

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (AREC)

The AREC will appoint a president from among its members, for a term of two years, extendable. The President is responsible for the representation of the AREC and the maintenance of order in the discussions. Representative members shall be appointed for renewable periods of two years.

It is up to the secretary to:

- Convene the sessions.
- Set the agenda.
- Write the minutes of the sessions and the reports.
- Act as an interlocutor between the researcher, the AREC and the administration.
- Provide the AREC with all the documentation and technical information required for the correct development of the assigned competencies.
- Carry out a first assessment of the information sent to the AREC, based on the criteria established by the same.
- Receive, process, distribute and keep all the AREC documentation.

The AREC will be quorate when an absolute majority of its members are present.

Approval of procedures: once the AREC is quorate, in order for the procedure to be evaluated to be approved, the decision must be by an absolute majority of the total members of the AREC.

Members of the AREC who have a direct relationship with a procedure will not be able to participate in its evaluation.

AREC's members must comply with the principle of confidentiality.

The AREC has the power to require and request any additional information it deems necessary for the research staff responsible for the project being evaluated.

Where the AREC deems it appropriate, it may seek the advice of non-AREC experts, who shall in all cases comply with the principle of confidentiality.

The animal welfare advisory staff at the centre should always be present.

Once the suitability of a procedure has been assessed, it must be approved or rejected by a reasoned report, with the vote of an absolute majority of members.

Periodicity of AREC meetings: at least quarterly on an ordinary basis, and on an extraordinary basis at any time.

Establishment of standard work procedures of the AREC detailing the organisation chart and the standardised mechanism of operation of the Committee.

Issuance of minutes: each time the AREC meets, minutes of the meeting will be drawn up stating at least the place and date of the meeting, the members attending, people external to the AREC who attend, the agenda and decisions taken. Where applicable, the inspections carried out by the AREC and the reports of the animal welfare advisory staff on the monitoring of the procedures carried out at the centre and which have previously been authorised by the AREC must be recorded.

The minutes must be signed by all attendees.

The minutes of the meetings should be kept for at least five years and kept at the disposal of the staff of the Department of the Environment during the relevant inspections or at the request of the Animal Research Commission.

The minutes must be approved at the next session.

CONTENT OF REPORTS ISSUED BY THE AREC ON PROCEDURES TO BE NOTIFIED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

It must state, at least, the date of the meeting, the name of the procedure that has been evaluated and approved, and that all the aspects contemplated in article 28 of Decree 214/1997 have been examined.

CONTENT OF REPORTS ISSUED BY THE AREC ON PROCEDURES REQUIRING EXPRESS
AUTHORISATION FROM THE ANIMAL RESEARCH COMMISSION

The following content should be included in the AREC report or in the descriptive report of the procedure submitted by the researcher to the AREC and attached to the report of the Committee.

1. Reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the suitability of the procedure in relation to the objectives of the study; either because the regulations require so, or the only procedure that complies with the objectives, etc...
2. Reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the suitability of the species; that is, why this species is used and not another.
3. Reasoning with a precise and clear explanation that valid conclusions are reached with the smallest number of animals; that is, justify why that number of animals is chosen and not a lower one, either because the guidelines of that procedure specify it or other reasons.
4. Reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the exclusion of alternative methods, either because the guideline requires the use of animals, because there is no officially validated alternative method, or other assumptions.
5. Where applicable, reasoning with a clear and concise explanation of why experimental animals are used that do not come from unrecognised breeding and supply centres.
6. Where applicable, reasoning with a clear and concise explanation of why these wildlife species caught in the wild, whether protected or not, are used.
7. Where applicable, reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the place chosen to carry out the procedure, outside the registered user centre.
8. Where appropriate, reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the animal release methodology during the procedure.
9. Where applicable, reasoning with a clear and concise explanation of why wild animals used in the procedure should be released to the native environment.
10. Where applicable, reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the exclusion of the use of analgesics or anaesthetics during the procedure.
11. Where applicable, reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the method of euthanasia of the selected animals, when slaughtering the animals.
12. Where appropriate, reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of why the animals are reused in another experimental procedure, indicating the previous procedure in which the animal was used.
13. Where applicable, reasoning with a precise and clear explanation of the need to perform an experimental procedure, if there is prior certainty that the animal may suffer severe and prolonged pain.