

Statement on the use of animals in research, testing and teaching

This statement describes teaching and research involving the use of animals at the University, and how it is overseen by our Animal Ethics Committee.

The University of Waikato Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato is an internationally recognised research institution that conducts a small amount of teaching and research involving the use of animals. These research programs include field-based and laboratory studies crucial to conservation efforts of New Zealand native species, as well as laboratory-based research into animal behaviour, addiction and drug action, and the molecular and cellular mechanisms of disease that can only be answered using animal models.

The primary aim of our research is furthering knowledge that could lead to restoration of New Zealand's biodiversity, a better understanding of the natural world, and the development of new treatments in both humans and animals. As a teaching institution, we also conduct a small number of low-impact teaching activities using animals (such as field or laboratory-based observations of natural behaviour and physiology).

Animal research at the University is overseen by its Animal Ethics Committee, which makes ethical decisions regarding proposed research and provides oversight for the projects, facilities, and procedures to maintain animal welfare. While the use of animals in research is a fundamental cornerstone for biomedical discovery, it is highly regulated in New Zealand under Part 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, and only allowed when the potential benefits outweigh the expected harm and when no alternative methods are available. All animal research in New Zealand also adheres to the 3R's principles of Reduction, Replacement and Refinement. As part of its activity, the Animal Ethics Committee is guided by these principles of reducing the need for animals in research, refining the way research is performed to reduce harm and maximise benefit from research programmes and, where possible, eliminating the need to use animals in research and teaching altogether. For example, since 2000, the University has reduced the use of animals in teaching by greater than 90%. Concerns for animal welfare are paramount in the ethical approval process and our staff and students are passionate about the welfare of the animals used in our research and teaching.

The Animal Ethics Committee includes external members consisting of a veterinarian, a representative appointed by the SPCA, and a member to represent the public interest, and all decisions are by consensus..

The University was an inaugural signatory to the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) [Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in New Zealand](#). Our staff recognise the importance of open dialogue with members of the public who justifiably deserve to be well informed about why, when, and how animals are used in research.

Related links

- [ANZCCART \(Australian/New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals In Research and Teaching\)](#)
- [The ANZCAART Openness Agreement on Animal Research and Teaching in New Zealand](#)
- [Ministry of Primary Industries - Animals in Research Teaching and Testing](#)
- [Understanding Animal Research \(UK\)](#)
- [National Centre for the Replacement Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research](#)
- [European Animal Research Association Transparency Agreements in Europe](#)
- [New Zealand's Commitment to the 3R's of Animal Research](#)