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	Policy Criteria for Assessment of Animal Ethics Committee Membership	

1. Introduction

A properly constituted and effectively functioning AEC is an essential component in the process by which accredited animal research establishments implement the principles that underlie both the *Animal Research Act 1985* and the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013*.

The requirements for AEC membership are set out in Section 2 of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013*.

The CHM Alliance Board evaluates overall membership of the AEC to ensure that:

- The committee has the expertise and diversity to enable it properly to assess research proposals and to make informed decisions
- Animal welfare and community perspectives are adequately represented
- The balance of membership is satisfactory
- There is at least one separate member for each of the Categories A to D and that members are not appointed to more than one Category

2. Membership Categories

2.1 Category A (Veterinarian)

A degree in veterinary science with experience relevant to the species used and activities conducted in the accredited establishment is the chief requirement. Members without veterinary qualifications would not be considered suitable.

2.2 Category B (Researcher / Trainer)

The members must demonstrate appropriate recent research or teaching experience. This experience should be relevant to the species used and the activities conducted in the organisation. This will usually entail the possession of higher degree(s) and/or details of research or teaching undertakings. A statement verifying appropriate experience will be required if there is any doubt concerning the qualification of the member.

2.3 Category C (Animal Welfare)

It is essential that people in the animal welfare category:

- (a) have a demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals

- (b) do not have any involvement with the organisation
- (c) do not have any current involvement with the care, supply or use of animals in research or teaching.

In addressing the suitability of the Category C members the following features are desirable:

- (a) active involvement in promoting animal welfare
- (b) animal welfare organisation membership
- (c) nomination by an animal welfare organisation

Veterinarians with specific animal welfare interest and experience may meet the requirements of this category.

The Category C member is not a representative of any animal welfare organisation on the committee.

2.4 Category D (Independent)

The Category D member must be an independent person who does not currently and has not previously conducted scientific or teaching activities using animals, and who is not an employee of a CHM Alliance company.

The person must not be directly or indirectly associated with the company (for example a member of the Board of Directors of the company).

Conduct of research or teaching using animals will only be considered to refer to research or teaching done at a postgraduate level (ie excluding undergraduate or school involvement).

As well as being independent of animal research or teaching, Category D members should bring an 'independence of thinking' to the AEC. The members of this category will therefore be members of the community who do not have a background of biological scientific training and who can thus contribute a different perspective to the deliberations of the Committee.

2.5 Other Members

Additional members may be included on the AEC outside the above four categories.

The appointment of employees such as the animal house manager, farm manager or other animal care staff who are responsible for the daily care of animals at the accredited establishment or animal supply unit, is strongly encouraged.

If there is any doubt as to the ability of an individual that the organisation wishes to appoint to its AEC to meet the criteria applying to any of the categories A to D, then s/he should be appointed outside these categories. It should be noted that the balance of membership of the AEC as required by Clause 2.2.8 of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013* must be maintained.

3. Alternate members

A quorum for AEC meetings must be maintained in accordance with Section 2 of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 8th Edition 2013* which requires that a quorum must include at least one

member from Category A, B, C and D. It should be noted that AEC membership should be such that absenteeism will not result in failure to reach a quorum or lack of balance within the committee.

In order to ensure that a quorum can be maintained more than one member in each category of membership will be appointed. Members appointed will be full members of the AEC and attend on a regular basis.

4. Observers

There may be a need for the AEC to have observers present at meetings. Observers should only be invited to attend a meeting if the AEC considers that their advice or expertise will reasonably be required by the AEC in order to carry out its functions.

In most cases observers should only attend AEC meetings on an 'as needs' basis rather than on a regular basis. Examples of exceptions to this principle would be:

- Animal care staff who, if not members of the AEC, may be required to be present at AEC meetings on a regular basis to provide information to the AEC on animal care and management
- People providing administrative and secretarial support to the AEC

Observers do not have voting rights and will be provided with a copy of the: *Conflicts of Interest with Members of Animal Ethics Committees* prior to attending a meeting.