

Veterinary Governance Research Services Division

Veterinary Care at the ANU

Under the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* (the Code), a veterinarian providing the care and management of animals for research and teaching purposes must be integral to the Australian National University (ANU).

The responsibilities of the veterinary staff are directly linked to the ANU's responsibilities as detailed as per 2.1.5 of The Code as noted in parentheses.

Core Responsibilities

At the ANU, the core responsibilities of the veterinary staff are to;

- Maintain a program of veterinary care that provides a system for the provision of veterinary care and advice including (but not limited to) animal clinical care, emergency care, preventative medicine, anaesthesia, analgesia and surgery, animal quarantine dependent on the current and expected future size of the ANU animal facilities, number of animals, species and the type of studies being conducted. (Definitions, 2.1.5 vi)
- Provide immediate support during unexpected adverse events and emergencies (2.1.5 v, d)
- Ensure that activities proceed in compliance with the Code and the decisions of the AEEC as authorised by the institution (2.1.5 vii).
- Provide veterinary and diagnostic services, in liaison with external pathology providers, so that the health status of the animals is maintained to safeguard animal wellbeing and meet the requirements of the proposed use (2.1.8).
- Ensure that the Category A member(s) of the AEEC have knowledge and experience relevant to the institution's activity (2.2.4).
- Provide advice and information to investigators relating to their protocol (2.4.3).
- Ensure that the use of pharmacological and non-pharmacological means for minimising pain and distress and all procedures (including surgery and anaesthesia), are done so consistent with current veterinary or medical practice. (3.3.8-3.3.12)
- Provide advice to animal care staff as appropriate (2.5.5 iv)
- Hold appropriate qualifications and have relevant experience, for the provision of advice and services relating to the work being undertaken by the ANU (2.5.14).
- Provide veterinary services in a timely manner when requested by an investigator, animal facility manager or animal care staff. (2.5.15 vi)
- Provide advice to enable a prompt diagnosis and/or treatment of animals. (2.5.17 i)
- Provide advice on improvement of animal care, husbandry or procedures (2.5.17 ii)
- Perform post mortem analysis or relevant advice to undertake post mortem for animals that die unexpectedly (2.5.17 iii)
- Provide advice on procedures for maintaining health status of animals and protecting animal wellbeing (3.2.1)
- Provide oversight of animal facilities and animal experiments to maintain compliance, promote a high standard of animal wellbeing and ensure high standards of scientific integrity (3.3.4)

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- Perform veterinary review of animals intended for exportation outside of Australia as per the requirements of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the receiving country requirements.
- Develop training materials and deliver training to assist in the effective operation of experiments using animals at the ANU.

Veterinary Actions

The responsibilities of the ANU Veterinary staff are achieved by;

- Writing, publishing and maintaining documents that promote the standardisation and continual improvement of procedures according to best practice, as authorised by the AEEC.
- Providing 24/7 on call support (by phone and where necessary, attend in person) to investigators, animal care staff and facility managers.
- Providing advice, reviewing and approving all documents or actions taken by the ANU that may involve the following;
 - Animal husbandry procedures
 - Surgical procedures
 - Anaesthesia and analgesia procedures
 - Management of unwell animals
 - Animal Score cards and animal monitoring
 - Development of new animal facilities
 - Consideration for new species to be housed at ANU facilities
 - Animal health monitoring plans
 - Unexpected results from routine health monitoring
- Performing review of animal ethics proposals during routine AEEC review and pre-submission review where possible and appropriate.
- Performing routine rounds, unannounced rounds and spot inspection and arranged oversight or routine inspections of any animal holding or experimental areas on campus to continue to satisfy the requirements and approvals by the AEEC.
- Providing veterinary advice to the AEEC on the interpretation of the Code and actions taken related to the Code.
- Performing veterinary examinations of individual animals held on campus as appropriate and as maybe required by the AEEC.
- Performing post mortem analysis and/or providing advice on post mortem analysis of animals that are either dead or have been euthanased as indicated to investigate unexpected deaths or patterns of disease.
- Providing analysis of post mortem findings or pathology results, working with external pathology providers as part of the diagnostic process.
- Having at least one of the ANU Veterinarians as an approved AEEC Category A voting member of the Committee
- Maintaining an active role on the AEEC as a voting member or advisor as appropriate to the veterinarian(s) role including asking questions during protocol review, providing advice on improvements and conditions to specific protocols.
- Providing a monthly “Vet Report” to the AEEC reporting on current activities undertaken by the Veterinary staff.

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- Meeting regularly with researchers in regards to protocol development and review processes with a focus on continual improvement.
- Keeping up to date with current veterinary practices in regards to procedures and pharmacological management of animals and maintain ANU Standards and Guidelines consistent with best practice.
- Maintaining a network with veterinary colleagues across Australia and internationally to be aware of current and developing best practice.
- Maintaining veterinary registration with the relevant Veterinary Surgeon's Board.
- Maintaining knowledge in the care and management of the species held and bred by ANU investigators.
- Providing face to face, written informal and formal reports relating to advice on care, husbandry and health of animals and research practices and procedures.
- Responding in a timely manner to requests to provide veterinary services and/or advice.
- Taking samples, perform post mortems and analyse results to facilitate diagnostic services for animals.
- Providing training and competency assessment of specific skills consistent with their expertise and knowledge.

Additional ANU Commitments

The ANU Veterinary staff are also committed to;

- Providing approval for training practices and participating in the training of new students, staff and investigators for certain techniques thus promoting *Refinement*.
- Reviewing current challenges in animal based research and providing recommendations to the ANU relating to research quality, reproducibility and translatability to ensure that all animal use is warranted and contributes as intended to advances in the relevant research discipline, thus promoting *Reduction* and *Refinement*.
- Championing the publication of negative results to minimise the risks of repeat works being undertaken by other investigators, thus promoting *Reduction*.
- Keeping up to date with and communicate current alternatives to the use of animals for research and teaching purposes, thus promoting *Replacement* initiatives.
- Supporting investigators, animal care staff and animal management teams in the promotion of best practice, infrastructure improvement and the communication of concerns and complaints relating to animal welfare, supporting *Refinement*.
- Maintaining strong communication between animal facilities to maintain a coherent, common sense and coordinated approach to animal management decisions on campus.

ANU Veterinarians and the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee

The ANU Veterinary staff provide support and advice directly to the AEEC and the Animal Ethics Team. Recommendations for action, assistance in ethics processes and performing action items and communication required of the Animal Ethics Team may, at times, be

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completed by the ANU Veterinary staff. The ANU Veterinary staff will also provide support to the AEEC Chair and may act in the role of AEEC Chair where necessary.

Where there is a possibility for or potential perception of a conflict of interest, for example, where an Unexpected Adverse Event or non-compliance event may involve advice or actions from the veterinary staff, the Chair of the AEEC, the Director or Deputy Director of RSD will be involved to manage the integrity of any investigation or follow up actions required. Any person involved may make a request to involve other parties where they perceive a potential conflict of interest (e.g. the AEEC, the Animal Ethics Team, the investigator, the veterinary staff.)

Facility Staff Responsibilities Relating to Veterinary Care

Animal Facility staff (management and animal care staff) must;

- Follow veterinary directives.
- Contact the ANU Veterinary staff when concerned about the ongoing welfare of an animal.
- Contact the ANU Veterinary staff where animals die unexpectedly and there is no known cause.
- Report Unexpected Adverse Events as per the ANU procedure.
- Notify the ANU Veterinary staff of any changes to approved care plans or management of animals under veterinary care.
- Provide any records and knowledge of animal history as required by the ANU veterinary staff.
- Provide draft documents that update or change health monitoring plans, sick mouse management or other veterinary related procedures to the ANU Veterinary staff and the AEEC for review and approval prior to publication.

Investigator Responsibilities Relating to Veterinary Care

Investigators must;

- Follow veterinary directives.
- Contact the ANU Veterinary staff when concerned about the welfare of an animal.
- Keep veterinary staff updated on the progress of animals under veterinary care.
- Notify ANU Veterinary staff of any changes to approved care plans or management of animals under veterinary care.
- Report Unexpected Adverse Events as per the ANU procedure.
- Maintain a licence for any use of Schedule 8 drugs as approved under their animal ethics protocol.
- Provide any records and knowledge of animal history, experimental data, as required by the ANU veterinary staff.
- Provide draft documents that update or change health monitoring plans, sick mouse management or other veterinary related procedures to the ANU veterinary staff and the AEEC for review and approval prior to publication.

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Investigators are also encouraged to;

- Proactively engage with the ANU Veterinary staff in advance of protocol submission for pre-submission review of proposed projects utilising animals for research or teaching purposes (2.4.3).
- Seek advice from ANU Veterinary staff where animals don't respond as expected during an experiment, regardless of potential impact to animal welfare.

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