* Animal Research Review Panel Guideline 3

* + Collaborative Research between Accredited Animal Research Establishments

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# 1. What is collaborative research?

Collaborative research generally refers to research or teaching involving the use of animals where people (usually employees or students) from two or more Accredited Animal Research Establishments (Establishment) work on the same project. This may occur at one location or over a number of locations.

The following are examples of collaborative research:

* A research or teaching project carried out at more than one Establishment;
* A research or teaching project involving investigators from more than one Establishment;
* A research or teaching project in which animals are moved from one Establishment to another during the project;
* A research or teaching project where animals are cared for by animal care or research staff of more than one Establishment, either simultaneously or at different times during the project.
* A research or teaching project where the investigators from one Establishment are conducting research or teaching at another Establishment.

Collaborative research does not refer to the situation where an Establishment that does not have its own Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) nominates the use of the AEC of another Establishment for the purposes of its Accreditation as an Animal Research Establishment. This is referred to as sharing an AEC. The Animal Research Review Panel Policy 11: [“Formal agreements between accredited Establishments sharing animal ethics committees”](http://www.animalethics.org.au/policies-and-guidelines/information/formal-agreements) provides guidance for developing formal agreements for sharing AECs.

Guidance on collaborative research has been developed to assist Establishments and AECs to meet their responsibilities under the animal research legislation and to ensure that animal care and use is properly approved and monitored at all phases of a collaborative research project.

# 2. Guidelines

## 2.1 The Australian Code

The *Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* provides guidance for the conduct of collaborative research in Clauses 2.6.4.-2.6.8:

**Projects involving more than one institution and/or animal ethics committee**

**Responsibilities of institutions and animal ethics committees**

2.6.4 Institutions must ensure that projects involving investigators from more than one institution, or the care and use of animals at more than one institution, are approved and monitored by the responsible AECs. Procedures must be developed and implemented to ensure that:

(i) all parties involved are aware of, and can meet, their respective responsibilities under the requirements of the Code

(ii) a project does not commence before each AEC approves, or the delegate AEC approves (see Clause 2.6.5), activities to be conducted by members of its institution. Each AEC should be responsible for approval and monitoring of animal care and use that occurs at the institution for which it acts

(iii) the responsible AECs are aware of all aspects of the proposed use of animals, and consider the cumulative effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved

(iv) the responsible AECs can inspect the animals so that all phases of the project are monitored, including any animal transport between sites

(v) animals will receive appropriate care in all phases of the project, including any animal transport between sites

(vi) clear communication channels are established between all AECs and all investigators.

2.6.5 Institutions may agree to one AEC (the delegate AEC) approving the entire project, provided that all institutions involved agree to delegate the responsibility for decision making to, and support the necessary actions of, that AEC.

2.6.6 Arrangements between institutions should be as a formal agreement. Institutions should avoid unnecessary duplication of processes.

2.6.7 Arrangements should include mechanisms for reporting non-compliant activities between institutions and AECs.

**Responsibilities of investigators**

2.6.8 Investigators must notify the AEC in writing if they are involved in collaborative studies using animals at another institution, or if they are named in an application to the AEC of another institution (see Clause 2.4.9).

## 2.2 Additional

2.2.1 When submitting a research or teaching project application to an AEC for approval, the Principal Investigator has a duty to disclose all interactions with other Establishments relevant to that project.

2.2.2 The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that the care and monitoring of animals is appropriate at each site and of a standard considered satisfactory to the relevant AECs.

2.2.3 Where an investigator from one Establishment carries out research at another Establishment, the investigator’s Establishment continues to be responsible for the investigator’s compliance with the *Animal Research Act 1985*.

2.2.4 A Collaborative Agreement should exist between participating Establishments for all collaborative animal research or teaching projects undertaken. (See: 3 *Collaborative research agreement template*).

2.2.5 AECs of Establishments conducting collaborative research/teaching that involves animals being used at only **one** Establishment can agree to delegate the responsibility of approving the entire project to one AEC (the AEC for the Establishment at which the animal use will occur). The other AECs should ideally receive a copy of the approved project application and Animal Research Authority issued by the delegated Establishment.

2.2.6 AECs of Establishments conducting collaborative research/teaching that involves animals being used at **multiple** Establishments are each responsible for approval and monitoring of animal care and use that occurs at the Establishment for which they act *(2.6.4(ii)).*

2.2.7 When assessing an application an AEC must be aware of all aspects of the proposed use of animals over the life of the project, and consider the cumulative effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved *(2.6.4(iii)),* especially when animals are transported from one Establishment to another for further use in the same project. This means where parts of a project are approved and monitored by more than one AEC, each AEC must be provided with a copy of the full project application.

2.2.8 It is acceptable, if the AECs agree, that the same application form is submitted to all AECs involved for assessment and approval.

2.2.9 An Animal Research Authority should be issued by each Establishment, on the recommendation of their respective AECs, for the research or teaching being conducted at their location (relevant designated land).

# 3. Collaborative research agreement template

Collaborative agreements can vary in their format and complexity depending on factors such as the number, frequency and size of the collaborative projects. They may be as simple as email correspondence between AECs or a more complex agreement drafted on legal advice.

Any agreement should clearly document the responsibilities for approval and monitoring by the respective AECs. Please note as per Australian Code clause 2.6.4 (ii) it is essential that AECs are aware of and approve all animal research/teaching projects being conducted at the Establishment for which they act, regardless of who the Principal Investigator is employed by.

The following is a template collaborative agreement, relating to a specific project, that Establishments may customise for their own requirements.

**Collaborative Research Agreement between Accredited Animal Research Establishments**

Collaborative research most commonly refers to research or teaching involving the use of animals where people (employees or students) from two or more Accredited Animal Research Establishments work on the same project. This may occur at one location or over a number of locations. For guidance on collaborative research see:

* Clauses 2.6.4 – 2.6.8 of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* 8th Edition 2013
* Animal Research Review Panel Guideline 3: *Collaborative research between Accredited Animal Research Establishments*

1. This is a collaborative research agreement between the following Accredited Animal Research Establishments and their respective Animal Ethics Committees (AECs):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Accredited Animal Research Establishment** | **Animal Ethics Committee** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

2. This agreement applies to the following project:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **AEC project Number** | **Principal Investigator** | **Principal Investigator’s Establishment** |
|  |  |  |  |

3. The following are the location(s) where animals will be held and used and the AEC(s) responsible for the approval and monitoring of animal care and use at each location.   
*Note:*

* *Where animal care and use occurs at the location of an Accredited Animal Research Establishment, the AEC for this Establishment must approve and monitor this part of the research project.*
* *Where parts of the project are approved and monitored by more than one AEC, each AEC must be provided with a copy of the full project application.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Accredited Animal Research Establishment** | **AEC responsible for approval and monitoring** | **AEC application form to be used** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

4. If animals are to be transported, the following lists the AEC(s) responsible for approving and monitoring this transport:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Location from** | **Location to** | **AEC responsible for approval and monitoring transport** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

5. Documents to be developed and provided between Establishments / AECs (for example AECs from Establishments A and B)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Establishment / AEC** | **Receive copy of signed collaborative agreement** | **Approve project occurring at Establishment for which it acts** | **Receive copy of approved AEC Application** | **Issue Animal Research Authority for research occurring at the Establishment (designated land)** | **Receive copy of Animal Research Authority**  **from other Establishment** | **Report animal use numbers to NSW DPI** |
| Establishment / AEC A |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Establishment / AEC B |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*Please see Appendix 3.1 for examples of how this table could be completed.*

6. Contact people at each Establishment responsible for communication between the AECs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Establishment** | **Contact details** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

7. The undersigned agree that the nominated AECs will operate in accordance with the general responsibilities and project details described in this agreement or any agreed variation to this agreement (all being subject to compliance with the NSW *Animal Research Act 1985* and *Regulation 2010*, and the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition 2013*).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of \_\_\_\_\_ AEC Chair |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |
| Name of \_\_\_\_\_AEC Chair |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |

**Acknowledgement**

The contribution of Ms Leanne Wilkinson, Office of Environment and Heritage, to the development of this template is gratefully acknowledged.

## 3.1 Appendix – Examples of completed agreement tables

1. The table below is an example of a completed agreement table where a research project will occur using animals at only Establishment A.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Establishment / AEC** | **Receive copy of signed collaborative agreement** | **Approve project occurring at Establishment for which it acts** | **Receive copy of approved AEC Application** | **Issue Animal Research Authority for research occurring at the Establishment (designated land)** | **Receive copy of Animal Research Authority**  **from other Establishment** | **Report animal use numbers to NSW DPI** |
| Establishment / AEC A | **✓** | **✓** |  | **✓** |  | **✓** |
| Establishment / AEC B | **✓** |  | **✓** |  | **✓** |  |

2. The table below is an example of a completed agreement table where a research project will occur using animals at both Establishments A and B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Establishment / AEC** | **Receive copy of signed collaborative agreement** | **Approve project occurring at Establishment for which it acts** | **Receive copy of approved AEC Application** | **Issue Animal Research Authority for research occurring at the Establishment (designated land)** | **Receive copy of Animal Research Authority**  **from other Establishment** | **Report animal use numbers to NSW DPI** |
| Establishment / AEC A | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |
| Establishment / AEC B | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  |

Responsibility for reporting of animal use numbers to NSW DPI should be agreed on as part of the Collaborative Agreement. Care should be taken to only report each animal used for the project once.

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