Alfred Research Alliance
Animal Ethics Office

Code of Conduct for the Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes under Alfred Research Alliance Licences

Document Type:	Code of Conduct
Approved By:	Governance & Policy (GAP) Committee
Date Effective:	21 September 2021
Review Date:	2024
Version Number:	4.0
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Definitions

Activity: 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 (AEC).

AEC Approved Project: The project the home AEC has approved and includes any modifications.

Alfred Research Alliance (ARA) or The Alliance: A collaborative partnership between like-minded organisations focused on biomedical research. This includes:

Burnet Institute
Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute
Monash University Central Clinical School
Alfred Health
AMREP Animal Services Pty Ltd
Other approved organisations that use ARA AEC

Animal: Any live non-human vertebrate, i.e. fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, including domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock and wildlife, and any live invertebrate of a species, or a stage of the life cycle of a species, from the class Cephalopoda or Malacostraca (e.g. octopuses, squid, crabs, crayfish, lobsters and prawns). It includes any animal, as described in the previous sentence that is killed specifically for use for a scientific purpose and embryos that have achieved half their gestational period.

Animal Ethics Committee (AEC): A Committee constituted in accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) and membership laid down in the Australian Code. At the Alfred Research Alliance, AEC refers to both AEC A and AEC B.

Application: A request for approval from an Animal Ethics Committee to carry out a project or activity. An application may be for commencement of a project or activity, or an amendment to an approved project or activity. This may be for experimental work, animal breeding and/or for tissue collection.

Cosmetic: A substance or preparation intended for placement in contact with any external part of the human body with a view to altering the odours of the body, changing its appearance, cleansing it, protecting it, perfuming it or maintaining it in good condition and is not intended for therapeutic use.

Investigator: Any person who uses animals for scientific purposes. Includes researchers, teachers, undergraduate and postgraduate students involved in research projects, and people involved in product testing, environmental testing, production of biological products and wildlife surveys.

Principal Investigator (PI): Person with ultimate responsibility for the project.

The Australian Code: The current edition of The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, mandatory under Part 3 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and Regulations 2008.

Unexpected Adverse Event: 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

Related Documents

The following are policies and/or procedures related to this document. They can be accessed via the Animal Ethics Website on the policies page (amrepaec.baker.edu.au/home/policies).

Note: You will need a log-in to this website. This should have been provided to you when you joined the ARA AEC.

If you do not have a log in, or cannot remember your log-in details, please contact the Animal Ethics Office (AECSecretary@baker.edu.au)

→ Policy and procedures for reporting adverse events

→ AEC application training plan guidelines **(UNDER REVIEW)**

Purpose

The *Code of Conduct for Scientific Procedures Using Animals Under ARA Licences* (Code of Conduct) establishes a framework of responsible practice and conduct to be applied to work involving the use of animals for scientific purposes under a scientific procedures premises licence (SPPL), scientific procedures fieldwork licence (SPFL) or specified animal breeding licence (SABL) at the Alliance.

Background

The ARA Animal Ethics Committees (AECs), on behalf of the licence holders, apply the welfare and ethical standards required by the current edition of the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (the Australian Code).

The individual licensed institutions are responsible for compliance with Victorian law regarding the use of animals for scientific purposes. On behalf of the institutions, the AEC's key role is to see that all activity relating to the use of animals is conducted in compliance with the Australian Code.

The AEC must approve all activities as defined above. In performing its charter, the AEC reviews for approval any activities involving use, production, teaching of animals for scientific purposes by staff and students at ARA.

The Code outlines the responsibilities of researchers (including the supervisors of research students) and institutions. All recipients (individual and institutional) of research funding must comply with the Code as a condition of such funding. In addition, the AEC advises the licence holders on the ethical care and use of animals and monitors the welfare of animals used. It reports annually to the licence holders, major funding bodies and the Victorian state governments.

Applicability of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff, research degree candidates, external visitors and students working at ARA under the following licences issued by Animal Welfare Victoria:

Licence number	Licence name	Nominee / Responsible person
SPPL20259	Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute	T Marwick
SPPL20212	Monash Central Clinical School Scientific Procedure Premises Licence	T O'Brien
SPPL20234	Macfarlane Burnet Institute Scientific Procedure Premises Licence	D Anderson
SPPL20216	AMREP AS Pty Ltd Scientific Procedure Premises Licence	D Ramsey
SABL20361	AMREP AS Pty Ltd Specified Animal Breeding Licence	D Ramsey
SPFL20059	Alfred Health Scientific Procedure Fieldwork Licence	S Jane
SPPL20414	CCLabs	B Kagan
XXXX	Any additional Licences issued to ARA precinct members as endorsed by GAP or AEC.	As advised to GAP / AEC

The Code of Conduct has been developed:

1) To ensure that governing principles, scientific procedures and teaching conducted by researchers encompassed by ARA licences:

    a. Embody respect for animals

    b. Are based on the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) as described in the Australian Code (see below)

    c. Support the wellbeing of animals

    d. Avoid or minimise harm, including pain and distress, to animals

e. Apply high standards of scientific integrity.

2) To ensure that all research complies with:

a. the current edition of the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*

b. the Victorian *Code of practice for the housing and care of laboratory mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits*

c. the *Australian code for the responsible conduct of research*

d. legislation covering the use of animals for research and teaching as set out in part 3 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTA) and Part 5 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2019.

e. Relevant guidelines and applicable governance e.g., OGTR.

Application to the AEC to use animals

Researchers must submit an application to the AEC for review and approval before the commencement of any activities (see definition).

Researchers must submit requests for modification to an approved application to the AEC for review and approval before the requested changes can be implemented.

The principal investigator named on an application must obtain approval from the ARA AEC regardless of where the work will be conducted (locally, interstate or overseas).

At the time they submit an application, investigators must notify the AEC if they are involved in collaborative studies using animals at an external location/ institution.

Investigators must notify the AEC in writing if they are named in an application to the AEC of another institution.

Investigators, if they are named in an application to the AEC of another institution and work is being carried out at ARA, must notify the ARA AEC in writing and ensure delegation of responsibility for transport, care and welfare at each location and for what are agreed in writing between institutional AEC's and notified to relevant animal facilities prior to commencing.

Investigators who plan to use animals in another country must obtain written approval from their institutional AEC for such use. The project must comply with the governing principles of the Code, provided that such compliance does not breach relevant local legislation. Investigators must not conduct work in another country for the purpose of avoiding compliance with the Australian Code.

The researcher must disclose in the AEC application the sources or potential sources of funding for the research and declare any affiliation or financial interest when proposing and reporting on the research.

The researcher must disclose to the AEC at the time of application any commercial interest and activities to enable the AEC to make a complete evaluation. Note that such disclosure will be treated as commercial-in-confidence by the AEC.

A researcher must discontinue research if AEC approval of the project is suspended or withdrawn and must comply with any special conditions imposed by the AEC.

Responsibilities of staff, researchers and students

Governance

- All personnel who perform research involving the use of animals at ARA must do so under a licence as set out in the Applicability section above and under an AEC-approved protocol.
- Research must be conducted or supervised only by those persons with experience, qualifications and competence appropriate to the intended research and as approved by the AEC.
- Research must not be undertaken before the receipt in writing of AEC approval.
- Researchers must be familiar with, and act in accordance with, applicable legislation and Victorian and national codes of conduct and practice of relevance to their area of research.
- The use of animals for cosmetic testing is banned in Australia.

General

All researchers have a responsibility to:

- Be mindful of the welfare of animals used in research
- Complete an induction to the AMREP AS Pty Ltd before commencing work with animals
- Be familiar with, and act according to, this Code of Conduct
- Be familiar with their responsibilities under the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* 8th *Ed.*
- Act with honesty and integrity in all matters pertaining to animal use, and dissemination and communication of results and findings
- Avoid or minimise possible pain and/or distress to animals
- Ensure the safety of all personnel involved in the conduct of research

Merit of scientific purposes that use animals

- Researchers will receive AEC approval to use animals only if such use is deemed justified after the scientific or educational value of a proposed study has been weighed against the potential negative impact on the wellbeing of animals.
- Research should be undertaken with a clear scientific purpose. The researcher must demonstrate in the AEC application that the proposed use of animals is justified in terms of:
    - Increasing knowledge and understanding of the processes underlying the evolution, development, maintenance, alteration or control of biological systems
    - The expectation that the outcome will benefit the health or welfare of humans or other animals
    - The likelihood that the objectives of the proposal will be achieved through:
        - use of methods appropriate to the discipline
        - study of current literature to inform the design
        - inclusion of relevant background information

- consideration of relevant previous laboratory and animal studies
- application of current best practice concerning animal well being
- assessment of the level of skill and experience of all personnel who use animals and the provision of suitable supervised training as required

Replacement

Researchers must ensure that methods that replace or partially replace the use of animals are investigated, considered and, where applicable, implemented.

Opportunities to replace the use of animals must be kept under review during the lifetime of a project.

Reduction

Researchers must ensure that the number of animals used in a project is the minimum necessary to achieve the proposed aim(s) and to satisfy good statistical design. The use of too few animals may cause any data to be unusable.

Reduction must not be achieved at the expense of greater potential suffering of an individual animal. Activities involving the use of animals must not be repeated unnecessarily.

Refinement

Researchers must continually review and improve protocols used on animals to minimise the risk of them causing pain and/or distress to the animals.

All researchers have a responsibility to:

- Design and conduct procedures involving animals with consideration for promoting the wellbeing of the animal with emphasis on the avoidance of pain and/or distress
- Choose animals of a species, sex and age suitable for the purpose of the investigation
- Use the best available scientific techniques
- Provide pain relief in procedures that are likely to cause pain and/or discomfort unless the AEC has approved otherwise based on a well-justified case not to do so
- Implement a multi-modal pain management strategy appropriate to the species, procedure and circumstances
- Alleviate pain and/or distress without delay. If severe pain cannot be alleviated promptly, the animal must be humanely killed. Alleviation of such pain and/or distress must take precedence over achieving the planned end point of a study
- Ensure that, if it is not possible to use anaesthetics or analgesics, the end point of the research activity is as early as possible to avoid or minimise pain and/or distress
- Ensure activities that may cause pain and/or distress of a kind and degree for which anaesthesia would normally be used in veterinary or medical practice are carried out using anaesthesia appropriate to the species and procedure
- Avoid the use of neuromuscular blocking agents without appropriate general anaesthesia unless sensory awareness of the animals has been eliminated. The animal must be monitored to ensure that an adequate plane of anaesthesia is maintained or sensory awareness has been eliminated.

- Avoid the use of death as an experimental end point (which requires State Ministerial approval) if possible
- Handle and use animals under conditions appropriate to the species
- Ensure that humane killing methods are appropriate to the species, and conducted in such a way as to ensure death
- Maintain detailed experimental and monitoring records, including the use of anaesthetics and analgesics.

Training and demonstrations

Training and demonstrations involving live animals can be valuable for educational purposes.

All researchers have a responsibility to:

- Develop training plans/material, and a program for assessing competency
- Provide trainees with an understanding of the procedures and educational value before they commence the respective activity
- Monitor training against competencies to ensure the desired outcome is achieved
- Maintain training records that include assessment of competency at relevant stages through the training program
- Consider using dead animals or non-animal alternatives in procedures for which the use of live animals for training purposes is not justified or to reduce the use of live animals while achieving the equivalent training outcome. (Refer to the *AEC application training plan guidelines*.)

Animal care

All researchers have a responsibility to:

- Provide care and housing of animals that meet or exceed current codes and guidelines
- Notify the necessary people (i.e. veterinarian, AEC Chair, Animal Facility Manager etc.) in the event of an unexpected adverse event (see definition above), as detailed in the *Policy and procedures for reporting adverse events* i.e. notify the AE Office of an unexpected adverse event within 24 hours and submit an unexpected adverse event report to the AE Office as early as possible, and no later than 2 weeks unless there has been an agreement with the AEC chair for a later time point e.g. to obtain a pathology report which is critical to the findings of the report.
- Provide emergency contact details for 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Provide alternative nominees and contacts for periods of leave, weekends or public holidays
- Where an emergency welfare intervention is considered necessary for an animal allocated to a project (e.g. treatment or humane killing of an animal) and members of the project cannot be contacted or respond in a reasonable time the Facility veterinarian, Animal Facility manager or their nominee will take the decision.
- Transport the animals to the facility and around the facility in compliance with approved practices and policies applicable to the ARA site.
- Be familiar with their responsibilities under the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Ed*

Non-compliance with the Code of Conduct

Non-compliance with the Code of Conduct may constitute research misconduct or a breach of AEC conditions of approval.

Breaches of AEC approval and allegations of research misconduct must be referred to the relevant licence nominee to be dealt with under the relevant codes and the NHMRC *Australian code for the responsible conduct of research*.

I, the undersigned, have read and agree to conduct all experimental procedures involving animals in accordance with the *Code of Conduct for the Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes under Alfred Research Alliance Licences (Code of Conduct):*

Name	Signature	Date

Record of Version

Version	Version reason	Author(s)	Date	Update type
1.0	New document	AMREP AEC GAP Committee	September 2011	Creation
2.0	Review of document	AMREP AEC GAP Committee	August 2015	Renewal
3.0	Review of document	AMREP AEC GAP Committee	May 2018	Renewal
4.0	Review of document	D. Ramsey, A. Mitchell & J. Nash	September 2021	Renewal