



CONTACTS

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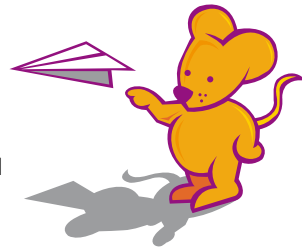
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CREATURE COMFORTS

University Animal Facilities aim to offer an enriched environment for the animals in their care. In particular, the rodents appreciate donations of empty toilet rolls, cardboard rolls and shredded office paper. Contact your local Animal Facility to arrange your donations.

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Cover photo (centre) by A/Professor Geoff Shaw, Department of Zoology

ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS FOR RESEARCHERS, TEACHING STAFF & STUDENTS

MELBOURNE RESEARCH OFFICE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

The humanest possible treatment of experimental animals, far from being an obstacle, is actually a prerequisite for successful animal experiments.

Russell & Burch. Principles of Humane Experimental Technique (1959)

The University of Melbourne takes its responsibility to animal welfare seriously, and through its Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) system strives to uphold and further best practice in animal-based science, while reflecting the expectations of the broader community. All proposed animal work is assessed with a particular emphasis on the 3Rs – Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. Our goal is to use animals only in well-designed and argued research and teaching projects.

University of Melbourne, Animal Welfare Committee

WHO NEEDS ANIMAL ETHICS APPROVAL?

At the University of Melbourne animals are used for various scientific purposes including laboratory research, teaching, field trials, veterinary diagnosis, agriculture and environmental studies. All researchers and teaching staff using live non-human vertebrates (mammals, fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians), or cephalopods such as octopus and squid, require approval from an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) before starting their work.

WHO GIVES ANIMAL ETHICS APPROVAL?

There are currently four AECs responsible for approving and monitoring animal-based research and teaching at the University. Each committee comprises representatives from veterinary science, research and teaching, animal welfare and the general public. The work of AECs is overseen by the University's Animal Welfare Committee which reviews University policy as it relates to research and teaching using animals.

www.research.unimelb.edu.au/animalethics/

LAWS AND CODES

Alongside a variety of State and Commonwealth legislation and University of Melbourne policy, the key document defining how animals are used within research and teaching is the *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*. The Code provides general principles governing the ethical and humane care and use of animals used for scientific purposes. AECs, under direction from the Victorian Bureau of Animal Welfare, apply those principles to animal ethics applications and to the monitoring of approved projects at the University.

GETTING YOUR APPROVAL

The Code requires that all new applications, and significant amendments to existing projects, are reviewed by a full AEC. AECs meet every 4-6 weeks, and deadlines for submitting applications are 10 working days prior to each meeting. Prompt submission enables committee members to properly assess how each project will impact on animal welfare. Check the Animal Ethics website (www.research.unimelb.edu.au/animalethics/) for AEC meeting dates.

Although the Themis electronic form (see Animal Ethics website) guides you through each step of the application process, successful applicants will be those who seek advice early and plan ahead. Well written applications answer each question carefully, using simple lay language where possible, and adhere to a central narrative about the experience of the animals.

Final approval is acknowledged by a formal letter from the Melbourne Research Office, and is granted for three years. Each year in February Project Supervisors are prompted to submit Annual Reports, describing progress in each of their approved projects.

For more in-depth advice on writing applications read *Ten Top Tips for Animal Ethics Application Success* on the Animal Ethics website.

SEEKING ADVICE

- Talk to mentors or experienced colleagues about your proposed work
- Contact the Animal Welfare Officer to discuss experimental protocols
- Contact the Animal Ethics Team at Melbourne Research Office for application advice
- Engage the practical experience of your Animal Facility Manager
- Enrol in the next *How to Apply for Animal Ethics* training session (see Animal Ethics website)
- Book into the Animal Welfare Officer's Annual Training Program in Laboratory Animal Science and Animal Welfare (see Animal Ethics website)

Photo by A/Professor Geoff Shaw, Dept of Zoology

