



## Monitoring of animals in research and teaching projects

The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 8th Edition, 2013, defines monitoring as “measures undertaken to assess, or to ensure the assessment of, the wellbeing of animals in accordance with the Code. This occurs at different levels (including those of investigators, animal carers and animal ethics committees).”

### Responsibilities under the Code:

[1.31](#) Institutions, AEC’s, and people involved in any aspect of the care and use of animals for scientific purposes must be aware of and accept their responsibilities (see [Section 2](#)), and act in accordance with the Code.

The **Institution** is required to promote compliance of the Code by:

- Providing “adequate resources to ensure the AEC and people involved in the care and use of animals can meet their responsibilities, including monitoring animals” ([2.1.5 \(ii\)](#))
- Ensuring that the guidelines for monitoring and assessing the animals are to be “developed in consultation with the AEC, approved by the AEC, and implemented and promoted within the institution” ([2.1.5 \(v\)](#))
- must identify clear lines of responsibility, communication, and accountability by ensuring that a person is responsible for the well-being of animals at any given time and is clearly identified ([2.1.7\(i\)](#))
- Monitoring is done by competent people ([2.1.7\(i\)\(a\)](#); [3.1.20](#))
- The scope of day to day monitoring must be clearly outlined and communicated to all parties. ([2.1.7\(i\)\(a\)](#))
- The AEC must “monitor the care and use of animals, including housing conditions, practices and procedures involved in the care of animals in facilities” by “inspecting animals, animals housing and the conduct of procedures, and / or reviewing records and reports.”

More information pertaining to the AEC’s and the institution’s responsibility are described in [Section 2.3.17 to 2.3.23](#).

**Investigators** have a large range of responsibilities:

- Are required to have “procedures in place for the monitoring and managing of animal health” from the planning stage of their project.
- Must provide “details of how the well-being will be monitored and assessed throughout the project, the frequency of monitoring and assessment, the actions to be taken if problems are identified, and the criteria for intervention points and humane end-points”.
- Are responsible for ensuring animal monitors are competent and “knowledgeable about the normal behaviour and signs of pain and distress for the species” or are “under the direct



supervision of a competent person". Those responsible for monitoring must be clearly identified. ([3.1.20](#))

- Must ensure that "where animal carers are involved in the monitoring and assessment of animals after they have been supplied to an approved project, the investigator must ensure that the scope and responsibilities for day-to-day monitoring are clearly outlined and communicated to all parties" ([2.5.5 \(b\)\(ii\)](#))
- Must take steps at all times to safeguard the wellbeing of animal by avoiding or minimising known or potential causes of harm, including pain and distress, to the animals: ([2.4.18](#))
  - ✓ Ensuring "that animals are monitored and assessed at all stages of the project for signs of pain and distress, including deviations from normal behaviour." ([2.4.18\(vi\)](#))
  - ✓ Conducting assessments at "a frequency sufficient to detect such signs at an early stage, as determined by the procedure, and ensure that the planned end-points are detected." ([2.4.18\(vi\)](#))
  - ✓ Keeping records of monitoring and assessment of animal well-being. ([2.4.18\(vii\)](#))
  - ✓ Taking "prompt action" in accordance with "intervention points and humane end-points approved by the AEC". ([2.4.18 \(viii\)](#))
  - ✓ Clearly outlining the scope of monitoring and "communicating to all parties" including animal carers. ([2.4.20 \(ii\)](#))
  - ✓ Regular reporting on "the monitoring of a new animal line at a frequency determined by the AEC."

Animal Facilities Managers and Animal Carers have the same responsibilities in terms of frequency of assessments, competency, record keeping, interventions and reporting to the investigator and the AEC.

More detailed information about monitoring methods, assessment criteria and actions etc. are available in Section [3.1.21 to 3.1.28](#). Records must be kept of monitoring and the Code discusses this further in point [3.1.22](#):

Records of the monitoring and assessment of animal wellbeing must be:

- sufficient to enable the AEC to verify that the wellbeing of animals has been monitored as agreed, and allow review and critical investigation of the cause(s) of and responses to unexpected adverse events as a basis for future prevention strategies
- Accessible to all people involved in the care of the animal
- Available for audit by the institution, the AEC and authorised external reviewers

[2.4.32](#) Investigators must ensure that records include:

- the origin/source of the animals and provisions for the animals at the conclusion of their use
- the number of animals used
- details of procedures, including dates, substances administered, analgesia and anaesthesia, and any unexpected outcomes



- the condition of the animal, any adverse impact on animal wellbeing and actions taken as a result
- any additional information requested by the AEC
- names of people performing the procedures and entering the records
- names and contact details of people responsible for monitoring and emergency incidents.

### **Available Resources at Curtin University**

Once your project has been approved, your application is a statement of intent to comply and consider the animal welfare aspects of your animal work. Rigorous monitoring records allow the AEC to verify that the welfare of the animals has been monitored as agreed. Monitoring Sheets are a mandatory element of any animal ethics application and should enable identification of all the animals, the terms of any procedures they have undergone, when they occurred, and the condition of the animal.

At Curtin University, the AEC requires that monitoring records are kept with the animals. Those individuals named on the application who are responsible for the day to day monitoring of the animals will maintain these sheets.

To assist in monitoring, the Animal Welfare Monitor and Building 300 Facility Staff are available to assist in preparing and organising appropriate welfare monitoring for your animal project. This can be done prior to your application being sent to the AEC for approval. There are examples of different monitoring sheets and criteria that can be used to set up a monitoring plan for each individual research project. When the project is started in the facility, we require a monitoring folder to be kept with the animals and have a cover sheet to be filled out to allow all animal care staff members knowledge about the project which is related to their care.

### **Anaesthetic monitoring and Post Procedural Monitoring**

For projects that include general anaesthesia, the code states that “the animal and the effectiveness of the anaesthetic are monitored to maintain an adequate plane of anaesthesia, minimise physiological disturbances, and monitor and manage potential complications (e.g. hypothermia, and cardiovascular and respiratory depression) [\(3.3.12\(ii\)\)](#). Anaesthetic monitoring records should be kept as appropriate- [3.3.12 \(iv\)](#): “Records are maintained of the use of anaesthetics and other drugs, monitoring of the animal, and the management of complications”. It also states that “appropriate records must be maintained and made accessible to all people involved in the post procedural care of the animal” [\(3.3.17\(iv\)\)](#). For more information about anaesthetic monitoring contact the AWO. We have a variety of forms which can be adapted for individual projects.