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Committee	Animal Research Ethics Committee



University of Fort Hare  
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## UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

### UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UFH-AREC)

#### STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: Meetings

##### Purpose

To ensure that the meetings of the University of Fort Hare Animal Research Ethics Committee (UFH-AREC) are conducted correctly and that all parties are aware of the processes followed.

##### Scope

All applications must be discussed and a decision made at quorate meetings

##### Pre-requisites

Applicants should consult the submission of applications SOP for instructions for submitting an application.

##### Responsibilities

1. UFH-AREC meetings take place monthly from February to November with emergency meetings in January and December should they be needed. Meeting dates are set at the start of the calendar year and confirmed at the end of each preceding meeting.

##### Procedures

1. Meeting dates and deadlines are communicated to the Faculty (Science and Agriculture) manager at the start of the calendar year and these are then circulated to the University. The correspondence to the University includes a statement that the meeting may be moved forward or delayed by a week to ensure that quorum is obtained for each meeting.
2. Meeting deadlines are three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. Applications received before the deadline will preferably have pre review's conducted should there be time before applications need to be sent to the reviewers.
3. Applications will be sent to the reviewers at least 14 days prior to the meeting
4. Minutes of the previous meeting and agenda for the upcoming meeting are to be sent to the committee at least four (4) days before the meeting. Additional items for the agenda are to be submitted in writing to the chairperson and should include a cover letter explaining the item to be discussed.
5. Meetings are held in person and via multimedia channels (i.e. skype) due to the distance from major centres.
6. If a member is unable to attend the meeting, the review comments should be sent to the chairperson the day before the meeting and apologies tendered.
7. Meeting quorum is at least 1 member of each category (Category A – Veterinarian, Category B – Animal Researcher, Category C – Animal welfare representative, Category D – Community member [layperson]). At least 33% of the committee at the meeting needs to be Category C and D members to ensure an unbiased review and discussion.
8. In the event that a quorum is not reached and the alternate date for the meeting cannot be agreed upon, the review of the absent members can still be used as a substitute for the absent. Following the meeting, the discussion of the committee needs to be shared with the absent member for clarification and agreement from the absent member. This eventuality should be used as a last resort and should not be the norm.
9. The meeting is chaired by the chairperson and follows the schedule as outlined in the agenda. The agenda will have on it the following standing items; 1) round-robin decisions, 2) reports (post-approval monitoring [passive and active], annual reports, facility reports), 3) SOPs for review, and 4) applications for discussion. Proceedings of the meeting are recorded on a recorder to assist in taking of the minutes and for detailed comments to the applicants.
10. Should the chairperson not be able to make the meeting, or has recused themselves from a portion of the meeting due to conflict of interests, the meeting will be chaired by a member voted for by the committee members at the meeting.
11. At the start of each meeting, the attendees should sign the register and declare any conflicts of interest that they may have with respect to the agenda presented. The chairperson should remind all committee members that the meeting discussions are confidential and that by signing the register the committee members acknowledge this.
12. Applications tabled for approval will be discussed by all committee members present and the process by which decisions are made shall be fair, consistent and transparent to investigators, teachers and all AEC members. Decisions in meetings are by consensus, and if consensus cannot be reached the decision of the majority. All effort should be made to resolve any conflicts and members can have it noted in the minutes that they disagree with a decision.
13. Decisions are classed as follows
  - a. Approved – The committee approves the application as is and requires no clarification or corrections. The clearance letter can be awarded as soon as possible.
  - b. Approved with technical clarification – The committee has approved the application pending minor technical clarification. On receipt of a revised application, the chairperson will assess whether the technical clarification has been resolved. Should

the technical clarification be resolved the clearance letter can be awarded as soon as possible.

- c. Approved pending minor revision – The committee has approved the application pending minor ethical or design concerns. On receipt of the revised application, the application will be sent to all committee members via round-robin for final approval. Should the minor ethical and design comments be resolved the clearance letter can be awarded as soon as possible. Note: round-robin is only possible for applications that have already been reviewed by a quorate meeting and are approved pending minor correction. No application that has not been approved in a quorate meeting can be approved via round-robin.
  - d. Major revision (Deferred)– The committee is concerned that there are ethical or design concerns that will require another round of discussions at a quorate meeting. Revised applications will then be tabled at the next quorate AREC meeting.
  - e. Rejected – The committee is of the view that the research is; a) unethical and no refinements will be able to fix this, b) the welfare concerns to the animals are too great and no amount of refinements will rectify the situation or c) the research is likely to be harmful to the image of the University.
14. Amendments and modification to projects can be approved via round-robin. However, should a member believe that changes are of an ethical nature that requires discussion, the amendment will then be tabled at a quorate meeting where it will undergo the same discussion as a new application.
15. Decisions are communicated to the applicant via e-mail within one week of the meeting, with the applicant welcomed to arrange a meeting with a committee member should they have concerns about the decision.

## References

South African National Standard: The care and use of animals for scientific purposes (SANS 10386: 2008)

## Document History

Date	Version No	Reason for revision
	1	Newly formulated
17 July 2020	1.1	Annual review