



ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEE ANIMAL MONITORING GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS AND ANIMAL TECHNICIANS

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**Authorised By: Andrew Bartlett, Manager and Denise Noonan,
Animal Welfare Officer**

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1. Animal Monitoring Responsibilities of Animal Technicians

Laboratory Animal Services staff check all research animals have feed and water on a daily basis. Sheep are given fresh feed, water and rooms are cleaned daily. Rodents feed and water is checked daily and if low is topped up. Rodent cages are cleaned once or twice per fortnight. During rodent cage changing LAS staff give each animal a quick visual inspection. If the cage is cleaned once per fortnight the week it's not due for cleaning it will be removed from the rodent rack, lid removed and given a brief health inspection only. If any animals appear ill an orange card will be placed on rodent cages and follow the "Animal Health Reporting" SOP or in the case of sheep a note will be made in their "Sheep Data Record" form and reported to the Facility Coordinator and AWO.

Laboratory Animal Services do not monitor research animals daily.

2. Animal Monitoring Responsibilities of the Chief Research Investigator

The Chief Research Investigator is responsible for the daily monitoring of their animals

2.1 General Daily Monitoring

2.1.1 The daily monitoring of a Research Investigator's animal(s) begins the day the animal(s) arrive at the Medical School Animal House.

2.1.2 If under special circumstances the Chief Investigator or anyone in their research group cannot come in on a particular day to monitor their animal, Laboratory Animal Services can assist, however this needs to be arranged with the Facility Coordinator and a Technical Assistance fee will be charged. Please fill in and send a Technical Assistance form by 2pm Friday for any Technical assistance required the following week. Any technical assistance forms sent after 2pm Friday cannot guarantee LAS assistance.

2.2 Monitoring During Anaesthesia, and During Recovery from Anaesthesia

The AEC generally expects that each animal will be monitored continuously from the induction of anaesthesia until the time the animal has recovered protective swallowing reflexes. Monitoring includes assessment of the depth of anaesthesia (response to painful stimuli, blink reflexes, skeletal muscle tone) and

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assessment of the vital respiratory and cardiovascular functioning of the animal. Assessment of body temperature and degree of hydration should be considered.

During recovery from anaesthesia, the animal must be monitored continuously until protective swallowing reflexes are regained. Thereafter the animal is to be monitored very closely until it regains the righting reflex (i.e. is able to roll upright onto the chest and support itself unaided). Following this stage in recovery, the frequency of monitoring will in part be determined by the nature of the anaesthesia, the clinical signs and animal behavioural responses, and any surgery that may have been performed whilst the animal was anaesthetised (see below).

2.3 Monitoring Post Surgery

Under no circumstances are anaesthetised animals to be left unattended until fully conscious. Post-operatively, animals should be housed individually to minimise injury from other animals within the cage and to allow safe recovery. **A Clinical Records Sheet must be used post surgery detailing any observations and post operative treatment given.**

It is good practice to monitor each animal several times later in the day of surgery to ensure that there is no unexpected haemorrhage, pain & distress, re-opening of the surgical wound or unanticipated adverse effect. If adverse effects are observed, the frequency of monitoring may need to be increased in a manner consistent with severity of the impact, clinical score and intervention criteria listed on the Clinical Record Sheet. **Routine use of analgesia following any painful procedure is an expectation of the AEC and the Code.** If there are scientifically justifiable reasons why analgesia cannot be used in a particular situation, then this must be discussed with, and approved by, the AEC.

After the first 24 hours post-surgery, the frequency of monitoring might be reduced, unless the nature of the surgery or the responses of the animal indicate a need to maintain a high level of monitoring for a longer period. The minimum frequency of monitoring is daily.

2.4 Monitoring Using Clinical Record Sheets

If clinical record sheets are to be used, they must be held in the animal housing room so that they might be accessed by the AEC and LAS animal technicians.

Clinical record sheets must record details such as the origin and fate of the animals. As they are considered to form part of the experimental and research & teaching record, they must be maintained and stored by the research investigator or teacher for a period consistent with all other research data and documentation. During the period the clinical record sheets are in use in the animal room, and afterwards during the compulsory storage period (minimum 3 years after the end of the Project), the AEC and other relevant authorities must be able to access and inspect them.

If researchers require LAS assistance to monitor and fill in your Clinical Record Sheets, and wish to add this detail to the Animals Ethics Application, they must meet with the Facility Coordinator to discuss this before the Animal Ethics Application is presented to the Animal Ethics Committee.

REFERENCES

- Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 7th Edition 2004 section 2.2.26
- *Animal User's Handbook – Information about your responsibility to use animals humanely and ethically in particular sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.5 & 7.3.*

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