



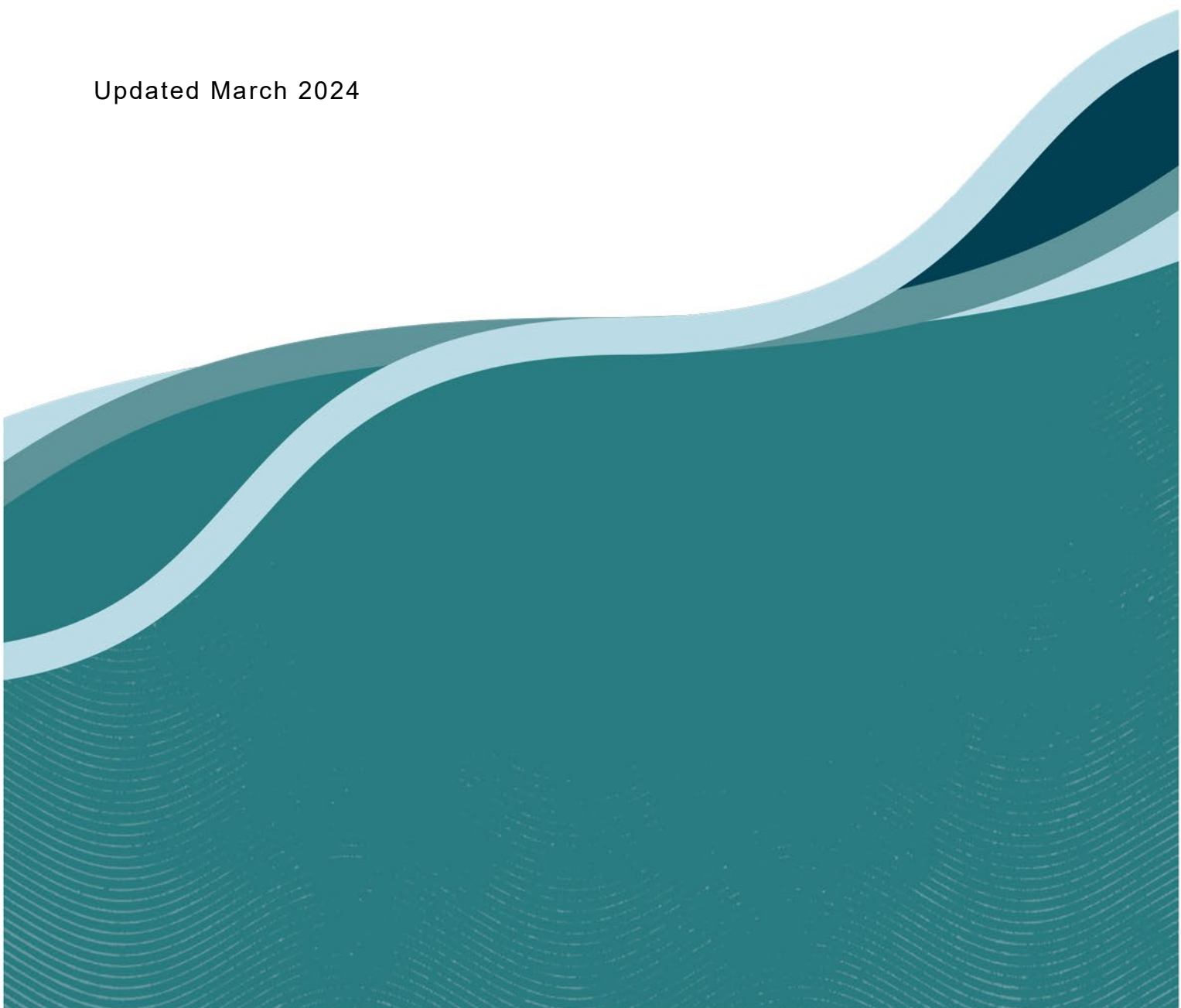
Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

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Licence to Use Animals for Scientific Purposes

Guideline for Independent Schools

Updated March 2024



The contents of this document may undergo periodic updates to reflect changes to policies, procedures or legislation. For the most up-to-date version, please refer to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's webpage.

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Table of Contents

1. Guideline for Independent Schools.....	4
1.1 Acronyms and defined terms	4
2. Scientific licensing program.....	6
2.1 Do I need a licence?	6
2.2 How do I apply for a licence?	7
2.3 Renewing a scientific use licence	7
2.4 Issued licences	8
3. Animal ethics committees.....	9
3.1 Obtaining animal ethics committee approval for a project.....	9
4. Changes to licence details.....	10
4.1 Change in nominated licence holder.....	10
4.2 Change in designated contact person(s)	10
4.3 Change in designated sites.....	11
4.4 Change in animal ethics committee overseeing the licence.....	11
5. What are my reporting requirements?	12
5.1 Annual Animal Use Report.....	12
6. What are my responsibilities as a teacher?	13
6.1 Education and training of teachers	13
6.2 Animal ethics committee approval	13
6.3 Ethical and social issues.....	14
6.4 Supervision of students.....	14
6.5 Report to the animal ethics committee.....	14
6.6 Maintain records of the care and use of animals	14
6.7 Release of animals to students or other persons.....	15
7. Activities not to be carried out by primary or secondary level students.....	16
8. Contacts and additional resources	17

1. Guideline for Independent Schools

This guideline aims to assist independent schools that hold a licence to use animals for scientific purposes, and teachers working at independent schools, to understand their responsibilities under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (AW Act), Animal Welfare (Scientific Purposes) Regulations 2004 and the *Australian Code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (2013)(8th edition)*(the Code).

This guideline provides further information regarding the scientific licensing program, how to apply for a licence under the AW Act, the role and function of animal ethics committees, licence holders reporting requirements, and schools responsibilities under the Code.

The contents of this guideline is for general informational purposes only. Whilst this guideline provides as a valuable reference, it may not consider unique and nuanced situations. Readers are encouraged to use this guideline in conjunction with relevant legislation, exercise discretion and seek advice from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development if any concerns arise (see section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

1.1 Acronyms and defined terms

In this document:

AAUR means annual animal use report.

AW Act means the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.

Code means the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (2013)(8th edition).

DPIRD means the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Institution means any organisation or agency involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, including universities, hospitals, research institutions, government departments, teaching organisations (including schools and colleges), vocational training organisations, agricultural organisations and commercial companies.

Investigator means 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.

Licence holder means the institution or the investigator to which a licence to use animals for scientific purposes has been issued. This term may be used interchangeably with scientific establishment.

Project means an activity or group of activities that form a discrete piece of work that aims to achieve a scientific purpose.

Scientific establishment means the institution or the investigator to which a licence to use animals for scientific purposes has been issued. This term may be used interchangeably with licence holder.

WA means Western Australia.

2. Scientific licensing program

In Western Australia, the AW Act provides for the protection of animals by, amongst other things, regulating the people who may use animals for scientific purposes, and the manner in which they may be used.

Animals cannot be used for scientific purposes unless the use is in accordance with the AW Act, Animal Welfare (Scientific Purposes) Regulations 2003 and a licence issued under the AW Act. A key condition of licences to use animals for scientific purposes is compliance with the Code. To obtain a copy of the AW Act or the Code, please see section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#).

The Code provides an ethical framework and governing principles to guide decisions and actions of all those involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes. An obligation to respect all animals underpins the Code. This obligation brings with it a responsibility to ensure that the care and use of animals for scientific purposes is ethically acceptable. Scientific use must balance the potential effects on the wellbeing of the animals involved and the potential benefits. The use of animals for scientific purposes must have scientific or educational merit; must aim to benefit humans, animals, or the environment; and must be conducted with integrity.

Teachers may undertake activities using animals for scientific purposes if they are working on behalf of a school that holds a valid licence. It is the responsibility of all persons using animals for scientific purposes to ensure that:

- all activities are conducted under an appropriate licence;
- animals use is in accordance with the licence and relevant legislation;
- any work undertaken is restricted to that approved by the relevant animal ethics committee;
- animals used receive a high standard of care and their wellbeing is supported and safeguarded; and
- activities are carried out at locations covered by the licence.

2.1 Do I need a licence?

In Western Australia, any individual using animals for scientific purposes must either hold a licence to use animals for scientific purposes, or undertake activities using animals on behalf

of an institution, such as a school, that holds a licence to use animals for scientific purposes. Activities that require a licence include those that use animals to acquire, develop or demonstrate knowledge or techniques in a scientific discipline, including teaching.

Relevant to teaching, a licence is required for activities undertaken with the aim of imparting or demonstrating knowledge or techniques to achieve an educational outcome in science, as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirements.

It is a mandatory requirement that all scientific activities involving live vertebrates (excluding humans and fish) in Western Australia are licensed. As the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development does not enforce the scientific use of fish and invertebrate species, it is not mandatory to hold a licence for activities involving these animals. However, when an animal species is not covered by the AW Act (such as fish), an institution can determine when approval is required from an animal ethics committee. If your project involves animals of any kind, you are encouraged to contact your Animal Ethics Committee for advice. More information on animal ethics committee can be found in section [3. Animal Ethics Committees](#).

2.2 How do I apply for a licence?

To obtain current licence application forms and procedures, please review the information available on DPIRD's website (section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

2.3 Renewing a scientific use licence

Section 8(3) of the AW Act requires that an application to renew a licence is made no later than 42 days before the day on which the licence is due to expire. As licences expire on 31 December, this means that **an application to renew a licence must be made no later than 18 November** in the calendar year which the licence is scheduled to expire.

If an application to renew a licence is not submitted on or before 18 November, an application for a new licence is required.

To obtain current licence application forms and procedures, please review the information available on DPIRD's website (section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

2.4 Issued licences

2.4.1 Period of issue

Licences may be issued for one, two or three years. A licence is issued until the end of the calendar year in which the fee is payable for. For instance, a one-year licence will expire on 31 December of the same year it is issued, whether the application was approved in January or August (table 2).

Table 2. A licence is issued until the end of the calendar year in which it is issued.

Application approved	Licence duration	Expiry date
January 2023	1 year	31 December 2023
August 2023	1 year	31 December 2023

2.4.2 Issued licences are not transferrable

Section 16 of the AW Act prohibits the transfer of licences between scientific establishments.

2.4.3 Display of licence and code

Section 14 of the AW Act requires licence holders to exhibit a copy of their licence at each place where animals are used or kept for scientific purposes.

3. Animal ethics committees

No animal(s) can be used for scientific purposes unless the proposed use is reviewed and approved by an AEC. Prior to using animals for scientific purposes, written approval from an AEC is required.

The primary responsibility of an AEC is to ensure, on behalf of the licence holder (e.g. school) for which it acts, that all activities relating to the care and use of animals for scientific purposes are conducted in accordance with the Code and other relevant legislation. AECs work to ensure that the use of animals is justified, provides for the welfare of those animals, and incorporates the principles of replacement, reduction and refinement. AECs may achieve this by:

- reviewing applications for projects to ensure they are ethically acceptable and conform to the requirements of the Code;
- reviewing activities and facilities associated with the care and management of animals;
- conducting follow-up review of approved projects and activities;
- continuing to monitor the care and use of animals, including facilities, practices and procedures;
- taking appropriate actions regarding unexpected adverse events and non-compliance; and
- providing advice and recommendations to the institution.

More information regarding the responsibilities of animal ethics committees can be found in section 2.3 of the Code (section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

3.1 Obtaining animal ethics committee approval for a project

Written approval from an AEC must be obtained before commencing an activity that involves the use of animals for scientific purposes. Written approval is also required if there is an amendment to an approved activity, and to repeat an activity that involves different students, times, locations, and animals.

To obtain approval to use animals for scientific purposes, or approval to amend an existing project, teachers should consider contacting the Schools Animal Ethics Committee (section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

4. Changes to licence details

Schools that hold a licence to use animals for scientific purposes are responsible for notifying DPIRD if there are any changes to the licensing information. This includes a change to the:

- nominated licence holder;
- designated contact person(s);
- designated sites; and
- the animal ethics committee responsible for overseeing the school.

To notify DPIRD of any changes, please complete the appropriate section of DPIRD's *Application to change licence details* form. This form is available on the forms page of DPIRD's (section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

4.1 Change in nominated licence holder

Schools that hold a licence to use animals for scientific purposes must nominate a senior staff member to be responsible for overall governance with respect to the care and use of animals. This person is considered to be the nominated licence holder. If for any reason the nominated licence holder for the school changes, it is the school's responsibility to notify DPIRD of the change by completing section 1 of the *Application to change licence details* form.

4.2 Change in designated contact person(s)

Schools may designate a primary contact and additional contacts to facilitate effective communication and coordination between DPIRD and the school. Designated contacts serve as the central point of contact for enquiries, updates, and interactions including but not limited to, notifications regarding licence expiry and submission of annual reports.

To add contact person(s), please complete section 2 of DPIRD's *Application to change licence details* form.

4.3 Change in designated sites

Schools are required to notify DPIRD of locations where animals are to be used or kept for scientific purposes in WA, before undertaking activities using animals for scientific purposes and before obtaining animals to be used for scientific purposes.

More information, including the process for notifying DPIRD of changes to designated sites, can be found in DPIRD's *Locations where animals are used for scientific purposes guidelines*. This guideline is available on the forms page of DPIRD's website (section [8. Contacts and additional resources](#)).

4.4 Change in animal ethics committee overseeing the licence

When applying for a licence to use animals for scientific purposes, applicants are required to declare the AEC that will be responsible for overseeing their licence.

If for any reason the AEC overseeing the licence changes, you may notify DPIRD of this by completing section 4 of DPIRD's *Application to change licence details* form.

5. What are my reporting requirements?

5.1 Annual Animal Use Report

The submission of an annual animal use report (AAUR) is a condition imposed on all schools issued a licence to use animals for scientific purposes.

An AAUR must be submitted to DPIRD regardless of whether animals were used for scientific purposes or not for the reporting period.

The reporting period for AAURs is the calendar year; 1 January to 31 December. AAURs must be submitted to scientific.licensing@dpird.wa.gov.au by 30 April of the year following the reporting period. For example, 2023 AAURs are required to be submitted by 30 April 2024.

AAUR templates are distributed to all schools that held a licence during the reporting period. The templates are distributed before the end of each calendar year and are accompanied by relevant guidelines.

6. What are my responsibilities as a teacher?

Teachers may undertake activities using animals for scientific purposes if they are working on behalf of a school that holds a licence to use animals for scientific purposes.

Teachers have personal responsibility for all matters that relate to the wellbeing of animals that they use, including their housing, husbandry and care. This responsibility extends throughout the period of use approved by the AEC until provisions are made for the animal at the conclusion of their use.

If you are involved in the care and use of animals in teaching activities in a school, you must:

- be aware of the governing principles that apply to the care and use of animals (see Section 1 of the Code);
- know your responsibilities;
- be aware of your duty of care to the animals; and
- follow the policies and procedures established by your school, AEC and State about how to implement the Code.

6.1 Education and training of teachers

Teachers may be required to undertake education and training, and competency assessment in accordance with the schools or the AEC's policies and procedures.

6.2 Animal ethics committee approval

Teachers must ensure that written approval from an animal ethics committee is obtained prior to using animals for scientific purposes including teaching (clause 2.4.4 [iii] of the Code).

Activities using animals for scientific purposes must be conducted in accordance with the AECs approval and cease if approval from the AEC is suspended or withdrawn (clause 2.4.4 [iv] of the Code).

6.3 Ethical and social issues

Teachers must ensure that students have the opportunity to discuss the ethical and social issues, and legal responsibilities, involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes, at a level appropriate to their learning ability and comprehension, and before the use of animals commences (clause 4.12 of the Code).

6.4 Supervision of students

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that procedures using animals are performed competently. Teachers must ensure that students are supervised by a person who is competent for the procedure being performed, and that the level of supervision of students takes into account the competency and responsibilities of each student (clause 4.13 of the Code).

6.5 Report to the animal ethics committee

Teachers are required to report to the AEC overseeing the school's licence as required. The AEC may require the following:

- (i) an annual report for an approved project, regardless of the duration of animal ethics committee approval for the project;
- (ii) prompt notification of any unexpected adverse events;
- (iii) a final report on outcomes as soon as practicable after completion or discontinuation of a project; and
- (iv) any other reports as required.

See clause 2.4.34, 2.2.24 and 2.2.32 of the Code.

6.6 Maintain records of the care and use of animals

Teachers using animals for teaching activities must maintain records relating to the care and use of animals. Records that must be maintained include:

- (i) the origin/source of the animals and provisions for the animals at the conclusion of their use;

- (ii) the number of animals used;
- (iii) details of procedures;
- (iv) animal monitoring and care;
- (v) condition of the animal, any adverse impact on animal wellbeing and actions taken as a result;
- (vi) any additional information requested by the AEC;
- (vii) names of people performing the procedures and entering the records; and
- (viii) names and contact details of people responsible for monitoring and emergency incidents.

See clause 2.4.30 – 2.4.33 and 2.5.11 – 2.5.13 of the Code.

6.7 Release of animals to students or other persons

Teachers must ensure that animals are not released to students, or any other person, for temporary care, or at the completion of the use of the animal unless:

- (i) the AEC has approved such release;
- (ii) safeguards are in place and approved by the AEC to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of the animal. In the case of primary and secondary level students, safeguards must include a written commitment from a parent or guardian for the provision of adequate, ongoing, and responsible care of the animal, and demonstrating awareness of relevant legislative requirements regarding the animal being rehomed or under their care; and
- (iii) transport of animals between sites is in accordance with clause 3.2.5-3.2.8 of the Code.

See clause 4.14 and 3.4.2 – 3.4.3 of the Code.

7. Activities not to be carried out by primary or secondary level students

The following activities using animals must not be demonstrated to, or carried out by, primary or secondary level students:

- (i) animal breeding that does not achieve an educational outcome in science and fails to provide for the lifetime welfare of animals (and their offspring);
- (ii) surgical, invasive and other harmful procedures, other than routine husbandry procedures;
- (iii) induction of an infectious disease or illness;
- (iv) production of nutritional deficiency;
- (v) exposure to conditions that would cause an animal to experience pain and distress;
- (vi) administration of drugs or chemicals unless for therapeutic or diagnostic purposes; and
- (vii) administration of toxins, ionising radiation or biohazards.

Humane killing of animals must not be demonstrated to, or carried out by, primary or secondary level students unless it is required to:

- (i) achieve an educational outcome in science as specified in the relevant curriculum or competency requirement; or
- (ii) as part of veterinary clinical management of an animal, under the direction of a veterinarian.

and

- (iii) animal ethics committee approval has been obtained prior to undertaking any humane killing activities.

See clause 4.6 of the Code of the Code.

8. Contacts and additional resources

Animal Welfare Act 2002

Available online at:

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_50_homepage.html

Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes

Available online at: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes>

Department of Education

Schools Animal Ethics Committee (Department of Education):

<https://myresources.education.wa.edu.au/programs/animal-ethics/schools-animal-ethics-committee>

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Email: scientific.licensing@dpird.wa.gov.au

Website: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/using-animals-scientific-purposes>