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Committee	Animal Research Ethics Committee

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UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

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

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: Application timelines

Purpose

To provide researchers and the University of Fort Hare Animal Research Ethics Committee (UFH-AREC) with information and guidelines on expected timelines for the processing, feedback and approval of applications.

Scope

This SOP will be applicable to all UFH-AREC members as well as to the students and staff of the University of Fort Hare that are, and plan to be, involved in research involving animals. The SOP will inform and guide the researchers and members of UFH-AREC on the timelines for the processing, feedback and approval of applications to ensure a timely response to applications.

Prerequisites

Applicants should ensure that they have consulted the University of Fort Hare Ethics Policy, UFH-AREC Terms of Reference, South African National Standard: The care and use of animals for scientific purposes (SANS 10386:2021 or newer) and the Department of Health 2024 (NDOH) ethics in research as well as the

relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) related to submission of applications and handling of meetings.

Definitions

1. Expedited approval – Applies to research that poses no more than minimal risk of harm.
2. Full approval – Applies to research that poses greater than minimal risk of harm and in the case of the UFH-AREC this applies to all research where vertebrates or higher invertebrates are to be handled as part of the research protocol.

Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of researchers to submit high-quality applications that are without ambiguity and clearly explain the proposed animal research. Importantly, these applications should be submitted before the deadlines for the specific types of applications.
2. It is the responsibility of the UFH-AREC administrators to respond promptly to applications that have been received and to provide applications to the committee for review.
3. It is the responsibility of the UFH-AREC committee members to review applications and provide constructive feedback via round robin (for expedited applications) or at the scheduled quorate meetings.
4. It is the responsibility of the UFH-AREC administrators to provide feedback to applicants within a reasonable time span following either a decision from the expedited process or the discussion at the quorate meeting.
5. It is the responsibility of the researcher to address the comments and requests for clarification to the best of their ability in a short time period.
6. It is the responsibility of the researcher to follow up with the UFH-AREC administrator should their be delays beyond the timeframes provided below.

Procedures

Timelines for expedited applications (see SOP for expedited applications and definitions above)

1. Low harms projects can be submitted at any time and are not subject to a submission deadline for a particular meeting.
2. Typically the administrator will acknowledge receipt, request feedback and forward the application to the reviewers within 1-3 working days of submission.
3. The administrator will provide the committee with a deadline for completion of the initial reviews (typically seven days).
4. On receipt of the committees feedback the administrator will provide feedback to the applicant within 1-3 working days.
5. The feedback request to the applicant will request a resubmission within seven days.
6. On receipt of the resubmission the process will loop back to point two above until either approved or the application is referred to a quorate meeting.

7. For a single round of reviews the time between submission and approval should be between 9 and 13 days. For a two round procedure the approval should be between 25 and 33 days.

Timelines for full applications

1. All projects that will involve the handling of animals will be subject to full review and deliberation and need to be submitted prior to the end off the month preceding the monthly meeting.
2. Typically the administrator will acknowledge receipt, request feedback and forward the application to the reviewers within 1-3 working days of submission.
3. The meeting will take place on the 3rd Friday of the month and thus 14 to 21 days after the deadline for submission.
4. On receipt of the committees feedback from the deliberations at the meeting the administrator will provide feedback to the applicant within 1-3 working days.
5. The feedback request to the applicant will request a resubmission within seven days.
6. Depending on the severity of the feedback the process will loop back to point 2 of the expedited procedure (minor comments) or point 2 of the full application (major comments).
7. For a single round of reviews the time between the deadline for the next meeting and approval should be between 15 and 24 days. For a two round procedure with the second round expedited the approval should be between 23 and 33 days. For a two round process with the second round a full review the process can take up to 55 days.
8. Further revision requests will result in further delays in the approval process over and above the estimated times shown above.

References

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Document History

Date	Version No	Reason for revision
July 2024	1.1	Newly formulated