



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
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## **Rhodes University Policy on Research Ethics – Animal subjects**

Policy Volume	Research and Postgraduate Studies
Policy Chapter	Research Policies
Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty	Rhodes University Animal Research Ethics Committee (RUAREC)
Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager	Rhodes University Animal Research Ethics Committee (RUAREC)
Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals	
Policy Approval Pathways (e.g. committee, Senex, Senate, Council)	Senate
Revision History: Approved Reviews	
Review Cycle (e.g. every 2/5/7 years etc)	Every four years or as necessary
Commencement date	1 August 2019 or the earliest and feasible date thereafter.
Next Review Date	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2023

## 1. POLICY PARTICULARS

<b>1.1. Policy Title</b>	Rhodes University Policy on Research Ethics – Animal subjects
<b>1.2. Policy Statement</b> <i>(State in a single paragraph the policy mandate and how this relates to the University Mission and Vision)</i>	In establishing this policy, Rhodes University, a university which measures itself against the highest international standards of academic and professional practice, sets a clear statement for the consideration of ethical requirements, and corresponding procedures to meet those requirements, on the use of animals in research and teaching across the whole University.
<b>1.3. Reason for Policy</b> <i>(What this policy aims to achieve)</i>	Animal welfare deserves the highest respect. Ethically correct conduct is thus of utmost importance for all activities under the auspices of Rhodes University. This policy succeeds previous policies to establish a Rhodes University Ethics committee from 2 November 1984, guidelines approved by Senate on 26 November 1986, and Rhodes University Policy on Ethics approved by Senate on 21 November 2014.
<b>1.4. Policy Objective/s</b> <i>(What are the measurable objectives of this policy)</i>	<p>(a) Rhodes University Animal Research Ethics Committee (RUAREC) aims to provide uniform and effective protection of animals that are associated with Rhodes University and any of its activities. Ethical considerations include (not exclusively) the minimisation of physical, psychological, social or financial risks, and the fulfilment of moral and legal standards.</p> <p>(b) This policy concentrates on ethical considerations in research and teaching activities involving animals. Further aspects of institutional ethics, ethical conduct, and ethics as an academic discipline or part of thereof are not covered by this policy.</p> <p>(c) It is incumbent upon the whole University to make staff, students and any other parties involved in University activities aware of this policy. The University must ascertain that, where applicable, all involved individuals are competent to maintain the standards outlined in this policy and the relevant protocols on ethics.</p> <p>(d) Ethical considerations are universal and have to be prioritised against any other interest.</p> <p>(e) Nothing in this policy document should be interpreted as relieving a University academic or support staff member(s), undergraduate or postgraduate student(s), postdoctoral fellow(s) or (senior) researcher associate(s) of any obligations acquired as a result of membership of a professional or other association. However, adherence to a professional code of ethics does not in itself override the obligation to observe this policy and the relevant protocols on ethics.</p>
<b>1.5. People affected by this Policy</b> <i>(e.g. All units of the University)</i>	Academic or support staff member(s), undergraduate or postgraduate student(s), postdoctoral fellow(s) or (senior) researcher associate(s) associated with Rhodes University using animals in research and/or teaching activities. These stakeholders are referred to as RU stakeholders in further text of this policy.
<b>1.6. Who should read this Policy</b> <i>(People who need to heed this policy to fulfil their duties)</i>	RU stakeholders and RUAREC members.

<b>1.7. Implementers of this Policy</b> ( <i>Who will manage the implementation of this policy</i> )	RUAREC, driven by its Executive Committee (EXCO) in collaboration with the DVC: Research and Development, and all relevant RU stakeholders.
<b>1.7 Website address/link for this Policy</b>	<a href="http://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policiesa-z">http://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/policiesa-z</a>

## 2. RELATED DOCUMENTS FORMS AND TOOLS

(University Policies, Protocols and Documents (such as rules/policies/protocols/guidelines related to this policy))

<b>Relevant Legislation (Legislation/Regulatory requirements/Organisational Reports – name these)</b>
<p>Agricultural Research Act, 1990 (Act No. 86 of 1990), as amended  Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984), as amended  Animal Health Act, 2002 (Act No. 7 of 2002), as amended  Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act No. 62 of 1998)  Animal Matters Amendment Act, 1993 (Act No. 42 of 1993), as amended  Animal Protection Act 1962 (Act no. 17 of 1962), as amended  Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998)  Medicines and Related Substances Control Act, 1965 (Act No. 101 of 1965), as amended  National Environmental Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 62 of 2008), as amended  Performing Animals Protection Act, 1935 (Act no. 24 of 1935), as amended  South African National Standard no. 10379:2005  South African National Standard no. 10386:2019  Societies for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1993 (Act no. 169 of 1993), as amended  Professional Code of Ethics of the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria, as amended  Veterinary and Para-veterinary Professions Act, 1982 (Act No. 19 of 1982), as amended</p>
<b>Related Policies</b>
Terms of Reference of RUAREC
<b>Related Protocols</b>
All relevant SOPs of the RAUREC and the relevant Rhodes University departments
<b>Forms and Tools (documents to be completed in support of this policy implementation)</b>
<p><i>E.g. Policy template for the policy itself. Documents pertaining to procedures for implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the policy.</i></p> <p>All relevant SOPs of the RAUREC and the relevant Rhodes University departments and proof of competence/accredited certificates of training in animals ethics that has been undertaken by RUAREC members/RU stakeholders</p>

## 3. POLICY DEFINITIONS

3.1	<b>Animal</b>	<p>This definition is in accordance with the definition of ‘animal’ in the SANS:10386 (2008) and updated versions thereof. Directly quoted from the SANS:10386: “live, sentient non-human vertebrate, including eggs, fetuses and embryos, that is; fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, and encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, farm animals, wildlife” ... “and higher invertebrates such as the advanced members from the Cephalopoda and Decapoda”</p> <p>Please note that primates are not within the scope of this policy, and special rights and duties apply to those species. RU stakeholders who plan to conduct research involving primates shall liaise with the RUAREC as early as possible. In the case of ‘lower’ invertebrates, the same procedure is advised, but different ethical considerations will apply.</p>
3.2	<b>Animal Ethics</b>	<p>The ethical principles that underpin the use of animals in research and teaching activities, incorporating the core ethical principles of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Replacement</b> of the use of animals with alternative models where feasible,</li> <li>ii. <b>Reduction</b> of the number of individual animals used to achieve the same level of scientific rigour and/or to achieve the goal of research and teaching with animals,</li> <li>iii. <b>Refinement</b> of experimental design, procedures, care and husbandry, to minimise or eliminate the impact on individual animals in terms of actual or potential pain, suffering, (dis)stress, and lasting harm, and</li> <li>iv. <b>Responsibility:</b> Who takes care of animals/insentient material in the experiments instead of sentient animals (tissue cultures which have been ethically obtained).</li> </ol>
3.3	<b>Ethics application</b>	<p>The document or set of documents describing the research or teaching activity requested for ethical approval. The ethics application normally consists of a form and appendices. Some other sources use the term ‘research proposal’ or ‘teaching proposal’ indirectly for an ethics application.</p>
3.4	<b>Ethical approval</b>	<p>The support of an ethics committee to undertake the activity proposed in the Ethics application, normally expressed in form of a letter. Some other sources use the term ‘ethical clearance’ synonymously to ‘ethical approval’.</p>
3.5	<b>Ethics review</b>	<p>The process of reviewing an ethics application aimed to obtain approval by an ethics committee.</p>
3.6	<b>Invertebrate</b>	<p>Any member of the kingdom Animalia, excluding those members of the Phylum Chordata, the Class Cephalopoda and the Order Decapoda.</p>
3.7	<b>Laboratory animal</b>	<p>Animal (refer to 3.1) kept and used for scientific purposes within the confinement of secure physical boundaries of a research animal facility.</p>
3.8	<b>Methodology and protocol</b>	<p>A theoretical underpinning or justification for the choice of methods or approach and a set of rules for the processes applied in the research. Different disciplines do, however, have very different definitions on the details and the structures of a ‘methodology’ or a ‘protocol’. This policy uses the term ‘methodology’ as a broad understanding of the conceptual and the empirical setup of the</p>

		research and the term ‘protocol’ for the processes applied, particularly with respect to the collection of data. In this understanding a ‘protocol’ forms part of the ‘methodology’. (Please note the difference between a research protocol and the protocol appended to a policy)
3.9	<b>NHREC</b>	The National Health Research Ethics Council of South Africa. The body with whom the RUAREC is registered.
3.10	<b>Principal Investigator</b>	The Principal Investigator (PI) is the RU stakeholder heads the research project and takes the responsibility for conducting the research and/or teaching activities involving animals.
3.11	<b>Researcher</b>	The term ‘researcher’ encompasses all individuals who are actively involved in research with animals and they are an RU stakeholder..
3.12	<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures documents that relate to the use of animals in research and teaching at Rhodes University.
3.13	<b>Teaching</b>	Any class activity, such as lecture demonstrations, laboratory practicals, and student projects, and including field-based classwork and practicals that involve the use of animal and involve or are carried out by RU stakeholders.
3.14	<b>Teacher and lecturer</b>	The person conducting teaching with animals and who is an RU stakeholder. For this policy ‘teacher’ will be used synonymously for ‘lecturer’.

## 4. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THIS POLICY

### SCOPE

4.1	A formal ethical consideration (with approval by the RUAREC) is required for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) research involving animals and invertebrates,</li> <li>b) research using animal biological material,</li> <li>c) research that might compromise individual, institutional, or public integrity when being performed or published,</li> <li>d) teaching involving animals for study or demonstration purposes and/or research, and</li> <li>e) teaching using animals that may cause health and safety risks for the involved individuals beyond what is covered by legal or professional standards.</li> </ul>
4.2	Ethical aspects have to be considered for all kinds of research or teaching activities that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) are conducted by RU stakeholders, and/or</li> <li>b) use infrastructure of Rhodes University, and/or</li> <li>c) use participants from amongst RU stakeholders, and/or</li> <li>d) are conducted on behalf of or affiliated to Rhodes University.</li> </ul>
4.3	The “Rhodes University Policy on Research Ethics – Animal subjects” (hereafter referred to as the <b>RU Policy on Animal Ethics</b> ) and the relevant protocols are binding upon all Rhodes University staff and students as well as externals falling under the scope of this policy.

## 5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1	In standing with SABS requirements, Rhodes University (RU) establishes an independent standing committee, the 'Rhodes University Animal Research Ethics Committee' (RUAREC).
5.2	RUAREC aims to ensure that all activities involving animals and invertebrates on campus are performed in a responsible way and meet contemporary ethical standards. This is particularly relevant for research and teaching involving animals and invertebrates.
5.3	In order to act in itself ethically, RUAREC is an independent committee, not directly controlled by any superior instance in terms of animal ethics. RUAREC commits itself to national and international ethical principles and standards, to its policy and protocols on ethics, and to Rhodes University rules and standards for all administrative issues.
5.4	RUAREC has operational reporting line to the DVC: Research and Development; and to Senate of Rhodes University through the approval/updates of the RUAREC Terms of Reference and internal annual reporting. In case of conflicts of interest or other ethical concerns arising with the Senate of Rhodes University, RUAREC shall report to Rhodes University Council.
5.5	RUAREC is the official RU body for ethical considerations on the use of animals and invertebrates, and no other internal or external body may be applied in its place. However, the RUAREC may appoint other internal or external expertise for facilitation.
5.6	The decisions of the RUAREC are binding for the Rhodes University and all relevant RU stakeholders.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1	<p>RU has a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Ensure, through the operation of RUAREC, that all activities involving the care and use of animals comply with NHREC regulations and national standards for the use of animals in research.</li> <li>(b) Promote compliance with the contemporary standards and regulations governing the use of animals in research and teaching.</li> <li>(c) Ensure and support the effective operation of the RUAREC.</li> <li>(d) Identify clear lines of responsibility, communication, and accountability.</li> <li>(e) Ensure that all people involved in the care and use of animals understand their responsibilities and the requirements of the contemporary regulations and standards, have the necessary skills and knowledge, and have access to appropriate educational programs and/or resources.</li> <li>(f) Regularly monitor and review the institution's compliance with the national standards and requirements of the NHREC through the annual or incident reports made by the RUAREC to Senate.</li> </ul>
6.2	Primary responsibility for ensuring that the Policy and Protocols on Animal Ethics are adhered to rests with the PI.

6.3	Supervisors and superiors on all levels are requested to develop awareness and to provide support to their students and co-workers for ethical considerations, as part of their guiding responsibility.
6.4	<p>RUAREC shall provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) animal ethics policies, SOPs, guidelines and policy briefs/interpretations as necessary,</li> <li>(b) education and information dissemination on animal ethics,</li> <li>(c) critical review of all institutional research and teaching practices with respect to animal ethics,</li> <li>(d) review and approval of research projects and teaching with respect to animal ethics, and</li> <li>(e) any other service to support animal ethical considerations within the scope of RUAREC to all members of the Rhodes University community and for all activities using animals that fall under the ethical responsibility of Rhodes University.</li> </ul>
6.5	The Rhodes University community at large is requested to critically reflect on animal ethical issues within the University and communicate these to RUAREC for consideration.
6.6	RUAREC has discretion in applying the <b>RU Policy on Animal Ethics</b> where exceptional circumstances or common-sense dictate, provided that the basic principles underlying the policy are not compromised.
6.7	RUAREC provide support for further ethical questions regarding animal usage as far as expertise is available, e.g. with respect to institutional ethics, ethical conduct, and Animal Ethics as part of an academic discipline.

## 7. PROCESSES

7.1	Researchers who intend to perform research involving animals and invertebrates shall obtain ethical approval from RUAREC prior to data collection.
7.2	Teachers preparing teaching or any class projects that will utilise animals or invertebrates shall obtain ethical approval from RUAREC prior to the commencement of classes or project-work.
7.3	This policy shall be made available to all RU stakeholders, and shall be considered by Heads of Departments, Deans and Senior Management in the scope of the academic project at Rhodes University and all its aspects which are relevant to animal ethics.

## 8. ETHICAL REVIEW

8.1	Any intended research, teaching or other activity that falls under the scope of this policy has to be approved by the RUAREC.
8.2	An application for ethical approval, signed by the PI, has to be submitted to RUAREC. Work on the project may not proceed before the approval of the application is given by the RUAREC through the online ERAS system.
8.3	In student research, students cannot take the role of a PI. This is normally the Supervisor or another senior researcher, who is an RU stakeholder, submits the ethics application on the students behalf.

8.4	In teaching, the course-coordinator normally takes the role of the PI and the individual lecturers act as Co-Investigators.
8.6	The basic ethical objectives are (a) minimising the risks associated with an activity and (b) the benefits must expectedly outweigh the risks. The application must provide clear information for evaluating both objectives.
8.7	A research/teaching methodology and/or protocol(s) is/are required to be reviewed as an application which involves the use of animals in research or teaching by RU stakeholders. This is necessary in order to evaluate risks/harms and benefits of the proposed activity as well as to consider if risks are minimal with respect to what can be achieved (e.g. by remedial measures) without significantly compromising the outcome.
8.8	No external ethics committees might be approached for ethical approval by the RU stakeholder as an applicant instead of RUAREC. If the project has been evaluated by another NHREC registered animal ethics committee at another institution, the RUAREC will evaluate the approval by this committee and has the authority to decide whether to accept the external institution's approval in lieu of conducting a full ethical approval process.
8.9	The conduct of the review of applications should be collegiate, with the aim of facilitating research and teaching.

## 9. ETHICAL CONDUCT OF RESEARCH / TEACHING

9.1	The conduct of research and teaching activities involving the care and use of animals for scientific purposes must comply with the approved protocol and all standard and specific conditions.
9.2	The RUAREC monitors compliance by reviewing annual and final reports for all approved projects and by any other means deemed necessary or appropriate, such as random audits (which may involve inspection of animals and associated records used in research and teaching activities).
9.3	All members of a research team have shared responsibility for the ethical and humane use of animals, and must be aware of and satisfied with the degree to which the conduct of the activity meets legislative requirements and RU policy.
9.4	The PI has to ensure that occupational safety and health safety requirements are met for all involved staff, researchers, facilitators and participants. Particular attention has to be given to processes and conditions that do not fall under set categories and where occupational and safety standards have to be applied in analogy to existing rules and regulations.
9.5	The Principal Investigator or Teacher in charge has ultimate responsibility for the care and use of animals and is responsible for ensuring that all personnel involved are competent, receive appropriate training for the procedures they perform, and are adequately supervised by a competent person.
9.6	Principal Investigators must ensure that all relevant permits (e.g. collection permits from provincial government agencies) and Gatekeepers' permission are obtained prior to the commencement of the projects.

## 10. REPORTING

10.1	Any adverse effects, changes, discontinuation and unforeseen events, that occur in research and teaching involving animals and where RU stakeholders are involved, must be immediately reported to RUAREC.
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10.2	The RUAREC will investigate, and attempt to satisfy, objections or concerns that were raised with respect to ethical standards in any ongoing or completed project. The respective SOP of RUAREC must be adhered for the particulars.
10.3	RUAREC may withdraw approval. In this case it has to inform the Principal Investigator and the hosting institution about the decision made and the reasons. The project or the teaching unit, respectively, must then be discontinued immediately.
10.4	A brief report must be submitted to the relevant committee on the completion of every research programme that has been granted ethical approval. The report should include a very brief summary of results and conclusions obtained; importantly, whether there were any unforeseen and undesirable consequences and if so, the steps that were taken to rectify them.
10.5	The report will be kept with the application and the committee reserves the right to access the research findings.
10.6	RUAREC provides annual reports to the Senate covering ethics matters around animal usage in research and teaching at Rhodes University. The reports will also include any other information that the RUAREC Chairperson deems relevant.

## 11. PUBLICATIONS

11.1	Results must not be exaggerated or filtered so as to make funding more likely or a submission more attractive to editors.
11.2	Results should be published if they have academic merit. Withholding, changing or toning down the content are not acceptable practices. Sponsors should not be allowed to comment on results prior to publication. They may not veto, change conclusions, or delay publication. Such aspects should be formalised in a written contract. Publication should proceed regardless of outcomes of the research.
11.3	Authorship and acknowledgements: All persons who have contributed to the originality of the publication shall be listed as authors. Individuals or institutions that have actively supported the research shall be acknowledged in the paper. Individuals or institutions that have supported the research financially must be acknowledged in the publication in order to provide transparency with respect to possible conflicts of interest.
11.4	It is advised to mention in the publication that ethics approval has been obtained and from which committee this was issued.

## 12. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

The RUAREC reconsiders the appropriateness of the Ethics Policy every four years, or as necessary.
All Rhodes University standing committees and individuals are welcome to suggest revisions of the policy.
The RUAREC's recommendations are submitted to Senate and Council for discussion and notification/approval. RUAREC will carefully consider any feedback from Senate and Council. All revisions that are approved by RUAREC will be included in a revised copy of policy which will be distributed amongst the University via Internet. Senior Management, Deans and all Heads of Departments will be notified of the revision.
<b>Communication of the review process</b> The review of the policy will be made known to the Senate and Faculty Boards at the commencement of the review process.

## 13. POLICY CONTEXT: RELEVANT DOCUMENTS CITED/CONSULTED/ADOPTED

1	<b>Guidelines on Ethics For Medical Research: Use of Animals in Research and Training</b> (Book 3) South African MRC 2004
2	<b>South African National Standard: The Care and Use of Experimental Animals</b> Standards SA. SANS 10386:2008
3	<b>Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals: Eighth Edition</b> , Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, National Research Council of the National Academies, National Academies Press 2011