

Animal Care and Ethics Committee Guidelines

Section 1 - Context/Overview

(1) NSW legislation directs the Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC) to approve only those studies for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th edition \(2013\)](#) ("the Code"). The ACEC must consider factors including the ethics of animal use, the impact on the well-being of the animals and the anticipated scientific or educational value of the project.

(2) These Guidelines support the University's [Animal Research Policy](#) and [Animal Care and Ethics Committee Procedures](#). They provide guidance on the ethical use of animals in research; the expectations of the ACEC for the practices and procedures used on research animals; and the implementation of the The 3Rs (replacement, refinement and reduction).

Section 2 - Guidelines

(3) The ACEC considers applications for the use of animals in research. During the application process applicants are asked to identify parts of the project that impact on animal well being and describe how they will reduce this impact.

(4) Areas of particular concern to the ACEC which should be addressed by the applicant are:

- a. Pain, suffering or distress in animals where anaesthesia or analgesia cannot be used because of the possible effects on experimental outcomes.
- b. Use of genetically modified animals where the modification is likely to cause pain or distress in the animal.
- c. Research involving uncontrolled environments where the effects of the intervention cannot be addressed (e.g. fieldwork where there may be effects on non-target species or where there is removal of animals with unknown effects on the remaining populations or ecosystem).
- d. Potentially severe or ethically contentious procedures highlighted in Clause 2.7.4.(v) of the Code; i.e.:
 - i. "Severe compromise to animal wellbeing and for which Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (The 3Rs) cannot be fully applied for the project to proceed, including:
 - Unrelieved pain and distress including where the planned end-points will allow severe adverse effects to occur.
 - death as the end point
 - reuse and repeated use of animals
 - prolonged restraint or confinement
 - ii. use of non-human primates."

(5) Applicants must fully disclose and discuss ethical issues associated with a project described in an application. Discussion of the ethical issues within an application will demonstrate awareness of such issues by the applicant and may minimise questions raised by the ACEC regarding these issues.

(6) Applicants must address The 3Rs – Replacement, Reduction and Refinement in their applications to the ACEC and are encouraged to report any methods used to implement The 3Rs to the ACEC. Such information is used in mandatory annual reporting to the Animal Research Review Panel.

(7) Applicants must be knowledgeable about the species to be used in their research protocol. They must justify the choice of species to the ACEC in terms of current knowledge about the species and its applicability to the proposed research methods and required outcomes.

(8) During consideration of an application at an ACEC meeting, the ACEC considers:

- a. the impact of the proposed project on the wellbeing of the animals;
- b. the benefit of the research (i.e. scientific or educational outcome); and
- c. the underlying ethical issues associated with the project, both those identified by the applicant and those identified by ACEC members.

(9) The question of whether the project should be performed at all may be a legitimate issue. During the meeting, the ACEC decides whether the ethical issues associated with an application require open discussion during its consideration. During such discussion, constructive debate is encouraged. Projects may be rejected because the ACEC consider that they are ethically inappropriate, regardless of their scientific or educational merit.

(10) The ACEC may also identify other issues that, while outside their area of responsibility, should be considered by the University administration (e.g. reputational or indemnity issues). While not affecting the approval by the ACEC of the project, the ACEC will refer these matters to University administration for attention and they may affect the issuing of an Animal Research Authority by the University.

(11) The ACEC has developed a series of 'Methodology' documents that provide further guidance to animal research personnel as to the ACEC's expectations in specific areas and techniques used in animal research. These documents should be consulted when planning experiments and writing applications.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	13th December 2013
Review Date	31st December 2019
Approval Authority	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation
Approval Date	13th December 2013
Expiry Date	2nd October 2019
Responsible Executive	Alan Hales Manager, Research Integrity Unit
Enquiries Contact	

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Personnel" - In relation to a party, any employee, officer, agent, contractor, sub-contractor, student or volunteer of that party.