



RESEARCH GOVERNANCE UNIT
St. Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne)
Caritas Christi Hospice
St. George's Health Service
Prague House

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)

Statement of Intent and Outcomes

The St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) is committed to fulfilling the governing principles of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (2013) by ensuring investigators have access to approved clinical and husbandry standard operating procedures to encourage current best practice.

Definitions

Clinical Standard Operating Procedure: detailed description of a standardised clinical procedure or process.

Current best practice: a practice, procedure, method or process that has proven to be most effective in supporting and safeguarding animal wellbeing

Husbandry Standard Operating Procedure (cSOP): detailed description of a standardised husbandry or breeding procedure or process

Procedure

Standard Operating Procedures provide investigators, animal facility staff and other relevant people or committees with clear direction on current best practice for a range of techniques, procedures and processes to ensure consistency in animal care and use for scientific purposes.

As stated in the Code institutions, in consultation with the AEC, may allow the AEC to consider and approve standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to the care and use of animals. Reference to SOPs can help investigators prepare applications to the AEC, but may make it more difficult for the AEC to apply rigour when evaluating procedures described in applications. An SOP must only be referenced in an application under the following conditions:

- the SOP must have current approval from the AEC
- the SOP must include in its title the date of approval or last review by the AEC
- investigators named in the application must be competent to implement the SOP
- any variation to an SOP must be described in the application and should be considered as a prompt for review of the SOP

New SOPs must not be used until approved by the AEC, and may be included with an application for consideration by the AEC. If an approved SOP is not reviewed by the AEC within three years of its approval, approval for the SOP lapses and the SOP cannot be used. Approved SOPs must be made available to all relevant people, including AEC members.

All SOPs must be written using plain English (lay language) so that all AEC members are provided with sufficient information to understand the procedure and participate effectively in the review of the SOP. Where the use of scientific language is deemed unavoidable, it must be supported by a suitable lay description, or a glossary of terms.

Submission process

All SOPs must be submitted using the current St Vincent’s Hospital (Melbourne) AEC Standard Operating Procedure template; no other formats will be accepted. A word document (not pdf) of the SOP must be emailed to research.ethics@svhm.org.au by close of business on the closing date of each scheduled AEC meeting.

Closing and meeting dates are available on the Research Governance Unit website. No exceptions will be made to this closing date, unless previously negotiated with the AEC Secretary.

Once the submission is received by the AEC Secretary an acknowledgement email will be sent to the author confirming receipt and the assigned AEC SOP Number.

Review outcome

Once approved by the AEC the SOP author will be notified via email and the approved SOP uploaded onto the Research Governance Unit website as a password protected PDF.

Approvals are for three years and the SOP must be reviewed prior to the next review due date.

Associated Procedures/Instructions

- 2.1 – New Project Applications
- 2.2 – Project Amendments
- 2.5 – Breeding Applications

Reference Documents

- Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (2013)
- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1986)
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations (2008)

Authorized by:



Dr Megan Robertson
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Author: Research Governance Unit	
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