

UCT RESEARCH ETHICS CODE FOR USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

[Last updated March 2012]

A PREAMBLE

- a. The University of Cape Town affirms that humans have an obligation to respect animals and to appreciate that they are sentient and sensitive to pain, respond to stress and may remember such experiences.
- b. The use of animals in research and teaching must be justified in accordance with the principles of **Replacement, Reduction and Refinement** (the three Rs). This means that all efforts must be made to reduce the use of animals to a minimum, that animals may not be used if a reasonable and viable alternative exists, and that discomfort, pain, suffering, stress and distress must be avoided if possible or kept to a minimum.
- c. The optimal care of experimental animals is essential and in the interests of both animals and research because
 - 1) proper care and use promote the welfare of animals and contribute to the attainment of the high ethical and humane standards expected of a civilised society; and
 - 2) it is expensive to use animals in experiments. Experimental animals that are housed in poor facilities or suffer from disease produce poor, unreliable and unrepeatable results, which waste resources.
- d. UCT affirms that all aspects of the Animals Protection Act (Act 71 of 1962), Veterinary and Paraveterinary Professions Act (Act 19 of 1982),¹ the South African National Standard SANS 10386:2008 The Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes and the Medical Research Council's Guidelines on Ethics for Medical Research Book 3: Use of Animals in Research and Training provide *minimum* standards and must be adhered to in the housing of animals and in the use of animals in experiments. Where feasible, more than the minimum standards will be the accepted standards.

Note: This document must be read in conjunction with the UCT RESEARCH POLICY and the UCT RESEARCH ETHICS CODE FOR USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING, the UCT NHP POLICY and the FHS AEC TERMS OF REFERENCE, the FHS AEC USE OF ANIMALS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH SOP, the FHS AEC APPLICATIONS FOR ETHICS AUTHORISATION SOP, FHS AEC REPORTING OF PROTOCOL DEVIATIONS, UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND WELFARE VIOLATIONS IN ANIMAL RESEARCH SOP and the SF AEC TERMS OF REFERENCE.

- e. UCT requires prior UCT research ethics approval for any research involving animals by
 - (i) any and all UCT researchers including those publishing under UCT's name at UCT or elsewhere, and/or
 - (ii) any other person conducting animal research at UCT.

¹ Especially section 23(1)(c) of the Act which states that 'only people with the correct Section 23(1)(c) authorization under the said Act may carry out procedures specific to the veterinary profession'.

B RESEARCHERS AND THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

- a. Research should be carried out in a scholarly and responsible manner. Researchers must recognize their responsibility for
 - The design, methodology and execution of their research;
 - Planning so that the findings have a high degree of validity;
 - Indicating where appropriate the possibility of alternative interpretations;
 - Reporting findings, and their limitations, to ensure accessibility and opportunities for peer-review.
- b. No single research paradigm is preferred. Researchers have the right to research from a variety of paradigms and to use a range of methods and techniques.
- c. In reporting findings, researchers should adhere to the principles of honesty, clarity, comprehensiveness, accountability and openness to public scrutiny.
- d. The governing professional codes should be acknowledged and honoured when conducting research.
- e. Ethics clearance is linked to a particular Principal Investigator and falls away when the Principal Investigator leaves the project before it is completed. Standard Operating Procedures must address this point and ensure that an application for an amendment to the proposal is made if a new Principal Investigator is to be appointed.

C THE RESEARCH PROCESS

- a. When planning research, researchers should consider and articulate the ethical acceptability and foreseeable consequences of their research in the research proposal.
- b. Researchers should keep in mind the requirement of prior research ethics review and clearance when planning the timeframes for their research.
- c. UCT expects its members who use animals in research and teaching to make every effort to **refine, reduce and replace animal experimentation** as far as is possible.
- d. UCT affirms that the use of animals in experiments should be justified fully and that discomfort, stress and distress for the animals should be avoided or kept to a minimum.

D CODES FOR RESEARCH ETHICS

UCT is committed to upholding this Code, but recognises that research is a human endeavour and, as such, is dependent also on discretionary decisions for which individual researchers must accept ethical and scholarly responsibility. The scholarly and ethical standards of researchers are central to the research endeavour and efforts to sustain and develop these standards are integral components of research at UCT. This Code and the more detailed versions aim to be educative rather than coercive in raising awareness of the standards and ethos that imbues research at UCT. However, researchers are expected to comply with the various codes and policies. Breaches or violations of the codes or policies are dealt with in accordance with the Research Misconduct procedures.

Minimum procedural standards (or Standard Operating Procedures) are required.

Ethical reasoning requires thought, insight, sensitivity and familiarity with various research ethics codes. As with scholarly work, peer-review is important. Ethics peer-review includes the larger intellectual community, society at large, and research participants. Seeking ethics clearance should be seen as an opportunity for informed ethical reflection and discussion with peers who are familiar with the relevant ethics codes.

In this spirit, ethics clearance is required in terms of the principles of this Code of Research, as supplemented by discipline-specific codes, for all research projects undertaken by staff and students of the university that involve use of animals.

The Faculty-level Research Ethics Committees are charged with responsibility for processing ethics clearance and for reporting to the Senate-level Animal Ethics Committee.

E RESEARCHERS AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

The university is committed to conducting research that will contribute to health and quality of life and that strives to serve humanity and South African society as a whole rather than any sectional interest, unless otherwise justified.

The University of Cape Town recognises society's right of timely access to research findings and to open debate on their implications. Consequently, UCT is committed to upholding the principle that research findings should be made responsibly and freely available to the public and not be unreasonably withheld.

F RESEARCHERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The University is committed to conducting ethical animal research while being mindful of its responsibilities towards the environment and other animals.

G CONTRACT RESEARCH

Contract research is subject to this policy, the codes for research ethics and UCT's contract research policies. Any remuneration for researchers must be specified in research contracts. All conflicts of interest must be declared.