

# Overview activities 2020

## Animal Ethical Committee University Maastricht

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### Introduction

Animal experimentation requires approval of the CCD (Central Commission Animal testing). By Dutch law, the Animal Welfare Body (IvD) coordinates a project proposal with the applicant especially with respect to the technical aspects and the implementation of the 3R's (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) before the project proposal will then be submitted to the CCD by the UM license holder. The CCD will request an advice from an Animal Ethical Committee (DEC), usually the DEC preferred by the applicant. For researchers affiliated to UM, this is the DEC-UM. The DEC-UM will judge the project proposal based on its scientific, 3R's and ethical merits and will advise the CCD within 20 working days. To expedite this process, the DEC-UM is composed of members with expertise in different scientific areas (see Table 1). Whenever necessary, the DEC-UM asks questions to the responsible researcher for clarification and invites them to the plenary meeting if needed. The CCD will make a decision based on the advice of the DEC and can provide a permit or a disapproval of the project to the license holder. Further details on practical animal experimentation are discussed with the IvD and secured in a work protocol.

The composition of the DEC-UM with the respective expertise of its members is indicated below. Also, an overview of the DEC-UM activities in 2020 is given.

## The DEC-UM

### *Composition*

In 2020, the composition of the DEC-UM has not been changed. In line with the composition requirements described in the law on animal testing (WoD), as of January 1, 2021, the DEC-UM is composed of the following members shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Composition DEC-UM op January 1, 2021

Member	Scientific focus	Expertise	Involved in animal research	Affiliated to the license holder
<b>Member 1 (chair)</b>	Veterinary medicine	VM;SA;D;P;HC	I-NL	NA
<b>Member 2</b>	Cardiology	SA;D	I	A
<b>Member 3 (vice-chair)</b>	Oncology	SA;D;P	I	A
<b>Member 4</b>	Neurology	D;SA;HC	I	A
<b>Member 5</b>	Pulmonology	SA;D;HC	NI	NA
<b>Member 6</b>	Ethics	E;SA;D;HC	NI	NA
<b>Member 7</b>	Biomaterials	SA;D;HC	I	NA
<b>Member 8</b>	Pharmacology/Toxicology	SA;D;HC	NI	NA
<b>Advisor</b>		Chair IvD	I	A
<b>Secretary</b>			NI	A

**Abbreviations:** SA = the scientific research areas and applications implementing animal testing, taking into account replacement, reduction and refinement on the scientific focus; D = design of animal tests, including statistical aspects; VM = veterinary medicine practice in context of research or wild-life animals; HC = housing and caring of animals applied in research; E = ethics; P = protection of research animals; NI = not involved in animal testing; NI-NL = not involved in animal testing within the Netherlands; I = involved in animal testing; I-NL = ???, NA = not affiliated to license holder; A = affiliated to license holder

### *License holder*

The DEC-UM advised the CCD for project proposals from the UM (UM, FHML). In 2020, no project proposals from an external license holder have been judged by the DEC-UM.

## Activities DEC-UM

### Meetings

The DEC-UM organized 8 – 2 on site and 6 online due to Covid-19 measures – meetings in 2020 to plenary discuss the CCD requests to provide an advice regarding new project proposals or project amendments. Based on these plenary meetings, the DEC-UM prepared advices for the CCD. The responsible researchers of two proposals have been invited to a digital plenary meeting to provide additional explanations or upon an intended (negative) advice.

### CCD-requests to the DEC-UM

In 2020, the DEC-UM completed 16 CCD-requests: 14 new project proposals, 1 re-submitted proposals and 1 amendment (see Figure 1). Three proposals (18.8%) have been withdrawn by the responsible researcher. The DEC-UM has formulated an advice towards the CCD for 10 proposals (62.5%). One proposal (6.3%) was judged ‘not testable/not assessable in current form’ and returned as such to the CCD. The CCD informed the applicant about this decision and gave the opportunity to re-submit the proposal. The DEC-UM proved a positive advice for 9 proposals (90%) and a positive advice with a clause for 1 proposal (10%). Most advices were given unanimously, except for 1 proposal (10%), for which a majority position was taken.

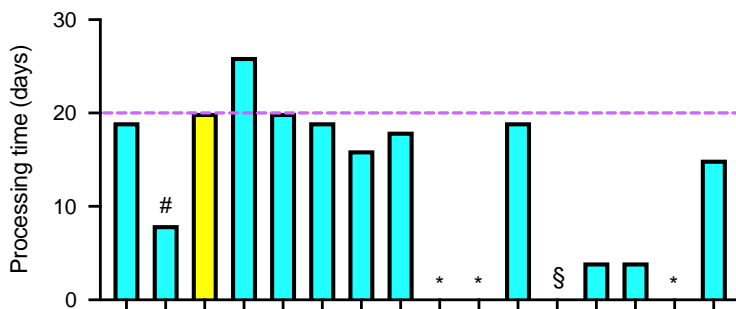


Figure 1. Processing time DEC-UM for completed CCD-requests in 2020

The purple dashed line indicates the maximal allowed processing time of 20 working days to provide advice to the CCD. \* = proposal withdrawn by the responsible researcher, # = proposal not testable /not assessable. § = amendment. Blue = new proposal, yellow = re-submitted proposal.

The processing time (working days) to compose an advice towards the CCD is indicated in Figure 1. The average processing time for the DEC-UM in 2020 was 15.7 working days. This is comparable with the processing time of 2019 and well below the maximal allowed processing time of 20 working days, given by the CCD to the DEC (purple line). For one proposal this maximal allowed processing time was exceeded, due to the complexity of the application and also limited accuracy in answering questions. This delay has been communicated with the CCD, with requesting an official extension as indicated by the law (EU 2010/63, Art.41-2).

### National meetings

### Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences

The Dutch society for animal ethical committees (NVDEC) is representative for all the 16 DEC's in several meetings, among others with the CCD. In 2020, the DEC-UM participated in the meetings for DEC chairs and secretaries, organized by NVDEC, on March 5 (on site) and December 1 (online), as well as in the meetings for CCD-DEC chairs and secretaries, organized by the CCD on July 10 and December 1 (both online). The meeting organized by NVDEC always preceded the meetings organized by CCD. In 2020, several members of the DEC-UM have participated in the webinar "Nut & oorzaak dierproeven", organized by KNAW on June 8 (online) and in the workshop "Openbaarheid informatie over dierproeven", organized by the Ministry LNV & EZK on September 22 and 29 (both online).

#### *Education*

In the Laboratory Animal Science Course at UM/FHML, organized in June and October 2020, the ethicist DEC-UM gave lectures on the new law on animal testing (WoD), the new application procedure, the role of the DEC and from a more general point of view ethics concerning animal testing.