

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Title: <b>CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MRU ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>	Page No.	Page 1 of 5
	SOP No.	MRU-SOP-ETH-004
	Version No.	01
Scope: Malelane Research Unit ETHICS	Supersedes	NEW
	Effective	01APR2022

Approvals			
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### Purpose

MRU AEC applies a set of principles, outlined in applicable guidelines, that govern the ethical conduct of people whose work involves the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. The role of the AEC is to ensure that the use of animals is justified, provides for the welfare of those animals, and incorporates the core ethical principles:

1. Replacement of the use of animals with alternative models where feasible
2. Reduction of the number of individual animals used
3. Refinement of experimental design, procedures, care and husbandry, to minimize or eliminate the impact on individual animals in terms of actual or potential pain, suffering, stress, and lasting harm.

This Code of Conduct serves as a guide to members of the ethics committee to serve the interests of the research facility and that of the public generally.

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## 1 Abbreviations

### 1.1 Abbreviations

1.1.1 MRU	Malelane Research Unit
1.1.2 AEC	The Animal Ethics Committee of the Malelane Research Unit
1.1.3 SOP	Standard Operating Procedure of the MRU

## 2 Responsibilities

### 2.1 All AEC members

All committee members have a fiduciary responsibility to serve the interests of the research facility (MRU) and that of the public generally. In accordance with MRU's Conflict of Interest Policy, all decisions are to be made solely based on a desire to promote the best interests of the research facility and the public and, in the case of research ethics-related matters, the interests of research participants and researchers must be protected.

## 3 Procedure

### 3.1 Code of conduct

Upon appointment to Malelane Research Unit Animal Ethics Committee, all committee members, including external members (e.g. lay persons) have responsibilities, including

#### 3.1.1 Integrity

- Must act in good faith and in the best interests of the facility
- To disclose conflicting interests, including any personal involvement or participation in the research or in competing research, and, in the event of such a conflict with respect to a proposal, not to review the proposal and to recuse him or herself during the discussion and decision-making process.
- Set the tone for an ethical organizational culture
- To maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to company guidelines, regarding research proposal or protocol information, reviews and decisions and all matters discussed at committee meetings.

#### 3.1.2 Competence

- Should take steps to ensure that they have sufficient working knowledge of the facility and context in which it operates as precondition to fulfil their responsibilities
- Must act with due care, diligence and take reasonable diligent steps to become informed about matters and decisions
- Continuously develop their competence to participate in all matters effectively

#### 3.1.3 Responsibilities

- To attend meetings on a regular basis and, as far as possible, to remain until the meeting is adjourned.
- Devote sufficient time and attention to prepare for meetings or other matters pertaining to the committee
- To review all matters independently, impartially and objectively

- To serve as a main reviewer in his or her area of expertise.
- To serve as a general reviewer of all matters discussed at committee meetings.
- To keep up to date with research ethics and regulatory guidance.
- To contribute to ethics-related continuing education.
- To ensure that research proposals involving the use of animals undergo rigorous scientific and ethical review processes

Consultants or ad hoc reviewers might from time to time be called upon to assist with research proposal reviews. The obligation to maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to company guidelines, should be made known to these reviewers.

Observers or guests may attend committee meetings at the Chairperson's discretion or invitation. Such persons have an interest in research ethics and the review process but are not committee members. Observers and guests must maintain confidentiality, where necessary according to company guidelines, regarding the business of the committee.

All persons who attend AEC meetings are free to make observations, ask questions but only AEC members may vote on decisions. Anyone without a vote who disagrees with the resolution of the issues under discussion and/or the outcome of the vote should take the matter up with the Chairperson of the AEC in the first instance. The Chairperson may call a special meeting to discuss the substance of the disagreement or to debate more fully issues raised in this way.

Note: Members should confirm that they will conform to company guidelines on the confidentiality of application and proceedings. When non-members attend, they should confirm that they will maintain confidentiality.

## 4 Related Documents

### 4.1 Internal

- 4.1.1.1 MRU-SOP-ADM-005, Animal Ethics
- 4.1.1.2 MRU-WI-ADM-001, Role of MRU in the Ethics Process
- 4.1.1.3 MRU-WI-ADM-002, Role of the AEC in the Ethics Process
- 4.1.1.4 MRU-SOP-ETH-001, Terms of reference
- 4.1.1.5 MRU-SOP-ETH-005 Complaints
- 4.1.1.6 MRU-SOP-ETH-006, Whistle-blower

### 4.2 References

- 4.2.1 OECD Principles on Good Laboratory Practice. OECD Series on Principles of Good Laboratory Practice SANS 10386:2021, EDITION 2. STANDARDS SOUTH AFRICA, PRETORIA, 2002 (or the latest edition).
- 4.2.2 ETHICS IN HEALTH RESEARCH: PRINCIPLES, PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, 2<sup>ND</sup> ed. 2015 (or the latest edition).

## 5 Appendices

None

## 6 Distribution

No controlled.

7 Version History

Version	Effective date	Short description of changes
1.0	01APR2022	NEW. Collates information previously contained in MRU-SOP-ADM-005.

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