

Animal Ethics Committee

Terms of Reference

VU Research Services Office

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Version 11.0

Acknowledgement of Country



Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/YUgarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
1. Definitions	4
2. Function of the Committee	5
3. Responsibility of Committee Members	8
4. Membership of the Committee & Term of Office	9
5. Nominations & Appointment of the Committee	11
6. Executive Officer	12
7. Business Operations	13
8. Financial Arrangements	18
9. Insurance of Members	18
10. Revision of Terms of Reference & Operating Procedures	18

1. Definitions

- 1.1 **Activity** shall mean any action or group of actions undertaken that involves the care and use of animals, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry of those animals. An Activity may involve one or more procedures. Activities are described in an application to the Committee. See also 'Project'.
- 1.2 **Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)** shall mean an AEC, as outlined in the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (the Code)*, 8th Edition 2013, and under Part 3 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (POCTA) Act 1986* and *POCTA Regulations 2019*.
- 1.3 **AEC Advisory Committee (AECAC)** shall mean a committee within the Institution that supports the work of the AEC by providing expert advice, fostering ethical decision-making, and promoting the welfare of animals used in research.
- 1.4 **the Code** shall mean the current edition of the *Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*, mandatory under *Part 3* of the *POCTA Act 1986* and *POACTA Regulations 2019*.
- 1.5 **Committee** shall mean the Victoria University AEC.
- 1.6 **the Department** shall mean the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action or equivalent and current State regulatory department.
- 1.7 **Institution** shall mean Victoria University.
- 1.8 **Investigator** shall mean the primary and co-investigators named on a Proposal or Project.
- 1.9 **Licensee** shall mean the named licence holder on the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence for the Institution.
- 1.10 **Member** shall mean a person appointed to the Committee by the organisation.
- 1.11 **Minister** shall mean the Victorian Minister for Agriculture.
- 1.12 **Minor Modifications** shall mean changes to a protocol that do not alter the substantive procedures or processes and have no impact on the management of animal welfare.
- 1.13 **POCTA Act and Regulations** shall mean the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and Regulations 2019*, as located at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>.
- 1.14 **Proposal** shall mean that as defined in the Code: *a written application to carry out a project for consideration by an AEC*.
- 1.15 **Project** shall mean that as defined in the Code: *an activity or group of activities that form a discrete piece of work that aims to achieve a scientific purpose*. A Project cannot commence until approved by the Committee. A Project must cease once the Committee has suspended or withdrawn its approval.
- 1.16 **Scientific procedures** shall be defined as in Part 3 of *The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*.

2. Function of the Committee

The primary function of the Committee, on behalf of the Institution, is to ensure that all use and care of animals is conducted in accordance with the Code and relevant Victorian legislation. The Committee monitors the care and use of animals by inspecting animals, animal housing, and the conduct of procedures, and/or reviewing records and reports.

2.1 General Functions of the Committee

The Committee must:

- 2.1.1 Approve and review guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, housed, held, captured, marked, banded and used for scientific or teaching (including observation) purposes on behalf of the Institution.
- 2.1.2 Examine and approve written Proposals, as submitted on the agreed Institution's application form, for up to 3 years, subject to annual reporting of approved Projects. The committee may decide that:
 - (i) an application to commence a Project or Activity, or amend an approved Project or Activity, is approved a) with or b) without conditions, c) deferred subject to modification, or d) not approved.
 - (ii) following review of the annual report for an approved Project or Activity and possible consultation with the Investigator, the approval for the Project or Activity is continued, suspended, modified or discontinued.
 - (iii) an approval is suspended or withdrawn.
- 2.1.3 Review annual and final reports of Projects, according to section 2 of the Code.
- 2.1.4 Monitor the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals involved in an approved Project on an ongoing basis to assess compliance with the Code and the decisions of the Committee. The Committee must establish provisions for monitoring that include ensuring appropriate records of animal care and use are maintained by the Investigator and that unexpected or adverse events that impact on the welfare of the animals are reported to and reviewed by the Committee. The Committee must ensure that identified problems and issues receive appropriate follow-up and, if necessary, refer suspected breaches of the Code to the Institution, and/or, where appropriate, the Department.
- 2.1.5 Implement, as needed, monitoring of Activities that are likely to cause pain or distress at an early phase during the conduct of the Project or Activity. This requirement should be a condition of approval for the Project or Activity. These Activities could include the study of pain, responses to stressors, models of human and animal diseases, or attempts to change behaviour by

physical or chemical means. Consideration should be given to the need and value of conducting pilot studies, with the continuation of the activities in the Project being contingent on the Committee's review of the pilot study outcomes and planned next steps (see the Code s2.3.14 and s2.4.8 (xvi)).

- 2.1.6 Conduct inspections of relevant sites and premises and monitor Project Activities approved by the Committee at least annually. The Committee should determine the frequency and timing of inspections. Influencing factors include the number and accessibility of sites, the number and types of Projects and Activities, and whether inspections can be combined with scheduled AEC meetings. In addition, the Committee may decide that certain Projects or Activities require more frequent inspection than others. Inspections may be announced or unannounced. A Committee member who is external to the Institute (Category D) should participate in site inspections, together with a Category C member of the Committee.
- 2.1.7 Maintain records of inspections, which include the names of attendees, observations, any identified problems, recommended actions, ongoing or outstanding issues, and the outcome of any action items.
- 2.1.8 Implement, as needed, procedures that cover the delegation of authority to suitably qualified people to monitor animal care and use, including Projects and Activities conducted at remote sites (e.g. fieldwork), and detail how reports of such monitoring are to be provided to the Committee (e.g. using still or video images).
- 2.1.9 Recommend to the Institution any measures, including training or supervision, needed to ensure that the standards of the Code are maintained.
- 2.1.10 Ensure that the Institution fulfills its responsibility to facilitate on-going education of Committee members.
- 2.1.11 Establish protocols to authorise the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal. The Committee will ensure appropriate consideration of emergency treatment or euthanasia procedures in each Project it considers. The Committee will nominate a person who is authorised to respond to emergencies. This will usually be the Institute veterinarian. Where possible this person should be a Category A member of the Committee. In the event of that person being unavailable, the Investigator named on the Project as being responsible for emergencies will be notified, who will then take appropriate action. Any action taken in the event of an emergency must be reported promptly in writing to the Project Investigator and the Committee, including reasons for action taken. (Refer to the AEC Adverse Events Procedure (AEP0401) and, if required, AEC Non-Compliant Events Procedure (AEP0402))
- 2.1.12 Maintain a record of Proposals and Projects for at least 5 years.
- 2.1.13 Deal with alleged non-compliances with the Code and grievances with Committee decisions, in accordance with Institution policy and procedures

governing animal welfare complaints and non-compliant events. This may also include referral of the matter to the Institution research leadership team, Research Ethics and Integrity, AEC Advisory Committee (AECAC), and the Department, as required (see also section 7.8). The Institution must have procedures for dealing with complaints and non-compliance with the Code, complaints related to the AEC process, and irreconcilable differences between the AEC. These procedures are available via the [Institution policy portal](#).

2.1.14 Facilitate annual audits by the Institution.

2.1.15 Ensure coordination with the AEC Advisory Committee where appropriate.

2.1.16 Provide advice on any relevant matters referred by the Institution.

2.1.17 Report at least annually to the Institution on the Committee's activities, and advise on:

- (i) numbers and types of Projects and Activities assessed, and approved or rejected
- (ii) the physical facilities for the care and use of animals by the institution
- (iii) actions that have supported the educational and training needs of AEC members and people involved in the care and use of animals
- (iv) administrative or other difficulties experienced
- (v) any matters that may affect the institution's ability to maintain compliance with the Code and, if appropriate, suitable recommendations.

2.1.18 Ensure procedures are in place so that during their appointment to the Committee, and before any deliberations of the Committee, members must declare any interest that could influence the objectivity of their decision making. Procedures must allow for declaration of interests and management of perceived or actual conflicts of interest involving committee members and experts whose advice is sought by the Committee, such that individuals with a conflict of interest remove themselves from the Committee's decision-making on matters that relate to the conflict of interest. Where the Committee Chairperson is perceived to have a conflict of interest, a Deputy Chairperson will be appointed from the other Committee members. This will usually be a member who is not an employee of the Institution.

2.2 Withdrawal or Suspension of Project Approval

The Committee may withdraw or suspend approval for any Project where it is deemed necessary and in line with the [VU Animal Welfare Non-Compliant Events Procedure](#). All or some of the following will be required for a decision to withdraw or suspend a Project:

2.2.1 An investigation implemented by the Committee.

- 2.2.2 Convene an investigation by the AEC Advisory Committee (AECAC) that will include the Committee Chairperson (or Acting Chairperson) and a Category A or Category C member of the Committee.
- 2.2.3 Consider interviewing all parties related to the matter.
- 2.2.4 The AECAC, or Members of the Committee, will prepare a report for consideration by the Committee. The Committee will review the findings of the investigation, and may report the findings to the Department, in addition to the Licensee, and stipulate recommendations and remedial actions.
- 2.2.5 The decision must be communicated by the Chairperson of the Committee to all relevant parties, including the Investigators, the Institute Director, and Animal Facility personnel.
- 2.2.6 Provide appeals process for the Project Investigator.
- 2.2.7 If the Project is suspended or withheld, the subsequent continuation of the Project, and/or publishing of the data, will be subject to the Committee's consideration and approval. The Committee will confirm that the issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Committee prior to lifting suspension or reinstating ethical approval.
- 2.2.8 Additional requirements may be stipulated, subject to the advice of the Department and/or Licensee.

3. Responsibility of Committee Members

The primary responsibility of members is to ensure that the use of animals for scientific procedures and teaching is ethically justified, provides for their welfare, and incorporates the principles of *Replacement, Reduction and Refinement* based on collective experience and knowledge, and not to represent any particular interest group.

3.1 Confidentiality

- 3.1.1 Intellectual property interests of the Institution, individual privacy and maintenance of commercial-in-confidence obligations may be the subject of confidentiality and *in camera* policy may be applied during Committee meetings. Institutions are required to inform Committee Members in writing how Members may seek advice relevant to fulfilling their role and responsibilities without breaching confidentiality. Following receipt and acknowledgement of this advice, Committee members may be required to sign a Member declaration to maintain confidentiality. Members must not be precluded from seeking advice and guidance, including external advice, on matters pertaining to ethics and animal welfare in research. Member responsibilities include obtaining advice relating to procedural techniques, procedural burden, pain management, experimental end-points, monitoring, animal husbandry and accommodation from a range of reputable sources.

3.1.2 A Member resigning or retiring from the Committee shall not, without the express approval of the Institution, expose or discuss confidential information accruing from membership.

3.2 Conflict of Interest:

3.2.1 Where a Member has any direct or indirect interest in any matter of business before the Committee, which may be construed as involving pecuniary or other gain, that interest shall be declared to the Committee.

3.2.2 Where a Member so declares, the Committee must ensure that Members remove themselves from the Committee's decision-making on matters that relate to the conflict of interest.

4. Membership of the Committee & Term of Office

4.1 Term of Office

Unless otherwise determined by the Institution, the term of office of each Member shall be 3 years and may be renewed for an additional term of three years. Current Members may be reselected. There is no limit to reoccurring terms.

4.2 Number and Category of Members:

4.2.1 The membership of the Committee shall comprise of at least one (1) Member per category, all of whom will have a genuine interest and commitment to the ethical use of animals for scientific procedures or teaching. The Committee must comprise and meet with at least one appointed person from each of the following categories:

- A.** A person with qualifications in Veterinary Science and with experience relevant to the activities of those submitting a Proposal to the Committee. Veterinarians who lack this experience must familiarise themselves with the biology and clinical characteristics of the species of animals used.
- B.** A suitably qualified person with substantial recent experience in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities. This will usually entail possession of a higher degree in research.
- C.** A person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who is not employed or otherwise by the Institution or any potential Proposal applicant, and who is not involved in the care and use of animals for scientific procedures or teaching. Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this category. While not representing an animal welfare organisation, that person should, where possible, be selected on the basis of active membership of and nomination by, such an organisation.

- D. A person who is both independent of the institution and any potential Proposal applicant and who has never been involved in the use of animals for scientific procedures or teaching, either in their employment of beyond their under-graduate education. Category D members should be viewed by the wider community as bringing a completely independent view to the Committee and must not fit the requirements of any other category.
- 4.2.2 In selecting all Members, the Institution will have regard for the need for knowledge and experience concerning ethical use of animals in scientific procedures or teaching. In addition to the prescribed Categories A to D, the Institution may appoint persons with knowledge of the routine care and husbandry of animals involved in Projects.
- 4.2.3 If the Committee has more than four Members, Categories C plus D should represent no less than one third of all the Members. To ensure that meetings are quorate, Members may communicate via teleconference. Non-quorate meetings will be cancelled and reconvened within 1-4 weeks.
- 4.2.4 The Committee must have a quorum in attendance to conduct meetings. A quorum shall consist of one Member from each category. Should the meeting not be quorate, decisions must not be made on Proposals (see 7.4.2).
- 4.2.5 Before appointment, all Members should acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the Terms of Reference of the AEC and any requirements for confidentiality required by the Institution, including how advice may be sought without breaching confidentiality.

4.3 Varying & Replacing the Members, Absentee Members:

- 4.3.1 The Committee may recommend to the Institution that membership be amended.
- 4.3.2 The Committee may co-opt other persons with relevant experience or expertise as required, including persons with experience in the routine care of animals for scientific procedures or teaching. Co-opted individuals invited to specific meetings to provide their expertise to the Committee cannot exercise voting rights and must adhere to the general principles of confidentiality as per voting Members.
- 4.3.3 In the event of a Member being obliged or electing to retire or resign during the term of the Committee, or being removed by the Institution, the Institution will seek nominations for a replacement Member. Details of the eligibility of the nominated Member should be provided to the Department prior to attending the first AEC meeting. The Department may provide guidance advising if the Member suits the criteria of the nominated category.
- 4.3.4 Where a Member fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee without providing an apology or excuse, or is demonstrably unable to maintain an adequate level of participation, the Committee shall recommend to the

Institution that the Member be replaced by a new appointee of the same category.

5. Nominations & Appointment of the Committee

5.1 Nominations of Category A to D Members

The Institution shall seek:

- 5.1.1 Existing Victorian AEC Members, of any category, to nominate themselves.
- 5.1.2 Other potential Members that fulfil one of the above categories, either within (excluding Category D) or outside the Institution.
- 5.1.3 Veterinarians, with experience specific to the species of animals used by the institution to nominate themselves. One nomination will be selected to be a Member.
- 5.1.4 Category C members or animal welfare organisations may nominate a Member. One nomination will be selected to be a Member (see 4.2.1.C).

5.2 Appointment of Category A to D Members

- 5.2.1 Appointments to the AEC will be made by the Licence Nominee.
- 5.2.2 The Licence Nominee may withdraw membership at any time on the advice of the Committee.
- 5.2.3 Members will be required to sign a letter of undertaking regarding maintaining confidentiality and acceptance of the Terms of Reference in accordance with item 2.2.22 of the Code.

5.3 Reappointment of the Committee

Not less than three months prior to the expiry of the term of appointment of the Committee, and subject to the continuance of the Committee, the Institution shall call for nominations in accordance with 5.1 for the next term of appointment. With the objective of continuance of effective Committee functioning, a staggered re-appointment of the Committee members will be attempted. A letter confirming renewal will be sent out to each Member. This letter will confirm appointment of another three-year term.

5.4 Chairperson

- 5.4.1 The Institution will appoint a Chairperson who possesses the relevant attributes to bring impartiality to the consideration of Proposals submitted to the Committee, skills to manage the business of an AEC, to communicate, negotiate and resolve conflict with an understanding of the relevant ethical and animal welfare issues. The Chairperson must accept the agreed Terms of Reference as a condition of appointment. An official letter with confirmation of

appointment (three-year period) will be sent out with a signoff from the DVC of Research & Impact. Whilst the Chairperson may fulfil the requirements of a Category A-D member as well, it is recommended that the role of the Chairperson be separate from any Committee Category member roles.

The Chairperson will:

- 5.4.2 Ensure that the Committee operates in accordance with the principles and requirements of the Code, the relevant policies of the Institution, and the agreed Committee procedures.
- 5.4.3 Ensure that proposals are considered by the Committee and the outcomes conveyed to Investigators in a timely manner.
- 5.4.4 Advise Institution management regarding the level of resourcing required by the Committee.
- 5.4.5 Represent the Committee in any negotiations with management.
- 5.4.6 Oversee all requirements of the Committee to report and review its operations as outlined in the Code.
- 5.4.7 Ensure AEC records are maintained and made available for review by the Institution and authorised external reviews.
- 5.4.8 Provide a report to the Institution at least annually which details the Activities of the Committee (see 2.3.28 of the Code)
- 5.4.9 In the absence of the Chairperson at any meeting of the Committee, the members present shall appoint one of their Members as Acting Chairperson at that meeting or utilise the Deputy Chair (see s2.1.18).

6. Executive Officer

- 6.1 The VU Research Services Office shall provide an Executive Officer to provide support services to the Committee. The Executive Officer will be the first point of contact for Investigators wishing to access the Committee.
- 6.2 The Executive Officer will not usually be a voting member but should have substantial experience in administration of an ethics committee and detailed knowledge of related issues.
- 6.3 The Executive Officer will ensure that all relevant documents (minutes, correspondence, Proposals, Project reports, Committee decisions and Committee procedural documents), as appropriate, are distributed to the Committee prior to each meeting, as well as maintaining a system for the provision of audit.
 - 6.3.1 All relevant documentation related to the Committee and its decision-making, including, but not limited to, Proposals, Projects, modifications, procedures, adverse incidents, and non-compliances, is to be filed by the Executive Officer.

7. Business Operations

7.1 Conduct of Meetings

7.1.1 Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the operating procedures established by the Committee under these Terms of Reference. Proposals must be assessed in accordance with the relevant information required in section 2 of the Code.

7.2 Correspondence

7.2.1 Institutional, Project or procedural related correspondence from and to the Committee between meetings shall be circulated to all Members promptly and a copy filed by the Executive Officer.

7.2.2 Written correspondence conveying the Committee's advice to the Investigator or the Institution, as appropriate, shall be completed as soon as practicable after the relevant meeting.

7.3 Meeting Frequency and Documents

7.3.1 General meetings:

The time and venue of general meetings of the Committee shall be determined by the Committee, but should aim to meet at least six times per year to facilitate regular consideration of Proposals, Projects and related matters in accordance with client needs, unless the Department has provided an exemption.

7.3.2 Special meetings:

The full Committee may elect to conduct special meetings, if circumstances or the nature of business is urgent or extraordinary.

7.3.3 Meeting agenda and relevant documents:

The Chairperson shall ensure that the meeting agenda will consider Committee business as required to meet the Committee's responsibilities. The Executive Officer shall circulate not less than 5 working days prior to a general meeting or a special meeting, an agenda setting out standing business before the Committee and all relevant Proposals and related correspondence.

7.3.4 Meeting minutes:

The Executive Officer will maintain and circulate to Members, as soon as practicable after each meeting, minutes of the meeting specifying each item of business discussed, summarising essential items of discussion, and recording the decisions reached or advice resolved and actions to be taken. The minutes will be confirmed at the subsequent meeting of the Committee.

7.4 Attendance of Meetings

- 7.4.1 A quorum of the Committee is constituted by a membership of at least one representative of each of the Categories A to D. If the Committee has more than a quorum of members, Categories C plus D should represent no less than one third of the members.
- 7.4.2 Unless a quorum is in attendance, the Committee may discuss Proposals but must not approve or reject Proposals (see 4.2.4).
- 7.4.3 Attendance of quorate meetings may be facilitated by video-linking, teleconferencing, or other remote linking technology of some or all Members in circumstances where face-to-face attendance is not possible. Where video-linking/teleconferencing is utilised, Members may authorise the Executive Officer or Chairperson to record discussions and decision outcomes.
- 7.4.4 Any duly convened meeting at which a quorum is in attendance shall be competent to consider and resolve any business of the Committee and shall have and may exercise all the functions of the Committee.

7.5 Submission and Approval of Proposals

- 7.5.1 Only those Proposals that conform to the requirements of all relevant sections of the Code and legislation may be approved.
- 7.5.2 The Committee has the authority to accept or reject Proposals:
- 7.5.2.1 If the Committee deems that modifications are necessary, the Proposal may be sent back to the Investigator to be re-written.
- 7.5.2.2 The Committee may decide that:
- (i) a Proposal to commence a Project or Activity, or amend an approved Project or Activity, is approved a) with or b) without conditions, c) deferred subject to modification, or d) not approved.
 - (ii) following review of the annual report for a Project or approved Activity and possible consultation with the Investigator, the approval for the Project or Activity is a) continued, b) suspended, c) modified or d) discontinued, or
 - (iii) an approval is suspended or withdrawn.
- 7.5.2.3 Proposals must be considered and approved only at scheduled or special meetings of the Committee. Note that minor modifications to existing Projects or Activities can be approved at any time by the Executive (see 7.6.1).
- 7.5.2.4 The Committee has the authority to impose conditions as part of the approval process (e.g., approval for new applications may be delayed until any outstanding Annual or Final reports are provided by the Investigator, or approval to commence full-scale Activities may be contingent upon the outcome of a pilot study)
- 7.5.3 Minor modifications to Proposals:

- 7.5.3.1 *Minor modifications* shall mean changes to a protocol that do not alter the substantive procedures or processes and have no impact on the management of animal welfare and do not represent an increase in animal numbers above those approved in the original application.
- 7.5.3.2 If minor modifications are required to meet the requirements of the Committee, i.e. the Proposal is *approved with conditions*, the Committee may nominate representatives to review the responses of the proposed modifications. The Project may proceed subject to the nominated Committee representatives being satisfied of adequate responses to the Committee requirements. The minor modifications are reviewed and ratification at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 7.5.3.3 The Committee should not nominate representatives to review minor modifications of a Proposal where there are technical or welfare considerations pending, or where the Committee has not been able to approve the Proposal pending modifications that are minor or administrative in nature, due to the number or potential implications of these to the final decision. In this instance the Proposal is *deferred subject to modification*.
- 7.5.4 The Committee is only required to consider completed and signed protocols submitted by the Investigator or Teacher. The Institution may also elect to have Proposals signed off by other relevant people such as student supervisor, animal facility manager, or the relevant Licensee/s.
- 7.5.5 Projects or Activities must not commence before written approval is given by the Committee.
- 7.5.6 Where a Project has a standard operating procedure (SOP) referred to in the Proposal, the AEC members will be provided with a copy of that SOP. (See the Code s2.2.36)

7.6 Executive:

The Committee may establish an Executive at any time from the available Members and must include the Committee Chairperson and at least one Member from Category C or D. The Executive must not approve Proposals and may only:

- 7.6.1 Approve minor modifications to Projects or Activities for review and ratification at the next meeting of the Committee, subject to the following:
- 7.6.1.1 The minor modifications involve no additional impact on animal welfare (see 7.5.3.1) and there are special circumstances in which changes are required.
- 7.6.1.2 Addition of new Investigators to a Project is considered a minor modification, under the proviso that no project work is conducted without appropriate training and supervision by an Investigator with sufficient experience to provide training, and the new Investigator has been signed off as competent.

7.6.1.3 It is preferable, and will therefore be standard practice, that all minor modifications of Projects go to a full Committee for approval.

7.6.2 Specify urgent action required in response to reports of adverse events or emergencies.

7.7 Voting

7.7.1 Decision outcomes at a meeting of the Committee shall be determined by consensus as defined by the Code. Where consensus cannot be reached after reasonable effort to resolve differences, the Committee should explore with the Investigator ways of modifying the Project that may lead to consensus. If consensus is still unachievable, the Committee should only proceed to a majority decision after Members have been allowed a period of time to review their positions, followed by further discussion.

7.7.2 No person at a meeting, other than an appointed Member, may have the right to vote.

7.8 Grievance Procedures

The following grievance procedures will be adopted if there is dissent:

7.8.1 In the case of dissension with a Committee decision, the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, may undertake the following procedure:

7.8.1.1 Attempt to resolve the matter with the dissenting person(s).

7.8.1.2 Seek an opinion from the Licensee or nominated responsible person, either at the Committee meeting or as soon as possible after a Committee meeting.

7.8.1.3 Place the matter before the Licensee or nominated responsible person at a formal meeting for resolution. This meeting will be attended by the Chairperson, Executive Officer, dissenting person(s) and other nominated Member(s).

7.8.1.4 Refer the decision and discussions back to the Committee.

7.8.2 Where AEC requirements are not being met:

7.8.2.1 The Committee receives a report of an alleged incident, either prior to or at a regular meeting of the Committee where the matter is discussed. This shall be dealt with as per the VU Animal Welfare Policy and Non-Compliance Procedure.

7.8.2.2 The Committee will investigate the report and seek a written explanation of the incident from the Investigator or other relevant persons.

7.8.2.3 Depending on the level of non-compliance, the report may be distributed to all Members for comment and if necessary, an extraordinary Committee meeting convened for further discussion.

- 7.8.2.4 The Chairperson will report the incident and the Committee's views(s) to the Licensee for information and may provide recommendations for further action.
 - 7.8.2.5 Should a Member, after the above procedures have been exhausted, still be unsatisfied that appropriate action has or will be taken to safeguard animal welfare, then that Member should advise the Licensee and may report their dissent to the Department.
 - 7.8.2.6 All parties have a right of appeal, to be submitted in writing within one month of the outcome being published.
- 7.8.3 In the event of dissension between the Institution and an Independent External Review Panel:
- 7.8.3.1 The Institution will attempt to resolve the matter with the Independent External Review Panel.
 - 7.8.3.2 The Institution will seek the opinion of the Licensee regarding their complaint. If the Licensee has appointed the Independent External Review Panel, the Institution will seek the opinion of the Vice Chancellor of the Institution regarding their complaint.
 - 7.8.3.3 The Institution will submit the complaint to the Independent External Review Panel in writing.
 - 7.8.3.4 The Institution expectation would be to receive a written response to the grievance from the Independent External Review Panel within one calendar month.
 - 7.8.3.5 The Independent External Review Panel response may be distributed to all Members for comment and if necessary, an extraordinary Committee meeting may be convened for further discussion.
 - 7.8.3.6 If the Institution and Independent External Review Panel are unable to resolve the matter, then the complaint shall be referred to the Licensee or Vice Chancellor (in the case the Licensee has appointed the Independent External Review Panel) and the Department.
 - 7.8.3.7 In the case that the Independent External Review Panel is the Department or associated with the Department, and the matter cannot be resolved, the Institution will refer the matter to the Minister.
 - 7.8.3.8 The Institution and the Licensee and other appropriate parties will be informed of the outcome, and this shall be documented in the meeting following resolution.
 - 7.8.3.9 All parties have a right of appeal to both the process of the review and the outcome of the review, to be submitted in writing within one month of the outcome being published. All appeal decisions will be communicated to the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.
- 7.8.4 In the event of a dissension between the Committee and the Institution:

- 7.8.4.1 The Committee will aim to resolve the matter with the Institution.
- 7.8.4.2 The Committee will submit the complaint in writing to the Institution and Licensee.
- 7.8.4.3 In the event the complaint cannot be resolved by the Committee and the Institution, it will be referred to the Department.
- 7.8.4.4 All correspondence from the relevant parties will be distributed to a Committee Executive for comment and if required, an extraordinary meeting of the full Committee will be convened for further discussion.
- 7.8.4.5 The Committee, the Licensee and other appropriate parties will be informed of the outcome, and this shall be documented in the meeting minutes following the resolution.
- 7.8.4.6 All parties have a right of appeal, to be submitted in writing within one month of the outcome being published. All appeal decisions will be communicated to the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

8. Financial Arrangements

8.1 Honorarium

The Institution recognises the time and effort of the Committees external members, and as such, will provide an honorarium to the Committees external members that will be determined by the VU Research Services Office from time to time.

8.2 Expenses

The Institution will provide travel expenses to the Committees external members in the form of taxi vouchers or visitor parking permits. The form of reimbursement will be determined from time to time by the by the VU Research Services Office.

9. Insurance of Members

- 9.1 Under 14 (3) of the *Accident Compensation Act 1985*, an appointed member of the Committee is deemed to be an employee of the Crown while attending meetings or while undertaking any directed or approved Activity on behalf of the Committee. Cover is afforded by WorkCover.

10. Revision of Terms of Reference & Operating Procedures

10.1. Review

The Terms of Reference and the Operating Procedures will be reviewed **three-yearly**, or as necessary in response to changes in the legislation, institutional policy or concerns expressed by members of this Committee.

10.2. Changes and Amendments

Changes and amendments to the Terms of Reference will require the endorsement of the Committee and approval of the appropriate VU Committee (e.g., VUREG, RRTC, Academic Board).