


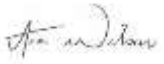

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Unisa-College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Animal Research Ethics Committee

Referred to as UNISA-CAES AREC

2024

1 COMPILATION AND AUTHORISATION

Action	Designated person	Date	Signature
Compiled by:	Prof EL Kempen (then Chairperson UNISA-CAES AREC)	Version 1: September 2017 Version 2: August 2019	
Revised & approved by:	Dr A Wilson (current Chairperson) on behalf of UNISA-CAES AREC	Version 3: May 2024	
Supported by:	Prof MM Ntwasa (Executive Dean CAES)	Version 3: May 2024	

2 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version no	Reason for revision
1 September 2017	1	Development of the document
22 August 2019	2	Revised for submission to UNISA-CAES AREC
13 May 2024	3	Revised for adoption and regulatory compliance

3 ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation/definition	Description
UNISA-CAES AREC	UNISA-College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Animal Research Ethics Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure/s
URERC	Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee
NHREC	National Health Research Ethics Council
CAES	College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
REC	Research Ethics Committee
CRIPGC	CAES Research, Innovation and Post Graduate Committee

4. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ToR

The purpose of the Terms of Reference is to guide the UNISA-CAES Animal Research Ethics Committee (UNISA-CAES AREC) so that it considers the dignity and well-being of animals included in all research undertaken by UNISA and its affiliates. The Terms of Reference support all institutional policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and adhere to all national standards and legislation.

The scope of the UNISA-CAES AREC is to ensure adherence to the Department of Health's Ethics in Health Research Guidelines, 2nd ed. (DoH 2015), and the South African National Standard: The care and use of animals for scientific purposes 2nd ed. (SANS 10386:2021). The committee will adhere to regulations and guidelines as required from committees registered with the NHREC.

5. ORGANISATIONAL POSITIONING AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

UNISA has a multi-reporting decentralised governance model, as such and in compliance with NHREC requirements, the UNISA-CAES AREC retains autonomy with legal accountability on the outcome of an ethically acceptable proposal. For noting purposes, quarterly and annual reports are submitted to the CRIPGC and URERC. The Chairperson represents the UNISA-CAES AREC at these meetings.

The composition of the UNISA-CAES AREC follows the requirements for Research Ethics Committees as stipulated under section 4.4.1.3 of the Department of Health - Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures guide of 2015 and SABS SANS 10386 (2021 or later version). SOP 2 for the selection, appointment and functioning of UNISA-CAES AREC members should be referred to in this regard.

Individual members are indemnified from personal liability, if members act in good faith.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

- 3.1 To adhere to and comply with all UNISA-CAES AREC SOPs.
- 3.2 To undertake independent, thorough, competent and timely reviews of all ethics applications and accompanying research proposals in the absence of undue political, institutional professional or market related influences.
- 3.3 To review ethics applications that fall within the General Principles for the care and use of animals in research (section 3.1 on page 20) as stipulated in the Ethics Policy 2016 of the University of South Africa.
- 3.4 To identify the risks associated with a research project and propose solutions and mitigating measures through monitoring procedures, regular reporting and other relevant processes to minimise the potential risk of the research.
- 3.5 To conduct a harms-benefit analysis to ensure that the likely harms are justified by the benefits accrued by the study.
- 3.6 To provide objective and sound ethical opinions related to the research that would assist a researcher in CAES and other applications the committee considers, to improve the ethical quality and standard of the research.
- 3.7 To ensure that all animals, as stipulated under section 3.1 on page 20 of the General Principles for the care and use of animals in research, will be part of scientifically sound research and that their welfare interests are always protected.
- 3.8 Committee expertise should be made publicly available.
- 3.9 The committee complies with confidentiality and conflict of interest stipulations, and adhere to the Code of Conduct agreement.
- 3.10 The committee remains up to date through regular training with the latest animal research ethics requirements.
- 3.11 The committee will remain abreast with institutional policies, guidelines and standard operating procedures pertaining to research ethics.
- 3.12 The ethical values that guide the code of conduct of the committee include: *integrity, accountability, dignity* (expressed in fair, caring, transparent and respectful relationships), and *excellence*.
- 3.13 The committee provides guidance to the College and all Animal Ethics applicants to promote compliance with institutional, national and international ethical and regulatory requirements.
- 3.14 Reviews research proposals and ongoing research that require its action in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment and the ethical principles set out in the Policy on Research Ethics.
- 3.15 Reviews and provides guidance regarding complaints from researchers and students.

- 3.16 Provides guidance to Animal Ethics applicants on the ethical aspects of their research and the consideration of the “4R” principles.
- 3.17 Develops and proposes standard operating procedures, to enhance and facilitate Animal related Ethical research and Animal Ethics review in CAES, including those which are necessary for building capacity in Animal related ethical research and Animal Ethics review.
- 3.18 Provides assistance with cases of conduct which are contrary to the Policy on Research Ethics, and therefore pose a threat to the integrity of UNISA.
- 3.19 Provides input into the development of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics as the need arises.
- 3.20 Provides advice to the Executive Dean on matters pertinent to research ethics.
- 3.21 May consult with external experts or other RECs if appropriate, bearing in mind confidentiality constraints.
- 3.22 Monitors research that is approved through regular reports from principal researchers and may withdraw approval where circumstances indicate that a project is non-compliant with the approved protocol¹.

7. MEETINGS

- 4.1 The UNISA-CAES AREC meets once a month or more frequently if the need arises.
- 4.2 The UNISA-CAES AREC may decide to establish *ad hoc* task teams or subcommittees, consisting of no less than three persons, to deal with specific requirements. In instances where there is disagreement among members regarding action on applications, or whenever the need arises, the chairperson may call for an *en banc* meeting.



¹ Department of Health. (2015). Ethics in Human Research: Principles, Processes and Structures.