfare and animal wellbeing are balanced against the potential benefits to humans, other animals or the environment. At UNSW, proposals for the use of animals are evaluated for their scientific or educational merit justifying the use of animals and assessed on the grounds that animal wellbeing is at the core of all research and teaching involving animals.

### 3. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Procedure and associated Guidelines:

**Animal:** any non-human vertebrate (including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals and encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock and wildlife) and cephalopods. This includes animals at early stages in their development.

**Animal Care and Ethics Committees (ACECs):** Animal Care and Ethics Committees constituted according to the terms of reference and membership determined in the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (2013).

**Animal Research Authority:** issued by the UNSW ACECs for each research project prior to commencement and following project approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). In accordance with the Animal Research Act authorities can only be issued for a 12 month period and will need to be renewed annually during the life of any approved project that runs for more than 12 months. At UNSW, renewal of the authority is conditional upon submission of a satisfactory annual report to the ACECs.

**Animal Research Establishment:** a corporation which uses animals in research and teaching in NSW and is accredited as an animal research establishment under the Animal Research Act 1985.

**Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP):** a statutory body created by the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW) to participate in monitoring the self-regulatory process that was established within institutions by the Act.

**Chief investigator:** the person who takes responsibility for the conduct of the animal research according to the protocol issued by the UNSW Animal Research Authority in the role of 'person with ultimate responsibility' as defined in the Code.

**The Code:** National Health & Medical Research Council (2013) Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th edition. Canberra: National Health & Medical Research Council.

**Unexpected Adverse Event:** an event that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals and was not foreshadowed in the approved project or activity.

### 4. Regulatory Environment

UNSW is accredited as an Animal Research Establishment under the Animal Research Act 1985 in New South Wales and holds current Animal suppliers' licences. The Vice-Chancellor, as Head of the Establishment and Holder of the Animal suppliers' licences, has delegated the Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) to oversee the conduct of animal research at the University. The DVC(R) and its delegated persons and bodies ensure that animal research is conducted in accordance to the Animal Research Ethics Procedure and deal with breaches accordingly.

All animal research at UNSW and its affiliated centres and institutes requires an Animal Research Authority issued by the DVC(R) on recommendation of the ACECs. The review process and monitoring as well as training and policy development on animal research ethics at UNSW and its affiliated centres and institutes is supported by Research Ethics & Compliance Support (RECS).

The principle guidance for policy development is provided by the Code and by State legislation, including the New South Wales Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW) and Animal Research Regulation 2010 (NSW). The DVC(R) ensures that the University's compliance with the Code is reviewed annually and complemented by an independent external review at least every four years.

## 5. Principles of Ethical Review at UNSW

The principles of ethical review of proposed research and teaching projects at UNSW are based on the governing principles of the Code. The core principle is the respect for animals which underpins all decisions and actions involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

Animal use is only approved when the use of these animals is justified by the potential benefits and where there is strong evidence that the wellbeing of the animals will be supported. Harm, including pain and distress, to the animals must be avoided or minimised. Scientific integrity is evident at a high standard and persons involved in the research know and accept their responsibilities.

The principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) are considered for all proposed stages of animal care and use, including whether it is possible to replace animals with other methods, whether the proposed numbers of animals can be reduced, and whether techniques can be refined to support and safeguard the wellbeing of the animals.

## 6. University Animal Care and Ethics Committees

### 6.1 ACEC Terms of Reference

The composition, terms of reference, functions and responsibilities and method of operation of the UNSW Animal Care and Ethics Committees (ACECs) have been established to conform to the requirements of the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW), the Animal Research Regulations 2010 (NSW), and the NHMRC Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes – 8th Edition 2013.

The UNSW ACECs shall act in relation to:

- UNSW and its affiliated organisations including those for which Affiliation Agreements are in force with respect to matters related to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes and the role of the UNSW ACECs; and
- all research, teaching or other activity that involves the care and use of live animals as defined under the relevant Act and the Regulations.

In addition to the responsibilities accorded under the Act, the Regulations, Guidelines and the Affiliation Agreements, the UNSW ACECs shall provide advice to the Vice Chancellor of UNSW (or delegated officer) in relation to any animal use in the course of, or relevant to, teaching, research or other activity within UNSW or its affiliated organisations.

The UNSW ACECs are accountable to the governing body of the UNSW, the Council, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Vice-Chancellor.

The UNSW ACECs report to the DVC(R) by providing recommendations on reviewed applications. The Presiding Member, as the Senior ACEC Chair, and other ACEC Chairpersons will meet periodically with the DVC(R) on an annual basis as a minimum.

UNSW ACECs operate according to the following terms of reference to:

- review applications for projects and recommend for approval to the DVC(R) only those projects and proposed amendments to projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code, the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW) and the Animal Research Regulation 2010 (NSW);
- 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 recommend for approval to the DVC(R) only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code, the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW) and the Animal Research Regulation 2010 (NSW);

- conduct follow-up review of approved projects and activities, and recommend to the DVC(R) the continuation of approval for only those projects and activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code, the Animal Research Act 1985 (NSW) and the Animal Research Regulation 2010 (NSW);
- monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities;
- take appropriate actions regarding adverse events, including the authorisation of emergency treatment or humane killing of animals;
- take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance by referring any possible breach of the UNSW Research Code of Conduct to the DVC(R) and recommend to the DVC(R) withdrawal, suspension or termination of approval for any project on identification of deviation from the approved protocol or adverse events;
- provide advice to the DVC(R) on draft and existing institutional animal care and ethics policies, procedures and guidelines and on the implementation for the university of new and revised codes and legislation updates affecting the conduct of animal research;
- provide advice to the university on the building or modification of animal facilities or areas adjacent to animal facilities in relation to animal welfare;
- contribute to the professional development of researchers, research trainees and the induction of new committee members;
- fulfil all agreed obligations to any other accredited institution for which they are providing ACEC purview; and
- report on their operations annually to the DVC(R) and the Council.

## **6.2 ACEC Membership and Appointment**

UNSW ACECs have a membership that allows them to fulfil its terms of reference, with at least one third of the members from outside the university and including separate persons appointed to each of the following categories:

- Chairperson, with suitable experience, whose other responsibilities will not impair the ACEC's capacity to carry out its obligations under the Code;
- 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 UNSW'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 UNSW and the business of the ACEC. This must include possession of a higher degree in research or equivalent experience;
- 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 UNSW, 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; and
- Category D: a person not employed by or otherwise associated with UNSW 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 ACEC, and must not fit the requirements of any other category.

The Director of Animal Care and the Animal Care Officer will attend ACEC meetings in an ex-officio advisory capacity. At any time, at least one person representing UNSW animal facility management should be present.

All ACEC members are formally appointed by the DVC(R). The term of membership is normally for three years, with the possibility to renew membership for one more term as decided by the DVC(R). As part of the nomination process potential members are requested to declare real and potential conflicts of interest and facts that may preclude them from the nominated category. External candidates are interviewed followed by background and referee checks under the direction of the Director of RECS.

Memberships may be terminated by the DVC(R) at any time by providing not less than 24 hour notice in writing. Members may voluntarily retire during their appointment by providing not less than 24 hour notice in writing to the DVC(R). Members that are staff of UNSW may need to seek approval from their Head of School or Dean prior to submitting a notice of retirement.

The University offers remuneration and professional development for ACEC members as determined by the DVC(R) to allow members to fulfil their duties according to the Code and UNSW policies and procedures. ACEC members are covered as Insured Persons under the University's Professional Indemnity and Medical Malpractice policies.

### **6.3 ACEC Meetings and Decision-Making**

ACECs meet as required, normally monthly from February to December, to make decisions about animal research ethics proposals at quorate meetings, with at least one member in each category present and Category C and D members representing at least one third of the members present. ACECs should strive to reach decisions by general agreement; this need not involve unanimity.

Any ACEC member who has an interest, through research collaboration or otherwise, in a proposal or other agenda item considered by the ACEC, should as soon as practicable, declare such interest and withdraw from the meeting until the consideration of the matter has been completed.

Urgent considerations of new proposals or requests for major amendments to approved projects may only be considered in exceptional circumstances at quorate extra-ordinary meetings at the discretion of the ACEC Presiding Member.

Only minor amendments to approved projects, including changes to personnel and changes not likely to cause harm to the animals, may be considered by the ACEC Executive in non- quorate meetings and discussions. The ACEC Executive includes the Chairpersons, at least one Category C or D member, and, where possible, the spokesperson who originally led the review of the approved project.

Recommendations by the ACECs or their Executive are submitted to the DVC(R) for approval and added to the agenda of the next ACEC meeting for ratification. All meetings of the ACECs and the Executive bodies are minuted and records of all decisions maintained.

## **7. Oversight of Animal Care**

At UNSW the Director of Animal Care and Animal Care Officers ensure the humane, responsible and scientifically sound use of animals in accordance with the approved research protocols. They conduct regular monitoring of animal care and use programs and facilities, survey the health of experimental and breeding animals, investigate problems in animal welfare and perform or arrange for necropsies on animals which died or had to be euthanased as part of an adverse event. They are also the first point of contact for researchers, students and animal facility staff on veterinary and animal welfare advice.

The Director of Animal Care and Animal Care Officers lead the provision of training programs and professional development for research staff and students involved in animal research at UNSW and affiliated institutes. This includes establishing registers and assessment for competency in understanding the requirements of the Code and institutional requirements as well as in experimental and animal handling techniques.

## **8. External and Multi-centre Animal Research**

UNSW researchers do not need to seek ethical review by UNSW ACECs if the research is conducted elsewhere and an external ACEC registered with the appropriate Australian State authority provides the ethical review, approval and monitoring of the research according to the requirements of the Code. However, evidence of the external review and approval must be provided by the lead UNSW researcher to UNSW prior to the commencement of the research or participation in an external project as requested on the UNSW Animal Research Ethics website.

Projects involving the care and use of animals at more than one institution need to be approved and monitored by the responsible ACECs, where each ACEC is responsible for approving and monitoring animal care and use at its institution. Participating ACECs need to be aware of all aspects of the proposed use of animals and consider the cumulative effects on the wellbeing of animals involved.

The University reserves the right to place conditions on involvement or refuse involvement in external projects by its researchers should approved proposals not conform to the requirements of the Code, other relevant legislation or potentially expose the University to undue risk.

## **9. Schedule 8/9 Drug Usage and Reporting**

The use of Schedule 8 (Drugs of Addictions, S8) and 9 (Prohibited Substances, S9) substances for animal research at UNSW, including their storage and security arrangements, reflects the requirements of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 (NSW). Researchers intending to use S8 or S9 drugs apply for the authority to possess the substances after ACEC approval is obtained. NSW Health may then issue approval for the term of the ACEC approval. Authorised persons as issued by NSW Health are responsible for the storage, dispensing and use, monitoring and security of the substances and may delegate some of the tasks to drug custodians. Inventories of all S8 and S9 drugs under their authority are prepared two times per year and forwarded to RECS. The DVC(R) will be immediately notified of any non-compliance identified during the preparation of the inventories or any other times where possible non-compliance is noticed. RECS will monitor the NSW Poisons List published by NSW Health and update University procedures as required.

## **10. Research Conducted Overseas**

Where a research project involving animals is to be conducted overseas and the personnel responsible is a UNSW researcher or employee of an affiliated centre or institute, UNSW ACEC review is required. In addition, approval may be required from an overseas ethics committee or equivalent body where appropriate or available. At a minimum it is expected that the governing principles of the Code are met when conducting research overseas, taking into account compliance with local requirements.

Where UNSW or affiliated centre and institute researchers and research trainees intend to participate in animal research approved overseas they need to provide evidence of the external review and approval as requested on the UNSW Animal Research Ethics website. The university reserves the right to request that the requirements of the Code and local compliance are met and that any tensions with overseas legal or other processes are resolved as set out in the Code.

## 11. Monitoring of Research and Adverse Events

Animal research approved by UNSW is monitored by the University and its delegated bodies through mechanisms described in the Code, including annual progress and final reports for each approved project, internal and external audits of compliance with the approved protocol, and site visits and interviews with investigators and animal care staff. The University may suspend or withdraw approval for animal research where it is reasonable to believe that continuation of the research project may compromise animal welfare.

Chief investigators are required to monitor animal wellbeing and report unexpected adverse events to the ACECs and the Director of Animal Care as soon as possible in accordance to the UNSW Animal Research Adverse Event [Standard Operating Procedure](#). The committees and the Director of Animal Care may request additional monitoring and other actions as deemed appropriate.

Issues identified during monitoring or adverse event reporting which may possibly involve breaches of the UNSW Research Code of Conduct are immediately referred to the DVC(R) and dealt with according to the UNSW Procedure for Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct.

## 12. Complaints and Grievances

UNSW has established a complaints and grievances mechanism for UNSW personnel, students and persons external to the university. This process allows the voicing of concerns regarding animal research and the ethical review process.

Complaints about the conduct of research by UNSW staff and research trainees should be directed to the DVC(R). Allegations involving possible breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research are dealt with in accordance with the UNSW Research Code of Conduct.

Grievances about ethics review and processes by UNSW staff and students should be addressed to the Director of RECS.

## 13. Additional Operating Guidelines

Animal Research Ethics operating guidelines in support of this Procedure, such as rulings on record keeping, animal housing, competency and standard operating procedures for handling and surgical techniques are approved by the DVC(R) and displayed in their most current form on the ACEC website.

## 14. Review & History

Version 1.0 of this Procedure was developed to facilitate compliance with the Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013. The Procedure is scheduled for review every three years.

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice-President & Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	24 February 2015	25 February 2015	New document