

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE



Applications for Animal Ethics Approval

Guidelines

1. The Deakin University Animal Welfare Committee

Deakin University has one full institutional Animal Ethics Committee called the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC). The AWC has its term of reference, composition and procedures determined by the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* and its Regulations, and the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (the Code)*.

The legislative requirements specify that an Animal Ethics Committee must verify that the use of animals adheres to the principles and guidelines described in the *Code*. The Deakin University Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) considers applications for compliance with legislative requirements.

The purpose of the *Code* is to ensure the ethical use and the humane care of animals used for scientific purposes. The *Code* emphasises the responsibilities of investigators, teachers and institutions using animals to:

- ensure that the use of animals is justified, taking into consideration the scientific or educational benefits and the potential effects on the welfare of the animals;
- ensure that the welfare of animals is always considered;
- promote the development and use techniques which replace animal use in scientific and teaching activities wherever possible. The *Code* specifies that techniques that totally or partially replace the use of animals for scientific purposes must be sought and used wherever possible;
- minimise the number of animals used in projects; and
- avoid pain or distress for each animal used in scientific and teaching activities;

To this end, there is a need in scientific and teaching activities to consider:

- the *replacement* of animals with other methods
- the *reduction* in the number of animals used; and
- the *refinement* of techniques used to reduce the impact on animals.

(Source: Bureau of Animal Welfare 'AEC Common Application Form')

In accordance with the *Code* the Deakin University AWC comprises a Chair, veterinarians (2 members), research scientists (3 members), animal welfare representatives (2 members), independent lay members (2 -3 members), people involved in the routine care of laboratory animals (2 members) and a Secretary.

Terms of reference:

1. To advise on the principles and guidelines for animal use and welfare in the University, including acquisition, transport, production, housing, care, use and disposal of animals.
2. To monitor the development and management of animal holding and breeding facilities in the University to ensure that the appropriate standards of these facilities are maintained.
3. To consider the ethical implications of all proposed research and teaching activities involving the use of animals, and to approve only those which conform to the requirements of the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*.
4. To monitor approved activities for continued conformance with the *Code of Practice*.
5. To maintain records of all applications for approval and the decisions of the Committee, and to make appropriate information from these records available in response to requests from a duly constituted authority.
6. To report annually on the activities of the Committee.

2. Research and teaching projects which require approval

In accordance with the *Code* all research or teaching involving the use of **live, non-human vertebrates (including fish) and higher order invertebrates (cephalopods)** must have AWC approval **prior** to the commencement of the project. This includes wildlife surveys. Approval will only be given **for a maximum of 3 years**, subject to annual review of the project.

Research or teaching projects involving **lower order invertebrates** do not require AWC approval or notification, and the Schools have responsibility for managing ethical issues surrounding the use of lower order invertebrates.

3. The application process

For new projects based at Deakin University applicants must complete the AWC application form for consideration at a meeting of the AWC. The application form is available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website.

The Deakin University AWC meets approximately six times per year. Information on meeting dates and **submission deadlines** are available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website or from the Secretary.

Staff members applying for research grants from funding bodies such as the ARC or NHMRC should make sure that their applications are submitted to the AWC in time to obtain approval by the required date.

Submit applications on the current form **via email** to the AWC Secretary animal-ethics@deakin.edu.au **by the application deadline**. A reference number will be issued and the application will be considered at the next scheduled AWC meeting. If the Principal Investigator has not received an acknowledgement email within one week of lodging the application, please contact the Secretary to ensure that the application was received.

A signed hard copy of the application must also be submitted. The Scientific Procedures Premises Licence (SPPL) nominee, principal investigator and co-investigators must sign the relevant declaration on the application form. When relevant, the Animal Facility Manager and a statistician must also sign the form. Please note that it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain the appropriate licence holder signature on the application. For wildlife projects copies of any permits required must be forwarded to the Secretary for AWC records once the permits have been obtained and prior to work commencing on the project

The Principal Investigator will usually be informed by email of the outcome of their application within a week after the AWC meeting date. If you have not heard within that time, please contact the Secretary to ensure that your contact details have been correctly recorded. Official notification of the decision will be forwarded to the Principal Investigator as soon as possible following a meeting, or after any required clarifications, amendments, additional information or signatures are received and approved.

Please note that for projects involving genetically modified animals approval from the Laboratory and Biosafety Committee (LBC) must also be obtained. Further information is available from the [Biosafety](#) website or from the LBC Secretary rsd-biosafety@deakin.edu.au.

4. The application form

The AWC must verify that the use of animals adheres to the principles and guidelines described in the *Code* and must be satisfied that the use of animals is justified, based on whether the scientific or educational value of the work outweighs the potential impact on the animals being used. The application form is the primary means by which the AWC achieves these aims.

The application form is available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

Researchers are encouraged to use the Deakin University Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) when preparing their research proposals and completing animal ethics application forms. The SOPs are available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website.

Prior to applying for animal ethics approval investigators must be familiar with the applicable sections of Part III of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Regulations*, the Victorian *Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Laboratory Mice, Rats, Guinea Pigs and Rabbits* (both available from the [Bureau of Animal Welfare](#) website), the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and the NHMRC Animal Welfare Committee *Guidelines for the generation, breeding, care and use of genetically modified and cloned animals for scientific purposes* (both available from the [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\) Animal Research Ethics](#) website).

Completing the form:

1. Download the application form from the animal ethics website each time you prepare an application. The form is frequently updated and out of date forms cannot be accepted.
2. Write in plain English. The application must be understood by people without a scientific background or with no knowledge of your area of research. If you cannot avoid the use of scientific terms, then they must be explained in the text or a glossary of terms may be attached.
3. Have a least one other person with experience in preparing AWC applications carefully proof read your application. Applications require considerable preparation to ensure they contain all the necessary information and present it in a coherent and consistent fashion. The most common reason applications are not approved is due to insufficient preparation leading to omission of important information or inconsistencies in the proposal.
4. Submit both one signed hard copy of the application AND an electronic copy to:
AWC Secretary (animal-ethics@deakin.edu.au)
Research Services Division
Deakin University
Pigdons Rd
Waurm Ponds VIC 3217
animal-ethics@deakin.edu.au

5. Consideration of AWC applications between meetings

Under the *Code* (section 2.2.11) the AWC may establish an Executive to approve **minor modifications** for review at the next AWC meeting.

The Executive may not approve new applications.

The Executive will meet to consider minor modifications at the **discretion of the Chair**. The Executive must reach unanimous agreement. Where unanimous agreement is not reached the Executive will refer the matter to the full AWC at the next meeting.

6. Additional requirements for wildlife studies

The use of wildlife in research and teaching is regulated by the Wildlife Act 1975 in addition the the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the *Code*. The Wildlife Act is overseen by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Any use of wildlife must have a permit under this Act. This may be additional to a Scientific Procedures Licence.

For futher information visit the [Bureau of Animal Welfare](#) website.

7. Repeated use of animals

A reduction in the use of animals should not be implemented at the expense of greater suffering of individual animals (refer to section 1.10 of the *Code*).

Requests for the repeated use of animals will need to address the guidelines set out in the code of practice (see sections 1.10 and 3.3.11 of the *Code*) and will be considered by the Committee on a case-by-case basis.

8. Training

All staff members or post-graduate/honour students must complete the AWC training course titled 'Regulatory Issues in the Care and Use of Animals for Research and Teaching', commonly referred to as Part 1. Courses are held twice yearly. On-line training is also available by contacting the AWC Secretary (animal-ethics@deakin.edu.au).

All staff members or post-graduate/honours students that will work with laboratory rodents must complete the AWC training course titled 'The Care and Use of Laboratory Rodents in Research and Teaching' commonly referred to as Part 2. The course is an introductory course that covers common rodent handling and use techniques. Part 2 courses are held once or twice a year subject to demand. If no Part 2 is scheduled for the time when laboratory work with rodents is due to commence please consult the document 'Deakin University AWC training courses' available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website.

For wildlife projects the Principal Investigator must complete a 'Register of Training in Research Procedures Involving Wildlife' for each investigator (staff or student) that requires training in research procedures involving wildlife. The register lists the various procedures in which the investigator has been trained and is considered proficient. The completed register must be retained by the Principle Investigator as part of the project records and a copy forwarded to the AWC Secretary for AWC records.

Further information on training and scheduled dates for course is available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website.

9. Minor Changes of protocol

Any proposed changes to the protocol, animal numbers or investigators involved, or requests for an extension of time must be submitted to the AWC for consideration and approval. A 'Request for Approval of Minor Change to Protocol' form is available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website.

'Guidelines for minor modifications to approved animal ethics projects' are available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website. This document is designed to help investigators decide if their proposed modification can be considered to be minor. However, due to the complexity of projects and the regulations surrounding such approval it must be stressed that ultimately the AWC will decide on a case-by-case basis. A new application is required in cases where the objectives of the project or animal welfare impact will significantly change and do not meet the criteria for a minor modification. If the Principal Investigator is unsure if proposed changes would be accepted as minor amendments, then a review of these changes may be requested in order to obtain advice as to whether the changes might depart sufficiently from the original protocol so as to merit a new application.

Please be aware however that the Committee will determine for themselves if the proposed changes can be accepted as minor changes to an existing protocol. The review is advisory only.

Requests for extensions of time must be received with sufficient time for the Committee to consider the request prior to AWC approval expiring. A new application is required if AWC approval for a project has expired. The maximum approval limit is 3 years.

10. Project reports

Annual reports must be submitted to the Secretary by the stipulated deadline. Annual report forms are available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website towards the end of each year.

Final report forms are available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website and **must be submitted within 2 weeks of a project being completed or discontinued.**

Reports must be made on the current AWC form and be in type format. Handwritten reports will not be accepted.

Failure to submit the required reports by the stipulated deadline will lead to suspension of approval of the project. The Committee may also exercise its right to withhold approval for new applications while project reports on previously approved projects are outstanding.

11. Approval to work on an external project

Deakin personnel (staff or student) working at another institution on a project approved by that institution must complete an 'Approval to work on an external project' form. This form is available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website and **must be submitted with a copy of the external AEC's approval letter and the complete application by the AWC application deadline** for consideration by the AWC.

External projects include projects using animals housed solely at another institution, and wildlife projects (using animals in the field) where the Principal Investigator is employed at another institution. In other circumstances see Section 12 (below) and contact the [AWC Secretary](#) for further advice.

12. Projects that take place across more than one institution including Deakin University

Under the *Code* (section 2.2.41- 42), the AWC is required to formulate procedures for projects involving more than one AEC. The document 'Procedure for projects to be conducted at another institution or at more than one institution within Australia' is available from the [Deakin University Animal Ethics](#) website and should be consulted.

13. Contact details

Animal ethics information: email animal-ethics@deakin.edu.au.

Chair: Professor Andrew Sinclair
andrew.sinclair@deakin.edu.au
School of Exercise and Nutrition
Burwood

Animal Welfare Officer: Dr Shannon Lee
shannon.lee@deakin.edu.au
Research Services Division
Geelong

Secretary: Amanda Mayor
amanda.mayor@deakin.edu.au
Research Services Division
Geelong

14. Website Details

Deakin University Animal Ethics:
<http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/admin/ethics/animal/index.php>

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Animal Research Ethics:
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/ethics/animal/index.htm>

Bureau of Animal Welfare: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare/>

The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching Ltd (ANZCCART): <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/>