

1. Objectives

- 1.1. This policy outlines the University's Animal Care and Use Program, underpinned by its commitment to the ethical, humane, responsible and compliant care and use of animals for scientific purposes, where such use is justified by the benefits to the community.
- 1.2. The Animal Care and Use Program reflects this commitment through:
 - (a) provision and maintenance of appropriate animal facilities, training and licences;
 - (b) governing, monitoring and reviewing all activities relating to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes;
 - (c) processes that prevent and detect non-compliance;
 - (d) a program of veterinary care;
 - (e) management of incidents;
 - (f) a culture of care, including replacing the use of animals with other methods where possible, reducing the number of animals used, and refining techniques to minimise adverse impacts on animals; and
 - (g) implementation of the Animal Openness Agreement.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all care and use of:
 - (a) live vertebrate animals, cephalopods, decapod crustaceans and embryos beyond the midpoint of gestation or incubation for that species (e.g. embryonated chicken eggs from day 11 post fertilisation);
 - (b) where such care and use is for scientific purposes in the course of University activities, including research, teaching, field work, breeding and husbandry;
 - (c) and to all personnel engaged with the University's Animal Care and Use Program, such as:
 - (i) University personnel, including staff, honoraries, graduate researchers and student investigators, facility staff, animal ethics committee members, volunteers, visitors, and advisors; or
 - (ii) non-University personnel operating on University premises or under a Scientific Procedures Premises Licence for which the University is the licence holder.
- 2.2. This policy does not apply to:
 - (a) the use of:
 - (i) invertebrate animals with the exception of cephalopods;
 - (ii) a reptile, bird (embryonated egg), fish, amphibian, decapod crustacean, cephalopod or mammal, other than any human being below the normal midpoint of gestation or incubation;
 - (iii) scavenged animal tissue where an entire animal, organ or tissue has been obtained from an animal already deceased;
 - (b) service animals and privately owned pets attending University campuses (see the [Health & Safety: Animals On Campus Guidance](#)); or
 - (c) the use or the depiction of live animals in arts - whether in performance or the making of still or moving images.
- 2.3. In the case of genetically modified animals constituting GMOs under the Gene Technology Act 2000 (Cth), this policy should be read in conjunction with the Biorisk Management Policy. Approvals, authorisations and space requirements under both policies apply to such GMO animals.
- 2.4. In the case of University activities governed by external Animal Ethics Committees, this policy should be read in conjunction with policies and procedures applicable to the host organisation.

3. Authority

- 3.1. This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#) and the Vice-Chancellor Regulation and supports compliance with the:
- (a) Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 2013 (The Code)
 - (b) Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
 - (c) *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (Vic) (POCTA)
 - (d) *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2008* (Vic)
 - (e) The Code of Practice for Housing and Care of Laboratory Mice, Rats, Guinea Pigs and Rabbits
 - (f) Scientific Procedures Premises Licences held by the University
 - (g) Animal Openness Agreement.

4. Policy

- 4.1. The University is committed to the responsible, ethical, humane and compliant care and use of animals for scientific purposes, where such use is justified by the benefits to the community. All Program Participants must comply with applicable laws, regulations, codes, standards, approvals, authorisations, licences, this policy and its Ancillary Requirements.
- 4.2. The University's Animal Care and Use Program, under the oversight of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), implements its commitment to the responsible, ethical, humane and compliant care and use of animals for scientific purposes in accordance with the activities, roles and responsibilities prescribed under this policy.
- 4.3. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will:
- (a) establish one or more Animal Ethics Committees, (**AEC**) to internally regulate the care and use of animals for scientific purposes through review, oversight and monitoring functions in accordance with the Code and Terms of Reference, including determining whether a proposed scientific procedure involving an animal is justified by its benefit;
 - (b) appoint Licence Nominees, to co-regulate animal care and use occurring on the relevant Licence Nominee's Scientific Procedures Premises Licence (SPPL), Scientific Procedures Fieldwork Licence (SPFL) or Specified Animals Breeding Licence (SABL) authorise activities approved by an AEC proceeding on their licensed premises and carry out such other responsibilities as may be described in this policy and its Ancillary Requirements; and
 - (c) establish such other reporting, governance and oversight bodies (e.g. Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee (AWEC)) or responsibilities as deemed necessary or desirable to ensure proper oversight of the Animal Care and Use Program, and document these as Ancillary Requirements.
- 4.4. Program Participants must only use animals for scientific purposes (e.g. breeding, research or teaching) where:
- (a) a properly constituted AEC, named on the relevant Scientific Procedures Premises Licence, has determined that the use is justified by the benefits; and
 - (b) with the authorisation of the Licence Nominee appointed for the relevant licensed premises on which the use will occur (or, in the case of an interstate licence, the relevant Dean).
- 4.5. Program Participants must:
- (a) recognise, value, and respect animals as sentient beings;
 - (b) exercise a duty of care for animals at all stages of the Animal Care and Use Program, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing, husbandry, use for scientific purposes and provision for animals at the conclusion of their use;
 - (c) ensure that animals are provided appropriate nutrition, housing and behavioural interactions;
 - (d) to the extent possible:
 - (i) replace the use of animals with alternatives;
 - (ii) minimise the number of animals participating in the Animal Care and Use Program (including limiting breeding of animals to meet, but not exceed, the requirements of the Animal Care and Use Program);
 - (iii) refine techniques to minimise adverse impacts on animals;

- (e) with the exception of approved fieldwork activities, house, hold, care for and conduct scientific procedures on animals only at premises named on a Scientific Procedures Premises Licence (SPPL) and:
 - (i) approved by the University, as designated by signage;
 - (ii) maintained in a fit a proper state; and
 - (iii) in accordance with any species and activity conditions of the relevant licence;
- (f) maintain contemporaneous records of the numbers, species and location of all animal care and use activities;
- (g) obtain approval and authorisation, through successful completion of relevant AEC reviews, assessments and training, to safely, ethically and responsibly work with animals;
- (h) meet the conditions of any approval, authorisation or licence issued by the AEC, Licence Nominee or external regulatory body;
- (i) remain current with mandatory training in accordance with the Ancillary Requirements;
- (j) where appropriate, seek advice from the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity (**OREI**) in relation to the responsible, ethical, compliant and humane use of animals for research;
- (k) cooperate with any internal or external audit or inspection activity, and promptly action any corrective actions issued; and
- (l) safeguard animal wellbeing in accordance with this policy.

4.6. All Program Participants must ensure the wellbeing of animals under their use or care through the following actions:

- (a) monitoring the wellbeing of animals in accordance with AEC approvals;
- (b) comprehensively forward planning for adverse events and emergencies in ethics applications;
- (c) managing incidents responsibly, ethically, compliantly and humanely, including taking prompt action to alleviate pain or distress in the event of an adverse event, and humanely euthanising any animal that would seriously suffer if it remained alive;
- (d) ensuring that appropriate routine and emergency veterinary care is available;
- (e) in designing and conducting animal care and use, considering and incorporating the relevant aspects of species-specific biology, physiology and behaviour, the 3Rs and strategies to minimise adverse impacts;
- (f) reporting unexpected adverse events (UAEs) and non-compliance to the AEC as specified in the Ancillary Requirements: Animal Care and Use Incident Management Procedure; [\[link\]](#) and
- (g) maintain currency of competency and animal welfare & ethics training.

4.7. Program Participants must facilitate and comply with processes to support the internal and external monitoring and oversight of the Animal Care and Use Program to support openness, transparency and alignment with community expectations, including:

- (a) annual animal use returns;
- (b) annual reports to the AEC;
- (c) ad hoc Incident reports to the AEC within 3 business days of occurrence;
- (d) periodic licensed space audits and inspections conducted by (OREI);
- (e) annual AEC inspections of animal facilities;
- (f) ad hoc audits and inspections conducted by the Animal Welfare regulator;
- (g) Post Approval Monitoring checks conducted by OREI relating to AEC approved applications;
- (h) management-initiated audits of the Animal Care and Use Program, including quadrennial external reviews; and
- (i) Animal Openness Agreement initiatives.

5. Procedural principles

Implementing the Animal Care and Use Program

5.1. The University governs activities involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes via an integrated program of oversight and management which provides controls and monitoring for activities, personnel and facilities. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will determine the details of roles and responsibilities relating to the Animal Care and Use Program in accordance with this policy, and these will

be recorded and maintained by the OREI, and published on the University's website as Ancillary Requirements.

- 5.2. The Animal Care and Use Program encompasses the following principal elements:
- (a) processes authorising personnel participating in the program, including education and training, skills development and competency assessment;
 - (b) processes and governance to review, approve, authorise, oversee, monitor and report on all activity undertaken in the program;
 - (c) internal and external reporting of animal inventories;
 - (d) provision and maintenance of appropriate, licensed animal facilities and spaces, with appropriately qualified staff to care for animals within the facility;
 - (e) a culture of care and continual improvement;
 - (f) education, training and expert advice;
 - (g) incident management, reporting, assessment and review;
 - (h) internal audit and inspection of facilities, post-approval monitoring of projects, and external or management-initiated program audits, including quadrennial external program reviews; and
 - (i) a program of veterinary care.

Animal Ethics Committees

- 5.3. AECs will:
- (a) work diligently to discharge their functions in a timely and professional manner;
 - (b) take prompt action to address incidents or concerns arising from, or relating to, AEC-approved activities;
 - (c) adhere to the Terms of Reference (including the behaviours described in the Terms of Reference and any Standards), the Code, this policy and terms of appointment in the discharge of their duties; and
 - (d) operate in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.
- 5.4. Deans will make staff available to serve on AECs in proportion to the number of applications submitted to AECs by their Faculty, taking into account the specific expertise required by the AEC.
- 5.5. Program Participants must:
- (a) ensure that full details of any proposed scientific procedure are:
 - (i) described clearly and in plain language for each animal (so as to enable a layperson to readily understand the precise care, use and location of each animal); and
 - (ii) submitted to the AEC secretariat in the OREI for review, approval and authorisation prior to commencing such scientific procedures;
 - (b) forward plan for any adverse events, including documenting full and complete management plans and arranging access to routine and emergency veterinary care as appropriate;
 - (c) conform to a current, AEC-approved protocol in carrying out scientific procedures;
 - (d) submit any proposed changes to an AEC-approved protocol, including changes to personnel, as an amendment to the AEC for consideration via the OREI, and any such changes must be approved by the AEC before being implemented; and
 - (e) promptly self-report any departure from an AEC-approved application or protocol to the AEC.
- 5.6. Animal ethics approval is necessary, but not sufficient, for any animal use for scientific purposes. Where ethics approval has been granted, Program Participants must only conduct animal care and use where it has been authorised by the relevant Licence Nominee or Dean in accordance with this policy, taking into account applicable laws, regulations, policies and processes.

Approval and authorisation of Animal Care and Use

- 5.7. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) will:
- (a) determine Ancillary Requirements relating to the operation of the AEC, including processes and pathways for working at other Institutions, using external AECs, accessing the University's AEC or animal facilities;

- (b) determine and document as Ancillary Requirements any additional authorisations required by Licence Nominees in relation to:
 - (i) activities occurring on their premises; and
 - (ii) authorisation of Program Participants operating on their premises; and
- (c) retain discretion to refuse an activity or Program Participant, even if approved by the AEC and authorised by the Licence Nominee, subject to procedural fairness.

Prohibited Activities

- 5.8. Program Participants must not authorise or carry out the following activities in the course of their University business:
- (a) any scientific procedure involving animals (including research, teaching and breeding) that is not specifically approved by the AEC under a current application, or is inconsistent with any conditions determined by the AEC, the Licence Nominee or a SPPL, SPFL or SABL;
 - (b) cosmetic testing on animals;
 - (c) forced swim test procedures on rodents;
 - (d) nose-only smoke inhalation procedures on rodents;
 - (e) animal surgeries, unless during the entire length of the operation, the animal is under the influence of an anaesthetic so as to be insensible to any pain; and
 - (f) death as an endpoint experiments, unless approved by the AEC, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the relevant Minister
- and AECs must not approve any activity set out in (b)-(e).
- 5.9. Program Participants must cease using an animal in any scientific procedure (including research, teaching or breeding) when:
- (a) a scientific or humane endpoint has been reached;
 - (b) the scientific outcome cannot be met;
 - (c) the animal develops an unexpected morbidity that cannot be treated without disrupting research; or
 - (d) an animal is seriously suffering, in which case prompt action to humanely kill the animal must be taken.

Incidents and adverse events

- 5.10. Subject to approval by the AEC, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor may determine procedures for the management of incidents as Ancillary Requirements, and such procedures will be maintained and published by the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity and include requirements for Program Participants to:
- (a) address incidents as soon as possible;
 - (b) take immediate action to alleviate pain and distress, including administering humane killing, and prioritise alleviation of pain and distress over the continuation of the project or reaching the approved endpoint; and
 - (c) determine, and report to the AEC on, the root cause of any incident, including conducting a necropsy in relation to any unexpected mortality or morbidity requiring humane killing.

Veterinary care

- 5.11. The University adopts a distributed model of veterinary care to enable species-appropriate care at all sites at which the Program is undertaken. All Facilities and Investigators must ensure that independent veterinary care is available for any animals under their care or control. Care must be:
- (a) Provided by veterinarians holding current registration with the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria (or equivalent for activities undertaken interstate);
 - (b) species appropriate;
 - (c) free from conflict of interest, unless this is declared and managed via OREI; and
 - (d) timely.

Reporting a concern, issue or inquiry

- 5.12. The University provides a publicly accessible mechanism for individuals to raise complaints, concerns or issues about:

- (a) researchers or the conduct of their research;
- (b) the conduct of an AEC;
- (c) the conduct or standing of a member of an AEC; or
- (d) inquiries relating to the Animal Openness Agreement.

5.13. Where complaints raise the possibility of a breach of the standards governing the responsible conduct of research, they are handled in accordance with the University's Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Conclusion of Involvement and Re-homing

- 5.14. Program Participants will consider opportunities to re-home animals at the conclusion of their involvement in the Animal Care and Use Program, and any such re-homing will occur under the oversight of the AEC and in accordance with the Ancillary Requirements: Rehoming Procedure Guideline, [\[link\]](#) species-specific guidelines, the requirements of the Code and any applicable legislation.
- 5.15. If unsuitable for re-homing at the conclusion of their involvement in the Animal Care and Use Program, animals will be treated ethically, humanely and responsibly, and in a manner that recognises, values, and respects animals as sentient beings.

Animal Housing and Facilities, Licensed Premises, Activity Licences

- 5.16. The University will provide and maintain appropriately licensed premises and activity licences in accordance with the Ancillary Requirements and roles and responsibilities determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

<i>Role/Decision/Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Conditions and limitations</i>
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Responsible for the overall Animal Care and Use Program. Oversees the Animal Care and Use Program and delegates responsibilities. Establishes and oversees the AEC, the AWEC and appoints Chair. Determines AEC and AWEC Terms of Reference and any University Standards binding on the AEC. Appoints Licence Nominees. Determines governance and reporting of the Animal Care and Use Program. Approves Ancillary Requirements and Guidelines under this policy.	
Director, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity	Administers processes to support the functions of the AEC relating to assessment and monitoring of scientific procedures and facilities. Administers processes to support the functions of Licence Nominees, including obtaining and maintaining relevant licences, and escalating issues or concerns	

	relating to scientific procedures conducted on their licence. Acts as administrative point of contact for external regulators, including submitting annual returns, AEC membership changes, licence amendments and renewals. Procures and monitors mandatory training artefacts. Maintains and reports inventory of animals. Monitors and inspects licensed premises and labels spaces authorised for animal care and use. Receive complaints, concerns or issues. Initiates Program reviews, including quadrennial external reviews. Conduct project-level post-approval monitoring. Analyse and report risk trends and opportunities for improvement relating to reported incidents and learnings from post-approval monitoring. Advise Program Participants in relation to the responsible, ethical and humane use of animals in research and regulatory requirements	
Licence Nominee (the individual nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor(Research) to be responsible for procedures under a Scientific Procedures Premises Licence.)	With AEC, co-regulator of Animal Care and Use occurring on their licence. Oversee all licensed facilities, spaces, and equipment used on their premises are clean, safe for animals and in good repair. Authorise and oversee animal care and use activity conducted on their licensed premises. Responsible to, and first point of contact for, external regulator, and will be corresponded with on all matters relating to the licence, such as: • breaches of licence conditions • licence audits • reporting of animal use • Animal Ethics Committee	All nominees must have suitable authority to execute their obligations. Additional responsibilities ascribed under Victorian legislation. Further details of role set out in Ancillary Requirements: Guidelines for Scientific procedures Licence nominee v1.0 April 2024 (1).pdf

	composition and conduct.	
Executive Director Business Services (or delegate)	On behalf of the Licence Nominee, ensure (a) all facilities and equipment managed by Business Services are clean, tidy, safe for animals and in good repair, (b) appropriately qualified and trained staff are deployed in facilities to care for animals and (c) administer processes to ensure facility spaces managed by Business Services are used strictly in accordance with licence conditions, and that breeding occurs consistently with this policy, licence conditions and AEC approvals. Appoint staff with appropriate veterinary qualifications, to oversee a Program of Veterinary Care across Business Services Facilities, and ensure availability of routine and emergency veterinary care for animals within facilities. Provide training with techniques on model and non-model animals within the Business Services facilities	Only relates to facilities managed under the Melbourne Bioresources Platform.
Deans (or delegate)	Authorise activities on inter-state licences. Establish processes for allocating space to Program Participants to reflect licence conditions and University authorisation, as per door signage. Ensure personnel seek amendments to licences via OREI if a space proposed to be used for Animal Care and Use Program is not suitably licensed and labelled. Make staff available to serve on AECs and otherwise support AEC processes and operations in accordance with Ancillary Requirements. Ensure Investigators within Faculty have access to appropriate veterinary care for their animals.	

	Ensure that Investigators have access to training to support competency in the care and use of non-model animals.	
AEC	Internal regulator of scientific procedures under the Animal Care and Use Program. Review, approve, monitor applications. Take prompt action to address incidents relating to approved activities, including withdrawing approvals in appropriate circumstances. Approve new facilities and annually inspect Facilities. Annually report to the University on activities. Approve re-homing.	Such other functions as described in the Terms of Reference. [Link]
Investigators	Obtains and complies with all AEC approvals, licence conditions and Licence Nominee authorisations. Carries out scientific procedures on suitably licensed, labelled premises. Promptly takes action to ensure animal wellbeing, and reports all incidents to AEC. Manages incidents promptly, compliantly, responsibly and humanely. Provides annual reports to AEC and annual animal use returns to OREI. Ensures availability of routine and emergency veterinary care in relation to approved activities. Maintains licensed spaces under their control in a fit and proper state. Maintains equipment in a state of good repair and compliant with servicing requirements. Stays current with mandatory training.	

7. Definitions

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. An activity may involve one or more procedures. Activities are described in an application to the animal ethics committee.

Adverse event means any event that has a negative impact on the wellbeing of an animal.

Animal means any live non-human vertebrate (that is, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock, wildlife) and cephalopods.

Ancillary Requirements means the detailed activities, requirements, guidance, roles and responsibilities authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) under this policy and maintained and published by Office of Research Ethics and Integrity.

Animal Care and Use Program means the program of activity relating to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, as further described in this Policy.

Animal ethics committee (AEC) means a committee constituted in accordance with the terms of reference and membership laid down in the Code.

Animal Openness Agreement means the industry-based agreement published by ANZCCART documenting the commitment of the University of Melbourne and other institutional signatories to greater openness in animal care and use for scientific purposes.

Animal welfare means an animal's quality of life, which encompasses the diverse ways an animal may perceive and respond to their circumstances, ranging from a positive state of wellbeing to a negative state of distress.

Death as an endpoint means when the death of an animal is the deliberate measure used for evaluating biological or chemical processes, responses or effects—that is, the investigator will not intervene to kill the animal humanely before death occurs in the course of a scientific activity. 'Death as an endpoint' does not include the death of an animal by natural causes or accidents, the unanticipated (despite appropriate monitoring) death of an animal that may be attributable to the approved experimental procedures, or the humane killing of an animal as planned in a project or because of the condition of the animal.

Distress means a state where an animal has been unable to adapt to stressors so as to sustain a state of wellbeing. Distress may manifest as abnormal physiological or behavioural responses, a deterioration in physical and psychological health, or a failure to achieve successful biological function. Distress can be acute or chronic and may result in pathological conditions or death.

Humane killing means the act of inducing death using a method appropriate to the species that results in a rapid loss of consciousness without recovery and minimum pain and/or distress to the animal.

Minister means the relevant government minister responsible for animal welfare in the State of Victoria.

Procedure means a technique employed when caring for or using animals for scientific purposes. One or more procedures may be used in an activity.

Program Participant

Program of veterinary care means system for the provision of veterinary care and advice. Elements of the program should include, where appropriate, animal clinical care; emergency care; preventive medicine; anaesthesia, analgesia and surgery; and animal quarantine.

Project means an activity or group of activities that form a discrete piece of work that aims to achieve a scientific purpose.

Scientific procedures includes research, teaching, field work and breeding.

Scientific Procedures Premises Licence means a licence issued by Animal Welfare Victoria, or equivalent in other States of Australia, to permit the conduct of scientific procedures in licensed spaces.

Standards means any standards prescribed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in relation to Animal Care and Use.

Unexpected adverse event means an event that may have a negative impact on the wellbeing of animals and was not foreshadowed in the approved project or activity.

An unexpected adverse event may result from different causes, including but not limited to:

- death of an animal, or group of animals, that was not expected (e.g. during surgery or anaesthesia, or after a procedure or treatment)
- adverse effects following a procedure or treatment that were not expected
- adverse effects in a larger number of animals than predicted during the planning of the project or activity, based on the number of animals actually used, not the number approved for the study
- a greater level of pain or distress than was predicted during the planning of the project or activity
- power failures, inclement weather, emergency situations or other factors external to the project or activity that have a negative impact on the welfare of the animals.

Vertebrate pest animals means vertebrate animals, including native and introduced species, that are generally regarded, or have been declared under state or territory legislation, as a 'pest species'.

Wellbeing means that an animal is in a positive mental state and is able to achieve successful biological function, to have positive experiences, to express innate behaviours, and to respond to and cope with potentially adverse conditions. Animal wellbeing may be assessed by physiological and behavioural measures of an animal's physical and psychological health and of the animal's capacity to cope with stressors, and species-specific behaviours in response to social and environmental conditions.

POLICY APPROVER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

POLICY STEWARD

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure)

REVIEW

This policy is due to be reviewed by [insert date not more than 3 years from date of approval].

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	[Position title of policy approver]			N/A