

ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Animal Ethics Committee is to ensure that all care and use of animals conducted by GOTAFE complies with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition (2013) – The Code*.

The governing principle is that all activities, including projects, that involve the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (which includes education and training) must provide adequate evidence to demonstrate that the proposed use of animals is justified, and:

- a) Be subject to ethical review, approval and monitoring by the Animal Ethics Committee
- b) Commence only after approval has been granted by the Animal Ethics Committee
- c) Be conducted in accordance with Animal Ethics Committee approval
- d) Cease if approval from the Animal Ethics Committee is suspended or withdrawn

2. DEFINITIONS

As per Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes – 8th edition (2013)	
Animal Welfare	An Animals quality of life, which encompasses the diverse ways an animal may perceive and respond to their circumstances, ranging from a positive state of wellbeing to a negative state of distress.
Ethics	A framework in which actions can be considered good or bad, right or wrong. Ethics is applied in the evaluation of what should or should not be done when animals are proposed for use, or are used for scientific purposes.
Scientific Purposes	All activities conducted with the aim of acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in all areas of science including teaching, field trials, environmental studies, research, diagnosis, product testing and the production of biological products.
Teaching activity	Any action or group of actions undertaken with the aim of achieving a scientific purpose, where the scientific purpose is imparting or demonstrating knowledge or techniques to achieve an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirements.
Wellbeing	An animal is in a positive mental state and is able to achieve successful biological function, to have positive experiences, to express innate behaviours and to respond to and cope with potentially adverse conditions.

3. FUNCTIONS

The GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee has the following specific functions and responsibilities:-

- a) Review applications for projects and proposed modifications to approved projects, and approve only those that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code
- b) Review applications for all activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities
- c) Review standard operating procedures relating to the care and use of animals
- d) Review applications for activities applicable to breeding programs
- e) Conduct follow up review of approved projects and activities
- f) Monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities
- g) Take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events
- h) Take appropriate actions regarding non-compliance
- i) Approve guidelines for the care and use of animals on behalf of GOTAFE
- j) Provide advice and recommendations to GOTAFE in relation to animal care and use
- k) Report on the operations of the Animal Ethics Committee annually to GOTAFE

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Membership Requirements

The Australian Code defines the membership categories of the Animal Ethics Committee.

Category	Description
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 Institutions activities.
Category B	A suitably qualified person with substantial and recent experience in the use of animals for scientific purposes relevant to the Institution and business of the Animal Ethics Committee.
Category C	A person with demonstrable commitment to, and established experience in, furthering the welfare of animals, who is not employed or otherwise associated with the Institution, and who is not currently involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
Category D	A person not employed by or otherwise associated with the Institution and who has never been involved in the use of animals in scientific or teaching activities, either in their employment or beyond undergraduate qualifications.

4.2 GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee Membership

4.2.1 The GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee membership is as follows:-

- Chairperson: GOTAFE Executive Manager Education Support & Quality
- Two (2) members from Category A – external members

- Two (2) members from Category B – GOTAFE teaching staff members
- Two (2) members from Category C – external members
- Two (2) members from Category D – external members

- GOTAFE Administration Officer (Record keeper, non-voting member)
- Other GOTAFE staff by invitation (non-voting) to provide specialist advice on a particular issue

4.2.2 All voting members of the GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee must be registered with Animal Welfare Victoria prior to participation in meeting discussions. This is arranged via the GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee Chairperson and the GOTAFE licence holder.

4.2.3 All members of the GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee note that the content of all applications to, and deliberations of, the Committee, are confidential to the Committee as well as other senior authorised members of GOTAFE where required.

4.3 Quorum

A quorum is established by the presence of at least one (1) Category A, B, C and D member.

In addition, Categories C and D must together represent at least one third (1/3) of the Animal Ethics Committee voting membership and meeting attendees.

4.4 Appointment, reappointment and retirement of members

- 4.4.1 Prospective members of the Animal Ethics Committee must be endorsed by the Animal Ethics Committee.
- 4.4.2 Prospective members of the Animal Ethics Committee will be reviewed prior to consideration by the Animal Ethics Committee by the Chairperson. The Chairperson will ensure suitability in relation to the Category membership requirements, and will also ensure that no conflict of interest exists in relation to the member appointment.
- 4.4.3 Prospective members of the Animal Ethics Committee will acknowledge in writing their acceptance of the Terms of Reference of the Animal Ethics Committee and any GOTAFE requirements for confidentiality.
- 4.4.4 Appointment terms are for a three (3) year period, with the option of two (2) subsequent terms of appointment.

- 4.4.5 Retirement of an Animal Ethics Committee member must be notified by the member in writing to the Animal Ethics Committee Chairperson.

5. MEETING PROCEDURES

- 5.1 The Animal Ethics Committee must endeavour to make its decisions by consensus, in accordance with the Code
- 5.2 Members with a conflict of interest must remove themselves from the Animal Ethics Committee's decision making. A quorum must be maintained at all times. The Animal Ethics Committee minutes must record all known conflicts of interest and their management.

- 5.3 The Administration Officer for the Animal Ethics Committee will prepare agendas and issue notices for meetings, and ensure all necessary documentation is distributed at least seven (7) days prior to a scheduled meeting.
- 5.4 The Animal Ethics Committee will meet at least three (3) times per year.
- 5.5 The Administration Officer for the Animal Ethics Committee will maintain responsibility for the distribution of information following the meeting within a ten (10) day period, including:
 - Distribution of the draft minutes to Animal Ethics Committee members
 - Notification to relevant GOTAFE staff of the status and approval of submitted applications in writing, including the reasons for decisions and any conditions attached to an approval.
 - Provision of Animal Ethics Committee meeting minutes to the GOTAFE Board of Studies which meets monthly, for noting.
- 5.6 The Animal Ethics Committee will meet face-to-face for meetings. However, if a quorate meeting is not possible, videoconferencing or web conferencing will be considered.
- 5.7 The Administration Officer for the Animal Ethics Committee will maintain GOTAFE's records relating to the Committee including:
 - A register of all applications to the Animal Ethics Committee and the outcomes of deliberations
 - Minutes that record decisions and other aspects of the Committees operation
 - Records of inspections conducted by the Animal Ethics Committee

6. ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVALS

- 6.1 In accordance with the Australian Code, the Animal Ethics Committee must review applications for projects, activities associated with the care and management of animals in facilities and activities applicable to breeding programs.
- 6.2 The Animal Ethics Committee may make one of five responses to new applications or applications to modify approved projects:
 1. Approved
 2. Approved with a condition(s).

This would be applied where the Animal Ethics Committee is satisfied that the application will be ethically acceptable and comply with the Australian Code, subject to a specific correction or defined alteration.
 3. Decision deferred, subject to modification to the satisfaction of the Animal Ethics Committee.

This would be applied where the Animal Ethics Committee is satisfied that the application has in principle justification, however requires additional information, clarification or changes in order to make a decision. Depending on the nature and potential consequences of the additional information, the resubmission may be assessed by the Animal Ethics Committee quorum or by the Animal Ethics Committee executive.
 4. Not approved, may be re-submitted to a quorate meeting of the Animal Ethics Committee

This would be applied where the Animal Ethics Committee generally understands the proposed animal use and is satisfied that the application has merit. However the application lacks sufficient information for the Animal Ethics Committee to fully assess the application and it does not currently comply with the Code.

5. Not approved.

This would be applied where in the judgment of the Animal Ethics Committee, the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved, is not justified by the potential benefits of the project.

7. ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE

7.1 Delegation to Animal Ethics Committee Executive

- 7.1.1 The Animal Ethics Committee is not permitted to delegate decisions to any other entity, other than an Executive of the Animal Ethics Committee.
- 7.1.2 The Animal Ethics Committee Executive may only approve minor amendments. The Animal Ethics Executive must not approve new projects or amendments that are not considered minor.
- 7.1.3 A minor amendment that could be considered and approved by the Animal Ethics Committee Executive could include:
- Addition of suitably experienced personnel to an approved project
 - Minor changes to an approved project or procedure, where “minor” is defined as any change that has little or no impact on the wellbeing of the animals involved in the project
 - Opportunistic diagnostic or veterinary activities intended to benefit the animals
 - Re-activation of paused approved projects

7.2 Animal Ethics Committee Executive Membership

The GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee Executive membership is as follows:-

- Chairperson: GOTAFE Executive Manager Education Support & Quality
- One (1) member from Category C or D
- One (1) member from Category A or B
- GOTAFE Administration Officer (Record keeper, non-voting member)
- Other GOTAFE staff by invitation (non-voting) to provide specialist advice on a particular issue

7.3 Animal Ethics Committee Executive Meeting Procedures

- 7.3.1 The Animal Ethics Committee Executive report to the GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee.
- 7.3.2 The Animal Ethics Committee Executive is delegated to approve minor amendments to approved projects or activities, for ratification at the next quorate Animal Ethics Committee meeting.
- 7.3.3 The Animal Ethics Committee Executive will schedule a meeting when directed by the Animal Ethics Committee, and may schedule as required additional special purpose meetings as required.

- 7.3.4 The meeting procedures for the Animal Ethics Committee Executive meetings will be consistent with the meeting procedure for the GOTAFE Animal Ethics Committee. However some of the timeframes for distribution of the agenda and meeting papers may be shortened, if an urgent matter is required to be addressed.

8. CHAIRPERSON

- 8.1 The Chairperson will hold a senior role within GOTAFE and be an additional appointment to Category A to D members.
- 8.2 The Chairperson will be appointed by the GOTAFE Chief Executive Officer for a term of no more than three (3) years.
- 8.3 The Animal Ethics Committee Chairperson responsibilities include:
- Guiding the operations of the Committee with impartiality
 - Ensuring that the Committee operates in accordance with the principles and requirements of the Code, the relevant policies of GOTAFE and the agreed Committee procedures
 - Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available.
 - Ensuring all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome.
 - Reviewing and approving the draft meeting minutes prior to distribution.
 - Advising the GOTAFE Executive Team regarding the level of resourcing required by the Committee
 - Represent the Animal Ethics Committee in any negotiations with GOTAFE Management
 - Development of an annual report reviewing the operation of the Animal Ethics Committee, and detailing numbers of applications, types of applications, numbers of animals, adverse incidents, and site inspections conducted by the Committee.
 - Assisting GOTAFE with the conduct of an annual review (in March of each year) of the operation of the Animal Ethics Committee, to ensure ongoing compliance with the Code.
 - Meet with the GOTAFE Chief Executive Officer annually to report on the operations of the Committee and raise any issues.

9. REVIEW

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed no later than three (3) years from the Date of Approval, and may be amended as part of continuous improvement prior to the scheduled review date.

Approval and/or amendments to these Terms of Reference shall be recommended by the Animal Ethics Committee to the GOTAFE Board of Studies for endorsement.

The above Terms of Reference for the Animal Ethics Committee have been endorsed.

Animal Ethics Committee Chairperson: Robyn Farley
Executive Manager, Education Support & Quality

Date of Endorsement by Animal Ethics Committee: 1 August 2018

Date of Endorsement by GOTAFE Board of Studies: 14 August 2018