Use of Privately Owned Animals for Scientific Purposes Guideline

PREAMBLE

The *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* (the *Animal Code*) specifies that all activities involving the use of animals for scientific purposes, including the use of privately owned animals, must first be approved by the Animal Ethics Committee (AEC).

Teaching through student interaction with standard veterinary care for patients of Murdoch University Veterinary Hospital occurs incidentally to the treatment of an animal, and is discussed in the *Use of Animals in Teaching Guideline* (under review).

'Scientific purposes' is defined as all those purposes which aim to acquire, develop or demonstrate knowledge or techniques in any area of science including research, teaching, field trials, product testing, diagnosis and production of biological products.

'Investigators' is defined as anyone who uses animals for scientific purposes including researchers, teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, persons involved in product testing, environmental testing, production of biological products, and wildlife surveys.

GUIDELINES

1. Investigators must ensure that all work involving animals used for scientific purposes must comply with the *Animal Code* and all Murdoch University policies and procedures.
2. Investigators must receive AEC approval before commencing on any such work.
3. As a general rule, techniques that form part of veterinary assessment, diagnosis and treatment, on either primary admittance or referral cases, are not subject to approval by the AEC.
    - 3.1 When standard treatments or intervention overlap with that pertaining to research or teaching, approval is required.
4. Guidance on whether AEC approval is required is listed on the table in Attachment 1.
5. When it is determined that AEC approval is required for the use of privately owned animals, it is usually appropriate to have a sample copy of the Information Letter, which the owner of the animal may keep, and a Consent Form to be provided to the owners. These should be attached to the animal ethics application.
    - 5.1 Owners must be fully informed about the procedures and their consent obtained prior to commencing any work.
6. Sample forms provided by AEC available on the Animal Ethics website (http://our.murdoch.edu.au/Research-Ethics-and-Integrity/Animal-ethics/Forms/) include:
    - 6.1 Information letter. This conveys the details of the protocol and in particular the impact of the procedures on the pet. It can be edited to suit the purposes of individual projects.
    - 6.2 Clinical Veterinary Research consent form is a record of the informed consent provided by the client. It is particularly suited to situations where the animal will be left in the care of Murdoch University staff, such as the veterinary hospital, where the animal is simultaneously undergoing treatment as well as involvement in research or teaching.
    - 6.3 Consent Form for use by the Murdoch Pet Emergency Centre (MPEC) and Murdoch University Veterinary Hospital (MUVH). It is a record of the informed consent provided by the client where the primary reason for the animal's presence is clinical treatment and only for circumstances outlined in these guidelines.

6.3.1 Consent may need to be confirmed at each testing occasion depending on type of sampling and duration since the animal's last involvement. If there are multiple testing occasions, you may wish to consider whether owners have options (such as consent to only part of the study). They should also be given the opportunity to withdraw at set stages, and you will need to communicate what will happen with the samples already collected, should they do so.

6.3.2 Occasionally alternate modes for consent are needed. For instance, where research is being conducted in association with people of non-English speaking backgrounds (e.g. in other countries), formal written communication may be inappropriate. In such cases the AEC will consider a request for verbal or oral consent.

All cases will be assessed individually, and verbal consent cannot be applied unless the AEC has provided approval. Provide a copy of the wording that will be used, along with the method of recording the person's response.

6.3.3 Consent information should provide enough detail for animal owners or clients to understand the study, and the real and potential impacts on them and their animals. It may be appropriate to include more than one version of the form, if the owners of the participants fall into subgroups which require varied information. The language used should be suitable for the intended audience.

7. All letters and forms should be on the Murdoch University letterhead, or include the current logo. The AEC permit number and title should be listed, as well as the contact details for the most senior person involved with the study, and Research Ethics and Integrity for independent enquiries.

ATTACHMENT 1

Table 1: Guidance on AEC approval requirements for the use of privately owned animals for scientific purposes.

Use of animal	AEC Approval **IS** required	AEC approval **IS NOT** required
Use of clinically collected by-products (e.g. blood, urine, CSF, tissue or faeces). *NB The approved client consent forms and information formats (found on the Animal Ethics website) should be consulted.*	If collection of the product is not necessary for routine medical requirements. If the sample isn't otherwise being collected for routine medical requirements. If additional material needs to be collected e.g. extra ml of blood. If collection of faeces is via rectum.	If sample has already been collected for standard health & treatment requirements only AND formal owner consent was obtained prior to the additional sample use, [using established and approved form(s)]. If collection of faeces is from the ground, cage, litter tray or elsewhere in the environment; provided measures are taken to ensure animals are not disturbed in the process.
Use of animal	AEC Approval **IS** required	AEC approval **IS NOT** required
Use of monitoring techniques, tests or products on clinical patients. NB NHMRC *Guidelines on the Use of Animals for Training Interventional Medical Practitioners and Demonstrating New Interventional Medical Equipment and Techniques* should be consulted.	If techniques, tests or products are: • to be used for the purposes of providing publishable or commercially relevant information; • new and untested for the species or application; • applied on behalf of a commercial interest; and/or • assessed in comparison or relation to other techniques, tests or products.	If techniques, tests or products are: • applied solely for the benefit of the patient; and/or • standard for the professional application.
Use of animal	AEC Approval **IS** required	AEC approval **IS NOT** required
Students participating in educational situations involving animals. *NB Use of Animals in Teaching Guideline (under review) should be consulted.*	If the use of animals requires creation of an artificial or structured teaching environment. (i.e the exemption criteria from the Code are not met). When the educational/research use of the animal(s) forms a significant part of a post graduate programme of studies (Honours, Maser, PhD or Fellowship etc). Continuing Veterinary Education forums.	If the exemption criteria for work experience in section 6.1.6 of the Code are met. If the situation is already approved under the by the AEC in accordance with the *Animal Ethics Policy* (under development) such as non-structured student participation in the assessment and treatment of animals in the veterinary hospital.
Use of animal	AEC Approval **IS** required	AEC approval **IS NOT** required
Research study, trial or survey (however funded).	For all prospective trials where cases are solicited or sought through advertising.	For retrospective study of clinical treatments and interventions by accessing past patient treatment records.