**POLICY:**

**ETHICS APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF ANIMALS FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES**

**Purpose:** To ensure the care and use of animals for scientific purposes at the University of Notre Dame Australia complies with the *Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, 2013* and relevant state legislation.

**Responsible Executive:** Pro Vice Chancellor Research

**Responsible Office:** Research Office

**Contact Officer:** Research Ethics Officer

**Effective Date:** September 2017

**Review Date:** September 2020
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1 PURPOSE

This policy, *Ethics Approval for the Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* (“Policy”) has been formulated to ensure that appropriate ethics approval is obtained for any research or teaching activity using animals in which The University of Notre Dame Australia (“UNDA”) is involved.

The requirements for applying for ethics approval outlined in this Policy are intended to ensure that any research or teaching activity involving the use of animals complies with the requirements of the following:

- *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 2013* (Animal Code),
- *Animal Welfare Act, 2002* (WA),
- *Animal Research Act, 1985* (NSW),
- Part 3 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1986* (VIC)

The Animal Code sets out the governing principles, as well as the responsibilities of institutions, Animal Ethics Committees, researchers, animal carers, and all people involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

The Animal Code encompasses 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.

2 National and State Legislation

2.1 *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)*

2.2 *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (2013)*

2.3 *Animal Welfare Act (2002)* (WA)

2.4 *Animal Research Act (1985)* (NSW)
3 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

**Activity** means any action undertaken that involves the care and use of animals, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry of those animals.

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

**Animal** means any live non-human vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals and encompasses domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock and wildlife) and cephalopods.

**Animal Carer** means any person involved in the care of animals that are used for scientific purposes, including their acquisition, transport, breeding, housing and husbandry.

**Animal Code** means the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*, 2013.

**Animal Ethics Committee (AEC)** means a committee constituted in accordance with the terms of reference and membership outlined in the Animal Code.


**Cross-Institutional animal ethics approval** means the recognition of ethics approval from an AEC, which is granted on a case by case basis by the Chair of UNDA HREC.

**HREC** means the Human Research Ethics Committee of UNDA.

**Research Ethics Officer** means the person who holds the position of Research Ethics Officer at UNDA.

**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 animals line where the impact on animal wellbeing is unknown or uncertain), diagnosis, product testing and production of biological products.

**UNDA** means The University of Notre Dame Australia.

**UNDA Researcher** means any UNDA staff member or student who conducts research on behalf of or under the auspices of UNDA.

**Unit Coordinator** means the person in charge of coordinating a UNDA unit in relation to which the Animal Ethics approval is sought.
4 SCOPE

This Policy binds all staff, students and University researchers.

5 EXCLUSIONS

None

6 PRINCIPLES

6.1 Any use of animals for scientific purposes must be in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy and must be approved in accordance with the Procedure: Applying for Animal Ethics Approval (“Procedure”).

6.2 The use of animals for scientific purposes must have scientific or educational merit.

6.3 The Animal Code is the foundation document informing research and teaching involving animals at UNDA.

6.4 The University is committed to fulfilling its moral and legal responsibilities under the Code of Practice, the Animal Welfare Act (WA) and the Animal Research Act (NSW), part 3 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (VIC) and part 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations (VIC).

6.5 The University actively encourages its research and teaching community to pursue alternatives to the use of animals for research. Where such alternatives do not exist or are inadequate, the use of animals must be conducted with care and respect and to the highest ethical standards.

6.6 Research involving animals must meet established ethical, professional and cultural norms.

6.7 Research must demonstrate an appropriate balance between the cost of animal interventions and the value to be achieved in carrying out the research.

6.8 Research involving animals must not be in conflict with the Objects of the University.

6.9 Research that does not directly involve animals but can impact upon them also requires ethics approval.
7 Conditions of Animal Ethics Approval

7.1 Where approval is obtained in accordance with the Procedure for the use of animals for scientific purposes, the conditions set out in this Policy must be complied with.

7.2 The Chief Investigator must report immediately anything which might affect ethical acceptance of the research project including but not limited to:
   7.2.1 Adverse effects on participants;
   7.2.2 Significant unforeseen events; and
   7.2.3 Other matters that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

7.3 Proposed changes or amendments to the research project must be applied for using an Amendment application form and approved by the HREC before these may be implemented.

7.4 An Annual Report for the project must be provided on the anniversary of approval.

7.5 A Final Report for the project must be provided at the conclusion of the project.

7.6 If, for any reason, the project does not proceed or is discontinued, a Final Report for the project must be provided.

7.7 If an extension is required beyond the end date of the approved project, a request for an extension in an Annual Ethics Report is required.

7.8 The Chief Investigator must advise the HREC immediately, in writing, if any complaint is made about the conduct of the project.

7.9 Any equipment used must meet current safety standards. Purpose built equipment must be tested and certified by independent experts for compliance with safety standards.

7.10 The AEC approving the use of animals for scientific purposes may impose any other conditions in which case the Researcher must comply with such conditions.

8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Responsibilities of University of Notre Dame Australia
   8.1.1 The Pro Vice Chancellor Research is responsible for the University’s overall governance with respect to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.
   8.1.2 UNDA must ensure and promote that the care and use of animals for scientific purposes comply with the following national and state based legislation:
       8.1.2.1 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)
       8.1.2.2 Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (2013)
       8.1.2.3 Animal Welfare Act (2002) (specific to WA)
8.1.2.4 *Animal Research Act* (1985) (specific to NSW)

8.1.2.5 *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (1986) – Part 3 (specific to VIC)

8.1.2.6 *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations* (2008) – Part 4 (specific to VIC)

8.1.2.7 Other codes, policies and legislation, where relevant.

8.1.3 UNDA must ensure that these documents are available and promoted to all UNDA staff and researchers.

8.1.4 The Research Office is responsible for ensuring that the university has a valid Licence to use animals for scientific purposes, as issued by WA Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

8.1.5 The Research Office is responsible for ensuring that the university has a current agreement in place for use of Murdoch University’s AEC.

**8.2 Responsibility of UNDA Researchers and Unit Coordinators**

8.2.1 UNDA Researchers and Unit Coordinators seeking to use animals for scientific purposes are responsible for ensuring that appropriate AEC approvals are sought.

8.2.2 Any costs associated with obtaining animal ethics approval from an AEC must be borne by the researcher (for research) or school (for Units) unless otherwise agreed.

8.2.3 Each UNDA Researcher or Unit Coordinator has personal responsibility for the ethical conduct of the activity throughout the duration of the approved use of animals.

8.2.4 UNDA researchers, Unit Coordinators and animal carers involved in the activity must undertake relevant education, training and competency assessments as required.

8.2.5 UNDA researchers and Unit Coordinators must obtain written approval from the AEC, UNDA HREC and any other relevant bodies prior to the commencement of any activity involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes.

8.2.6 UNDA Researchers and Unit Coordinators must comply with the conditions of approval outlined by the approving AEC.

8.2.7 The activity must not extend beyond the scope of what is approved by the AEC.

8.2.8 The activity must be conducted in accordance with the Code, the Animal Code and any relevant State legislation.

8.2.9 Any adverse events which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the research project must be reported immediately to the AEC.

8.2.10 The AEC must be notified of, and approve, any changes to the original protocol or membership of the research/unit team.

8.2.11 UNDA researchers and Unit Coordinators must ensure that animal wellbeing is
appropriately monitored at all stages of the activity.

8.2.12 UNDA researchers and Unit Coordinators must maintain a detailed records of care and use of animals which must be made available to the AEC and UNDA’s Research Ethics Officer upon request.

8.2.13 UNDA researchers and Unit Coordinators must cease the activity if approval from the AEC is suspended or withdrawn.

8.2.14 Researchers and students may conscientiously object, without disadvantage, to an activity that compromises their values.

9 SUPPORTING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Murdoch University Animal Ethics website

Guidelines to promote the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes - The assessment and alleviation of pain and distress in research (2008)

Guidelines on the Use of Animals for Training Interventional Medical Practitioners and Demonstrating New Interventional Medical Equipment and Techniques (2009)

National Standards and Codes

NHMRC Guidelines on the Care of Cats Used for Scientific Purposes (2009)

NHMRC Guidelines on the Care of Dogs Used for Scientific Purposes (2009)

10 RELATED POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Policy: Responsible Conduct for Research

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