

Animal Ethics Policy

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Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the care and use of animals for scientific purposes at Murdoch University complies with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013* and the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.

This policy is part of a suite of policies that support the *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy* and the ethical use of animals in research. This policy complies with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007*, the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013 (the Animal Code)* and the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*. The Animal Code sets out the governing principles, as well as the responsibilities of institutions, Animal Ethics Committees, investigators, animal carers, and all people involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. The Animal Code encapsulates the '3Rs' to be applied at all stages of animal care and use:

- **Replacement:** Methods that replace or partially replace the use of animals.
- **Reduction:** Methods for obtaining comparable levels of information from the use of fewer animals in scientific procedures and/or for obtaining more information from the same number of animals.
- **Refinement:** Methods that alleviate or minimise potential pain and distress, and enhance animal wellbeing.

Audience:

Staff (academic/professional, including those listed in the *Honorary Titles and Appointments Policy*), and Students

Objectives:

- To ensure that the care and use of animals for scientific purposes at Murdoch University complies with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013*, the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* and other applicable codes and legislation.
- To promote ethically good animal research and teaching practices for the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes.
- To clarify the responsibilities of Murdoch University, review bodies, investigators, animal carers and other relevant parties for the ethical care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

Definitions:

Any defined terms below are specific to this document. The definition of common terms appears in the Murdoch University Dictionary of Terms.

- “The Animal Code” means the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013*.

This policy adopts the Animal Code definitions for the following:

- “Activity” means any action or group of actions undertaken that involves the care and use of animals, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry of those animals.
- “Animal” means any live non-human vertebrate (e.g. fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock, wildlife), and cephalopods.
- “Animal Carer” means any person involved in the care of animals that are used for scientific purposes, including during their acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry. At Murdoch University, this includes the Farm Manager.
- “Investigator” means any person who uses animals for scientific purposes, and includes researchers, teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, and people involved in product testing, environmental testing, production of biological products and wildlife surveys.
- “Project” means an activity or group of activities that form a discrete piece of work that aims to achieve a scientific purpose.
- “Scientific Purposes” means all activities conducted with the aim of acquiring, developing or demonstrating knowledge or techniques in all areas of science including teaching, field trials, environmental studies, research (including the creation and breeding of a new animal line where the impact on animal wellbeing is unknown or uncertain), diagnosis, product testing, and the production of biological products.

Policy Statement:

Responsibilities of Murdoch University

1. The Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation is the responsible officer for Murdoch University’s overall governance with respect to the care and use of animals.
2. Murdoch University must ensure and promote that the care and use of animals for scientific purposes comply with the:
 - 2.1. *Animal Welfare Act 2002*;
 - 2.2. *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013*;
 - 2.3. *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2007*;
 - 2.4. *Responsible Conduct of Research Policy*; and

- 2.5. other codes, policies and legislation, where relevant.
3. These documents must be made available and promoted to all relevant people and Animal Ethics Committee members within Murdoch University.
4. An Animal Ethics Committee (**AEC**) is established to ensure compliance with the Animal Code, and Murdoch University must:
 - 4.1. ensure that the AEC's Terms of Reference are published on its relevant website;
 - 4.2. ensure the AEC's membership is constituted according to the Animal Code, and appoint additional members with relevant skills and background to assist the AEC, where necessary;
 - 4.3. establish procedures for the effective governance and operation of the AEC;
 - 4.4. provide the AEC and Research Ethics with the resources required to carry out its responsibilities effectively in compliance with the Animal Code;
 - 4.5. provide the AEC with a four-year plan for the implementation and resourcing of its responsibilities in relation to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes; and
 - 4.6. consult the AEC on any infrastructure developments, plans and policies that may directly or indirectly affect the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes.
5. An appropriately qualified and competent officer must be clearly identified to assist the AEC to ensure that:
 - 5.1. animal wellbeing is supported and safeguarded in accordance with the Animal Code, and relevant AEC-approved procedures and guidelines;
 - 5.2. animal wellbeing is monitored at all stages and sites of animal care and use;
 - 5.3. appropriate actions are taken in unexpected adverse events and emergencies where welfare intervention is required; and
 - 5.4. disease outbreaks and other emergencies are promptly detected and effectively managed.
6. Murdoch University must ensure all persons involved in the care and use of animals:
 - 6.1. understand their legal responsibilities and the requirements of the Animal Code including compliance in:
 - 6.1.1. animal wellbeing for all animals cared for, used, held, bred and supplied for scientific purposes;
 - 6.1.2. the management of animal acquisition, breeding and holding facilities; and
 - 6.1.3. the management of potential disease hazards and other occupational health and safety issues associated with the care and use of animals.

- 6.2. have the necessary competencies, based on current best practice, or are under the direct supervision of a competent person. In addition, Murdoch University must ensure:
 - 6.2.1. animal care is provided by an adequate number of competent personnel; and
 - 6.2.2. availability and access to appropriate veterinary and diagnostic services.
- 6.3. have access to appropriate educational programs, training, assessment and certification of competencies.
7. Murdoch University must ensure that investigators involved in any collaborative care and use of animals for scientific purposes with other institutions/AECs within Australia comply with the Animal Code and any other relevant legislation and/or codes.
 - 7.1. Before any animal work may commence, an Inter-Institutional Agreement must be in place, where necessary.
 - 7.2. Each project must have its own Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish clear responsibilities and communication lines between all collaborating AECs and all investigators.
 - 7.3. Collaborative projects must be approved and monitored by the responsible AEC/s.
 - 7.3.1. A formal agreement between collaborating institutions may delegate an AEC to approve and monitor the entire project to avoid duplication of processes. If no AEC is delegated, approval must be granted by each AEC of institutions involved before the project may commence.
8. Murdoch University must ensure that international collaborations comply with the Animal Code as well as any local legislation and other regulatory requirements.
9. Murdoch University must address any concerns of non-compliance with the Animal Code raised by the AEC and, if necessary, in accordance with the *Research Misconduct Policy*.
10. Murdoch University must regularly monitor and review the institution's compliance with the Animal Code by:
 - 10.1. conducting an annual review of the operation of the AEC, including an assessment of its Annual Report and a meeting with the AEC Chair;
 - 10.2. conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the processes for complaints and non-compliance;
 - 10.3. providing for an external review on its care and use of animals for scientific purposes as specified by the Animal Code; and
 - 10.4. reporting to Commonwealth and State government authorities, as appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Animal Ethics Committee

11. The AEC must ensure that all care and use of animals for scientific purposes, and associated activities, comply with the Animal Code.

- 11.1. The AEC must operate with at least the minimum Terms of Reference and membership, as required by the Animal Code.
- 11.2. The name of the AEC Chair may be published. The members of the AEC shall remain confidential and their names shall not be published. The approved membership categories may be published.
- 11.3. All new approvals or renewals of existing projects must only be approved at quorate meetings of the AEC, and the decision should be made on the basis of consensus and only by those present throughout the discussion.
- 11.4. Experts may be invited to provide advice, as required.
- 12. The AEC must establish required processes for the review of ethics applications, in accordance with the Animal Code, to:
 - 12.1. review applications for new projects, and approve only those that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Animal Code;
 - 12.2. conduct follow-up reviews of approved projects, and renew only those projects that are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Animal Code;
 - 12.3. regularly monitor the care and use of animals on site, and/or review records and reports;
 - 12.4. take appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events or non-compliance;
 - 12.5. approve procedures and guidelines for the care and use of animals;
 - 12.6. provide advice and recommendations to Murdoch University to ensure that the requirements of the Animal Code are maintained and that matters affecting animal wellbeing are addressed; and
 - 12.7. report on its operations to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation at least annually.
- 13. The AEC must apply the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement, as outlined in the Animal Code.
- 14. The AEC must ensure that there is a mechanism for authorising the emergency treatment or humane killing of any animal, in accordance with the Animal Code.
- 15. The AEC must establish good communication processes with investigators, and clearly communicate its decisions to investigators in writing as promptly as possible.
- 16. The AEC must maintain records in relation to applications, AEC decisions and inspections conducted in relation to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
- 17. The AEC may provide services for non-institutional applicants and for other institutions on a case by case basis.
- 18. The AEC may establish an AEC Executive which:
 - 18.1. must include the AEC Chair, or Deputy Chair, and at least one member from Category C or D, in accordance with the Animal Code;

- 18.2. may approve minor amendments to approved projects, as delegated by the AEC, for ratification at the next AEC meeting; and
- 18.3. must not approve new applications.
- 19. The operations of the AEC shall be subject to a formal external review at least every four years, in accordance with the Animal Code.

Responsibilities of Investigators

- 20. The Chief Investigator for a project must be a Murdoch University staff member able to take ultimate responsibility for the project.
 - 20.1. The Chief Investigator must be competent with respect to the wellbeing of animals used in the project.
 - 20.2. The Chief Investigator must ensure that all investigators involved in the project are competent animals users and that they are registered with Research Ethics before commencing any animal work.
- 21. Each investigator in a project has personal responsibility for the ethical conduct of the project throughout the duration of the approved use of animals.
- 22. Investigators must undertake relevant education, training, and competency assessments, as required.
- 23. Investigators must obtain written approval from the AEC, and any other relevant bodies prior to the commencement of, or amendments to, any project involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
- 24. Investigators must only apply for the use of animals when the potential effects on the animal wellbeing are justified by the potential benefits, in accordance with the Animal Code.
- 25. Investigators must ensure that the conduct of an approved project is managed in accordance with AEC approval conditions.
- 26. Details on the ethics application and management of an approved project are on the Animal Ethics website.
- 27. Investigators must ensure that the procedures using animals are competently performed and accord with current best practice.
 - 27.1. Investigators must develop Standard Operating Procedures for approval by the AEC, where necessary, in accordance with the Animal Code.
- 28. Investigators must ensure that animal wellbeing is appropriately monitored at all stages of the project.
- 29. Investigators must maintain and retain detailed records of the care and use of the animals which must be made available to Murdoch University, the AEC and authorised external reviewers.
- 30. Investigators must cease the project if approval from the AEC is suspended or withdrawn.
- 31. Investigators must promptly report to the AEC any unexpected adverse events that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals for which they are responsible.

32. Investigators must ensure prompt action regarding the future of animals at the completion of their use in a project, in accordance with the Animal Code.
33. Investigators must submit all reports on their approved projects or activities to the AEC in a timely manner, as required by the Animal Code.
34. Before animal work may commence, investigators involved in collaborative studies with another Australian institution must:
 - 34.1. obtain AEC approval from each institution, as relevant;
 - 34.2. check that an Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) is in place; and
 - 34.3. ensure that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) is provided.
35. Before animal work may commence, investigators involved in collaborative studies conducted in another country must ensure that:
 - 35.1. Murdoch University AEC approval is obtained;
 - 35.2. approvals from all other relevant bodies are obtained;
 - 35.3. the ethics application advises the AEC on how the principles of the Animal Code can be met, taking into consideration compliance with local requirements; and
 - 35.4. the location of the project is not a mechanism for avoiding compliance with the Animal Code.
36. Investigators may conscientiously object, without disadvantage, to a project including a teaching activity, that compromises their values, in accordance with the *Conscientious Objection Procedure*.

Responsibilities of Animal Carers

37. Responsibility for the care of animals rests with the animal carer/s until the animals are allocated to an approved project where their care is the primary responsibility of the investigator.
 - 37.1. Where multiple animal carers are involved, a Murdoch University staff member must be identified as having ultimate responsibility for the care of those animals housed at Murdoch University.
38. Animal carers must:
 - 38.1. comply with the Animal Code and all other relevant Murdoch University policies and procedures;
 - 38.2. undertake activities in accordance with AEC approval;
 - 38.3. ensure there are appropriate Standard Operating Procedures for the breeding and maintenance of breeding stock, including those from new approved animal lines;
 - 38.4. appropriately monitor and assess the wellbeing of the animals for which they are responsible;
 - 38.5. take prompt action, as necessary, in accordance with AEC-approved processes for welfare interventions and report to the investigator and AEC promptly;

- 38.6. maintain and retain detailed records of the care of animals, and make these records available to Murdoch University, the AEC, authorised external reviewers and investigators; and
- 38.7. report to the AEC as required.

Responsibilities for Teaching Activities

- 39. All parts of the Animal Code apply to teaching activities.
- 40. College PVCs have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that:
 - 40.1. all teaching activities involving animals conducted in their College comply with the Animal Code;
 - 40.2. people involved in the care and use of animals understand and accept their responsibilities; and
 - 40.3. resources are made available to enable staff and students to meet their responsibilities.
- 41. Investigators must ensure that animals are used for teaching:
 - 41.1. only when their use is essential to the achievement of an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirements; and
 - 41.2. when suitable alternatives to replace the use of animals to achieve the educational outcomes are not available.
- 42. Investigators must obtain written approval from the AEC prior to the use of any animals in teaching activities.
- 43. Investigators must ensure that students have opportunity to discuss the ethical and related issues associated with the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
- 44. Investigators must ensure that students are supervised by a suitably qualified and competent person.
- 45. Investigators must ensure that animals are not released either for temporary care or at the completion of the use of the animal unless AEC approval has been granted for such release.
- 46. Training of students to achieve competency-based outcomes in routine procedures are exempt from AEC approval if all of the following apply:
 - 46.1. the animals are at their home property or at a licensed veterinary facility;
 - 46.2. the procedures would normally occur as part of routine management or veterinary clinical management of the animal;
 - 46.3. the animals are subjected to no procedures additional to what would normally occur in routine management or veterinary clinical management of the animal; and
 - 46.4. the teacher is competent to carry out the procedure.

Complaints and Non-compliance

- 47. Complaints or allegations of non-compliance must be reported promptly to the AEC, in accordance with the *Animal Ethics Complaints Procedure*.

Performance Indicators:

- Number of breaches of the Animal Code is reduced (with the optimum being zero).

Related Documents:

[Animal Ethics Committee Governance and Operations](#)

[Animal Ethics Complaints Procedure](#)

[Conscientious Objection Procedure](#)

[Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#)

[Research Misconduct Policy](#)

[Honorary Titles and Appointments Policy](#)

References:

[Animal Welfare Act 2002 \(WA\)](#)

[Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th edition 2013](#)

[Biosecurity \(Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions\) Act 2015 \(Cth\)](#)

CSIRO 'Primary Industry Report Series' (complete listing).

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/nid/22/sid/11.htm>. Where any of these conflict with Western Australian codes and standards, the Western Australian codes and standards shall take precedence.

[Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 \(Cth\)](#)

[Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment \(Wildlife Protection\) Act 2001 \(Cth\)](#)

[Gene Technology Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#)

[IATA Live Animal Regulations](#)

[National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

Approval and Implementation:

Approval Authority:	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager Research Ethics
Approval Authority for supporting procedures:	Animal Ethics Committee
Approval Authority for supporting guidelines:	There are no supporting guidelines
Approval Authority for supporting standards:	There are no supporting standards

Contact Officer:	Animal Ethics Advisor
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Revision History:

Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date Approved	Effective Date	Next Review Date	Resolution No. (if applicable)
Administrative Amendments	08/03/2019			
Amended	12/04/2018	12/04/2018	12/04/2021	
Noted by AEC	24/03/2015			AEC/1/2015
Approved	01/03/2015	01/03/2015	01/03/2018	