

Schools Animal Ethics Committee (SAEC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Endorsed 16 March 2022

The Department of Education's Schools Animal Ethics Committee (SAEC) acts as the animal ethics committee for all licensed schools, inclusive of agricultural colleges, in Western Australia. This committee is responsible for ensuring that the use of animals in schools for scientific purposes complies with the *Animal Welfare Act* (2002) (the Act) and the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* (8th Edition 2013, updated 2021) (the Code). The operation of the SAEC is also a requirement of the Department of Education's licence to use animals for scientific purposes with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). The Association of Independent Schools, Western Australia and Catholic Education, Western Australia also use this committee.

The role of the SAEC is to ensure that the use of animals for scientific purposes is justified, provides for the welfare of those animals and incorporates the principles of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement.

The Terms of Reference of the Schools Animal Ethics Committee is to:

- Approve guidelines for the care of animals that are bred, held and used for scientific purposes on behalf of the institution;
- Monitor the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use and fate of animals;
- Recommend to the institution any measures needed to ensure that the standards of the Code are maintained;
- Appoint, re-appoint, or retire members according to procedures developed by the institution in consultation with the SAEC;
- Require that all members declare any conflict of interest;
- Deal with situations in which a conflict of interest arises;
- Examine and approve, approve subject to modification, or reject applications for the use of animals for scientific purposes;
- Approve only those studies for which animals are essential and justified and which conform to the requirements of the Code. This should take into consideration factors including ethics, the impact on the animal or animals and the anticipated scientific educational value;
- Inform the teacher and principal responsible when non-compliance is detected, either by phone call, email or letter, depending on the severity of the non-compliance. Instances of non-compliance will be added to a register that will be monitored for repeat offenders. Repeat offenders may receive a short-term ban on activities using animals;
- Assist teachers in charge of the non-compliant activity to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities for future activities;
- Withdraw approval for any project when non-compliance with the Code significantly impacting animal wellbeing is detected;
- Ensure veterinary details are provided by the school in case the emergency treatment or euthanasia of any animal is required;
- Examine and comment on all institutional plans and policies that may affect the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes;
- Maintain a record of applications and projects;
- Comply with the reporting requirements of the institution and the Code; and
- Perform all other duties required by the Code.

This Terms of Reference should be considered in conjunction with the SAEC Operating Procedures.