ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE GUIDELINE - ROUTINE ANIMAL CARE AND HUSBANDRY

1 PURPOSE

The Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is required by the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (‘the Code’, incorporated by reference into the New South Wales animal research legislation) to ‘review applications for activities associated with the care and management of animals… and approve only those activities that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code’ and ‘monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities’ (section 2.3.2).

This Guideline has been produced to inform animal research personnel about the requirements of the AEC for activities associated with the routine care and husbandry of research animals.

2 SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all animals held for the purpose of research by Macquarie University animal research personnel under an Animal Research Authority issued by Macquarie University’s Animal Ethics Committee.

3 DEFINITIONS

Commonly defined terms are located in the University Glossary. The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Guideline:

Animal carer means any person involved in the care of animals that are used for scientific purposes, including during their acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry;

Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) means the Macquarie University Committee set up under New South Wales animal research legislation to consider applications for the use of animals for research or teaching;

Animal Research Authority or ARA means the authority issued by Macquarie University on the recommendation of the Animal Ethics Committee and which covers the animal care and use protocol as approved by the AEC;

Animal research personnel means all personnel involved in the care or use of animals for research or teaching purposes, and includes researchers, research students, volunteers and collaborators on animal research projects, as well as animal carers.
Animal Care and Husbandry means the routine activities associated with feeding, watering, and housing animals. It includes routine veterinary treatments such as worming and vaccination but does not include any activity carried out as a part of a research protocol.

4 GUIDELINES

Overview

As required by the Code, animal care and husbandry procedures MUST:

1. Be based on current best practice.
2. Ensure species or strain specific physiological and behavioural needs are met.
3. Be carried out by animal care staff who are either:
   a. Competent in animal care and husbandry for the species involved or,
   b. Being trained to competency under the direct supervision of competent animal carers.
4. Be documented and reviewed by the AEC.
5. NOT commence until approval has been granted by the AEC.

Gaining AEC Approval for Animal Care and Husbandry

The AEC has approved Macquarie Animal Research Services (MARS) animal care and husbandry Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). MARS animal carers and their experience and qualifications in animal care have also been approved by the AEC. When animal care and husbandry for animals held under ARAs is performed by MARS staff no additional approval is required.

Where it is proposed that personnel other than MARS staff perform routine animal care and husbandry or any variation from the MARS approved animal care and husbandry procedures are proposed, approval must be obtained from the AEC prior to instituting the changes, and must cease if approval is withdrawn.

Approval for animal care and husbandry personnel or procedures is obtained by submitting an application to the AEC via the online application system. The following information must be provided:

1. Documented animal care and husbandry procedures.
2. Details of the type of housing provided for each species requested.
3. Details of the personnel carrying out the animal care and husbandry, their qualifications and experience and the name of the competent supervisor if the personnel are not competent in animal care and husbandry.

Applications for animal care and husbandry are submitted separately from those for research activities.

Animal carers will be expected to complete the relevant modules of the Research Animal Care and Ethics (RACE) training program.

5 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Animal Research Act NSW (1985)
6 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Animal Ethics Committee Terms of Reference and Procedures.

7 NOTES

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