



AUSTIN HEALTH AEC (2020) GUIDELINE FOR TRAINING AND COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to assist investigators in training and competency assessment when using animals for scientific purposes within Austin Health and the BioResources Facility.

This guideline will assist in compliance with *The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition 2013, (the Code)*.

The relevant sections of the Code are:

2.1.5 Institutions must promote compliance with the Code by:

(v) ensuring that guidelines for animal care and use are developed in consultation with the AEC, approved by the AEC, and implemented and promoted within the institution. Guidelines must include:

(a) how the competence of people involved in the care and use of animals will be assessed and ensured.

2.1.8 Institutions must ensure that all people involved in the care and use of animals understand their responsibilities and the requirements of the Code, are competent for the procedures they perform or are under the direct supervision of a person who is competent to perform the procedures, and have access to appropriate education programs and resources, by:

(ii) providing adequate resources for appropriate education, training, and assessment of competence of investigators, and certification of such competence to the satisfaction of the AEC.

2.4.4 Investigators must:

(i) apply the principles of the Code (see Section 1) in all aspects of the care and use of animals, including planning, conducting and reviewing projects.

(v) undertake education and training, and competency assessment, in accordance with institutional and AEC policies and procedures.

2.4.5 A person must be identified who has ultimate responsibility for the care and use of animals in a project. This person must:

(i) ensure that all people involved in the project understand and accept their roles and responsibilities.

(ii) ensure that procedures and resources are in place so that all people involved in the care and use of animals in the project can meet their responsibilities, including their education, training and supervision, as appropriate.

(iii) be competent with respect to the wellbeing of animals used in the project.

2.5.15 The facility manager, with support as required from the institution and other staff members, and advice from veterinarians, must:

(iv) ensure that procedures and resources are in place so that all people involved in the care of animals can meet their responsibilities, including education, training and supervision of staff, as appropriate.

2.4.8 During planning, investigators must consider the following factors and be satisfied that:

(xix) procedures are performed competently, by people competent for the procedures or under the direct supervision of a person competent to perform the procedures, and provisions are made for the education, training and supervision of people nominated on the application, as appropriate.

2. GENERAL

It is essential for high standards of animal welfare and to comply with the principle of **refinement** that all procedures performed on animals for scientific purposes are done so **only** by those who have demonstrated competency in that procedure or under the direct supervision of someone who is competent and experienced in that procedure.

The risk to animal welfare is high if the training provided is not adequate for that technique or procedure and competency is not achieved prior to working unsupervised.

Competency in any procedure can take a variable amount of time to achieve for different individuals. Competency in procedures is only achievable if sufficient and individualised training occurs. This training must be tailored to the individual and take into account previous experience of the trainee, the nature and technical difficulty of the procedure and the welfare of the training animals.

The AEC application must include training provisions including:

- Detailed information about the procedure in which the training is to occur
- Name of trainee/person to be trained
- Name of trainer
- Level of competency of trainer in the procedure to be trained. This is not just a record of how many times the procedure has been done as this does not equate with competency to train.
- Signature of trainer to verify responsibility for the training and competency assessment of the trainee.
- If training animals are used, the project must detail a schedule of the procedures and how many times the procedures will be performed on these animals. Training animals must be included in the AEC application along with the specific details on their use, monitoring and welfare assessment scores and endpoints.
- Training of an investigator may only commence once the AEC has approved the training as per the protocol and for an investigator named on a protocol/project.

3. TRAINING RECORDS

A record of training and competency achieved form part of the AEC protocol/project records and must be kept with the protocol folder/information. This record must be available to be viewed at any time as requested by the BRF manager and staff, the Animal Welfare Officer (AWO), the AEC and/or the regulator.

These records should include the following:

- AEC protocol/project name and number
- Trainer's name
- Name of person being trained/trainee
- Procedure in which the training is occurring
- Name of trainer for each training session/s
- Date of training sessions
- Date competency achieved and signature of trainer and trainee on this date to ensure both are satisfied with competency level
- As required, signature of animal technician, BRF manager or AWO as further assessment of competency

A person to be trained should only be assessed as competent once the trainer is satisfied they are able to manage all potential outcomes of the procedure without direct support. This includes competency in dealing with adverse events and subsequent actions in such an event to alleviate animal suffering or minimise harm.

The trainee must also be certain they are competent to perform the procedure unsupervised. Until the person trained feels completely confident and competent to work unsupervised, they must not sign off their competency assessment. There is no pre-determined number of times that a procedure may need to be performed for an individual to become competent.

Once assessed as competent the trainee can work unsupervised and eventually when considered 'expert' in the procedure, the person may train others in the procedure.

Austin Health AEC approved standard operating procedures and policies must be followed when training staff, students or investigators.

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