

Animal Ethics Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of the Animal Ethics Policy is to provide a framework for ensuring the ethical, humane and responsible treatment of Animals for the purposes of teaching, learning and researching at Melbourne Polytechnic. The Animal Ethics Policy is consistent with all the relevant statutes, Codes and guidelines including the [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013](#) 'the Code' and the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 \(Victoria\)](#) 'the Act'.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to all people conducting Melbourne Polytechnic business that involves the care and use of Animals for teaching, learning and research for Scientific Purposes. This policy applies to:

- a. members of the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC);
- b. staff and students regardless of where the work is carried out;
- c. all Project participants including investigators, Farm staff – responsible for Animals (out of teaching hours); and
- d. volunteers and visitors (when onsite at Melbourne Polytechnic or off-site working on Melbourne Polytechnic approved Projects).

(3) This policy does not apply to the care and management of privately owned animals that may come on Melbourne Polytechnic's premises as pets, display and exhibition purposes.

Section 3 - Policy

Policy Statement

(4) Melbourne Polytechnic is committed to adhering to the [Code](#) and the [Act](#) (2002).

Policy Principles

(5) This policy will adhere to the following principles which are consistent Melbourne Polytechnic's Strategic Vision & Values, the [Code](#), and must underpin all decisions and actions involving the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, demonstrated by:

- a. using Animals only when it is justified;
- b. supporting the Wellbeing of the Animals involved;
- c. avoiding or minimising harm, including pain and distress, to those Animals;
- d. applying high standards of scientific integrity;
- e. applying Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the "3Rs") at all stages of Animal care and use including:
 - i. the Replacement of Animals with other methods;
 - ii. the Reduction in the number of Animals used; and

- iii. the Refinement of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on Animals
- f. knowing and accepting one's responsibilities.

(6) The care and use of animals for teaching and research is subject to ethical review.

(7) All people involved in the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, must be aware of, and comply with, the requirements in the [Code](#) and the [Act](#), and other relevant legislation or regulations at all times.

(8) All people involved in the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes are to be provided with professional development in adherence to the [Code](#) and the [Act](#) ensuring that all people are aware of ethics approval requirements.

(9) The Melbourne Polytechnic Animal Ethics Committee is responsible for the conduct of responsible research and teaching when using animals. Only responsible research conduct will be encouraged and supported.

(10) A judgement as to whether a proposed use of Animals is ethically acceptable must be based on information that demonstrates the principles of Clause 1.1 of the [Code](#), and must balance whether the potential effects on the Wellbeing of the Animals is justified by the potential benefits.

(11) The obligation to respect Animals, and responsibilities associated with this obligation, apply throughout the Animal's lifetime whilst under the care of Melbourne Polytechnic, including acquisition, transport, breeding, housing, husbandry, use of the Animal in a Project, and provisions for the Animal at the conclusion of their use.

Section 4 - Responsibility and Accountability

Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) and its Members

(12) The AEC and AEC members are responsible for:

- a. approval of Projects;
- b. monitoring of all Animal care and use activities;
- c. the AEC will ensure reported activities comply with the [Code](#) and these activities demonstrate that all people involved in the care and use of Animals understand their responsibilities;
- d. an AEC Executive Committee will be established with delegation to approve minor amendments to approved Projects for ratification at the next AEC meeting.
- e. an internal review of AEC operations will be conducted annually;
- f. The AEC Chair will ensure effective operations of AEC in accordance with the [Code](#) obligations;
- g. the review of submitted reporting including review of the annual report detailing approved Projects.
- h. complaints and non-compliance regarding Animal research will be addressed by the AEC. Refer to [Animal Ethics Complaint, Non- Compliance and Adverse Events Procedure](#);
- i. AEC members may be asked to assess information that is commercial 'in confidence'.

(13) Melbourne Polytechnic is responsible for and has the following legal obligations:

- a. to hold (or ensure the appropriate natural person, holds) all relevant permits and licenses including the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence prior to Animal use commencing and activities;
- b. to appoint a natural person (i.e., an individual not an organisation) to hold the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence;
- c. ensuring that the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence nominee has suitable authority under delegation to execute their obligations;

- d. ensuring that a declaration is obtained from the person nominated to be the appointed Scientific Procedures Premises Licence nominee consenting to the nomination;
- e. establishing, resourcing and operating an AEC in accordance with the [Code](#);
- f. to promote Compliance with the [Code](#);
- g. ensuring that all people involved in the care and use of Animals understand their responsibilities and the requirements of the [Code](#), have the necessary skills and knowledge, and have access to appropriate education programs and resources;
- h. ensuring that all people involved in the handling and care of Animals, and performing any procedures on Animals, be appropriately trained and competency assessed to perform these tasks competently and appropriately;
- i. ensuring all Activities involving the care and use of Animals have prior approval from the AEC and are conducted in accordance with the approved Project or Activity;
- j. regularly monitoring and reviewing Melbourne Polytechnic's Compliance with the [Code](#); and
- k. to maintain a reporting system where Animal Welfare is regularly reported upon, including reporting of any negative impacts of the Wellbeing of Animals and an investigation of the reasons these have occurred.

(14) Melbourne Polytechnic is responsible for supporting external reviews including:

- a. Ensuring a review of the effectiveness of Complaints and Non-Compliance processes is routinely conducted;
- b. ensuring an independent external review is conducted at least every four years to assess Melbourne Polytechnic's compliance with the [Code](#) and to ensure the continued suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of its procedures to meet its responsibilities under the [Code](#);
- c. making external arrangements for the review to be conducted by people who are independent to Melbourne Polytechnic, and who have the appropriate qualifications and experience to the Activities of Melbourne Polytechnic; and
- d. complying with the requirements set out in clause 6.2 of the [Code](#).

(15) Melbourne Polytechnic has responsibilities under the [Code](#) to ensure that:

- a. staff are informed and can demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities and obligations as described in the [Code](#);
- b. each person has access to appropriate resources to conduct research in line with the [Code](#) and responsible research conduct;
- c. staff demonstrate an awareness of the Application processes for animal Ethics approval;
- d. staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to adhere to their responsibilities and obligations as described in the [Code](#);
- e. Melbourne Polytechnic promotes Compliance with the [Code](#) and responsible research conduct; and
- f. staff involved with any aspect of the care and use of Animals for teaching and research are aware of their responsibilities and apply the principles of the [Code](#).

(16) Melbourne Polytechnic Staff and Project Investigators/Participants, are responsible for:

- a. understanding responsibilities and act in accordance with the [Code](#);
- b. submitting an annual Project report(s) to AEC;
- c. adhering to all reporting requirements including the reporting of instances to the Executive Officer of the AEC, where Animals are not being treated in accordance with ethical approvals;
- d. participating in training and education professional development activities where directed;
- e. supporting the Animal Ethics administration requirements.

(17) The appointed Scientific Procedures Premises Licence nominee is responsible for;

- a. being the first point of contact for [Animal Welfare Victoria](#) (a portfolio with the Department of [Agriculture Victoria](#)) as the licensing authority. The licence nominee is responsible for corresponding with [Animal Welfare Victoria](#) on all matters relating to the licence including; breaches, licence audits, reporting of Animal use, AEC composition and conduct; and
- b. ensuring all Facilities and equipment are clean, safe for Animals and in good repair.

Animal Ethics Responsibilities Complaints and Non-Compliance

(18) Complaints and Non-Compliance regarding Animal research and teaching activities should be addressed by the AEC. The [Animal Ethics Complaints, Non-Compliance and Adverse Events Procedure](#) sets out the process and procedures for Complaints and Non-Compliance handling.

Section 5 - Supporting Documents and Templates

(19) Related Melbourne Polytechnic policies and procedures:

- a. [Animal Ethics Conscientious Objection Procedure](#)
- b. [Animal Ethics Complaints, Non Compliance and Adverse Events Procedure](#)
- c. [Animal Ethics Conduct of Projects Procedure.](#)

(20) Related Forms:

- a. Animal Ethics Project Proposal
- b. Animal Ethics Project Summary Form
- c. Animal Ethics Return Reporting Template
- d. Planning Projects

(21) Related Terms of Reference:

- a. Animal Ethics Committee

(22) Related Legislation and Regulation:

- a. [Agriculture Victoria](#)
- b. [Agricultural Development and Food Security](#)
- c. [Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals \(Administration\) Act 1992](#)
- d. [Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994](#)
- e. [Animal Welfare Act \(2002\)](#)
- f. [Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition 2013](#)
- g. [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018](#)
- h. [Biosecurity Act 2015](#)
- i. [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 \(POCTA\)](#)
- j. [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations 2008](#)
- k. [Therapeutic Goods Act 1989](#)
- l. [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- m. [Wildlife Act 1975](#) (VIC)

- n. [Wildlife Regulations 2002](#) (VIC)
- o. [Veterinary Practice Act 1997](#)
- p. [Veterinary Practice Regulations 2008](#)

(23) Related Guidelines:

- a. Animal Ethics Use of Animals for Scientific and Teaching Purposes Guidelines
- b. Australian Horse Industry Council Australian Horse Welfare and Well-being Toolkit Resource for horse organisations and event-based welfare officers, 2013
- c. Australian Veterinary Association, [Guidelines for Prescribing, Authorising and Dispensing Veterinary Medicines](#), 2005
- d. Australian Horse Industry Council [Resources Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training](#), v3, January 2016 (adapted from the TAFE NSW Procedures for Delivery of Training, January 2016 v4.0)
- e. Association of Zoos and Aquariums (USA) including AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook
- f. [Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses \(Revision 1\)](#)
- g. [Code of practice for the Welfare of Horses Competing at Bush Race Meetings \(Revision 1\)](#)
- h. [Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses at Horse Hire Establishments](#)
- i. [Horse Safety Australia](#)
- j. [Identify, assess and control hazards](#)
- k. [International Standard Organisation](#) Australian Standard: AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009, Risk management – principles and guidelines
- l. [Poisons Standard, February 2017](#)
- m. [Model codes of practice](#)
- n. [Australian Industrial Chemicals Website](#)
- o. [Safe Work Australia Guide to Managing Risks when New and Inexperienced Persons Interact with Horses](#)
- p. [Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons](#) (SUSMP) and relevant state and territory legislation and regulations
- q. [Agriculture Victoria - Transport and Care of Livestock](#)
- r. [Zoo and Aquarium Association 4.6 Guidelines – Animal Records Keeping](#)
- s. [WorkSafe Victoria](#)

Section 6 - Definitions

(24) For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

(25) Act: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [Act](#) 1986 (Victoria).

(26) Activity/Activities: 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 AEC. See also 'Project'.

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

(28) Animal Ethics Committee (AEC): A committee constituted in accordance with the terms of reference and membership laid down in the [Code](#).

(29) Animal Welfare: 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.

(30) Application: A request for approval from AEC 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.

(31) Code: Australian [Code](#) for the care and use of Animals for Scientific Purposes – 8th Edition 2013.

(32) Compliance: Acting in accordance with the [Code](#) and the [Act](#).

(33) Complaint: A statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable, this may relate to the Activities of DJPR, AEC or person involved in the care and use of Animals, including Investigators and Animal carers.

(34) Ethics: A framework in which actions can be considered as good or bad, right or wrong. Ethics is applied in the evaluation of what should or should not be done when animals are proposed for use, or are used, for scientific purposes.

(35) Facility: Any place where Animals are kept, held or housed, including yards, paddocks, tanks, ponds, buildings, cages, pens and containers.

(36) 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.

(37) Licensing Officer: Melbourne Polytechnic appointed staff member, whose role is to support and facilitate licence and AEC administration.

(38) Non-Compliance or Non-Compliant: Failure to act in accordance with:

- a. the [Code](#);
- b. the [Act](#);
- c. any relevant regulations;
- d. approvals by Melbourne Polytechnic's AEC; or
- e. Animal Ethics, Projects and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

(39) Monitoring: Measures undertaken to assess, or to ensure the assessment of, the Wellbeing of Animals in accordance with the [Code](#). Monitoring occurs at different levels (including those of investigators, Animal carers and AECs).

(40) Project: An Activity or group of activities using Animals for teaching or research purposes that have been given approval by AEC.

(41) Reduction: methods for obtaining comparable levels of information from the use of fewer Animals in Scientific Procedures or for obtaining more information from the same number of Animals.

(42) Refinement: methods that alleviate or minimise potential pain and distress, and enhance Animal Wellbeing.

(43) Replacement: methods that permit a given purpose of an Activity or Project to be achieved without the use of Animals.

(44) Scientific Procedures: Include the use of Animals for:

- a. acquiring, demonstrating or developing scientific knowledge
- b. acquiring, demonstrating, developing or exercising scientific techniques

- c. developing or testing the use, hazards, safety, or efficiency of vaccines, substances, drugs, materials or appliances intended for use in connection with human beings or Animals.

(45) Scientific Procedures Premises Licence nominee: As per the requirements under Section 26(2) of the [Act](#), a person that Melbourne Polytechnic has nominated to be responsible for the procedures to be carried out on the Melbourne Polytechnic premises and who is identified on the Scientific Procedures Premises Licence. The appointed Scientific Procedures Premises Licence nominee must have suitable authority to execute their obligations.

(46) Scientific Procedures Premises Licence: A scientific procedures premises licence (SPPL) authorises the licence holder to use Animals for research, teaching or testing in Victoria, at the sites nominated on their licence, under the approval of a nominated AEC.

(47) Scientific purposes: 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.

(48) Teaching Activity: Any action or group of actions undertaken with the aim of achieving a Scientific Purpose, where the Scientific Purpose is imparting or demonstrating knowledge or techniques to achieve an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirements.

(49) Wellbeing: 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.

Status and Details

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