

CONSTITUTION OF THE FNU ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Prepared by: OPVCR

Approving Authority: FNU Senate

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1.0 Introduction

The Fiji National University (FNU) operates as an animal research establishment accredited under the following provisions¹:

- a. Laws of Fiji: Animals (Control of Experiments) Act 1957 [Cap 161] ;
- b. The International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) [Guiding Principles for Biomedical Research Involving Animals](#);
- c. World Organization for Animal Health: Terrestrial Animal Health Code ([Chap. 7.8 Use of Animals in Research and Education](#));
- d. The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) [Guidelines for the Use of Animals in Experiments and Research](#).

These documents, as amended from time to time, together with any other relevant legal provisions, are jointly here called "the Governing Provisions."

A central feature of the Governing Provisions is that the University must have an Animal Research Ethics Committee ("the FNU AREC") and that no animal may be used for research or teaching without the FNU AREC's prior approval.

2.0 Obligation Of Researchers And Teachers

The Governing Provisions place ultimate responsibility for the care and well-being of experimental animals on the researcher or teacher. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with the conditions set by the FNU AREC for a particular protocol. These and other University provisions are included in the FNU AREC Constitution and appendices.

3.0 Guiding Principles

In carrying out its Terms of Reference, the FNU AREC must satisfy the legal and ethical requirements of the Governing Provisions, while facilitating appropriate research and teaching activities. It aims to do so primarily by encouraging awareness of legal and ethical issues of animal welfare among researchers and teachers, while also reserving the power to enforce compliance with the Governing Provisions.

In pursuance of these aims, the FNU AREC must ensure that the care of all animals on University properties minimises pain, distress, and discomfort. Animal use in research and teaching is allowable only when:

- a. there is not available an acceptable procedure alternative to the use of animals;
- b. justification is provided in terms of expected advancement in knowledge;
- c. facilities and techniques are available to ensure that pain, distress, and discomfort to animals is minimised; and
- d. the researcher or teacher is competent in the appropriate procedures.

In applying these principles, the FNU AREC follows what is widely regarded as best practice, namely the "three R's" - Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement in the use of animals.

4.0 Membership And Functioning

Membership and Functioning of the FNU AREC are prescribed in the **Terms of Reference** (TOR) document.

¹ This Constitution has been adopted from University of New England, Australia.

5.0 Further FNU AREC Obligations

Further obligations of the FNU AREC are as follows:

- a. Develop and maintain Emergency Procedures for experimental animals (see Appendix A).
- b. Develop and maintain Grievance Procedures (see Appendix C).
- c. Develop and maintain Application and Reporting Procedures (see Appendix D)

6.0 Appendices

The appendices to this Constitution are policies created by the FNU AREC and are to be read in conjunction with the Constitution. These policies may be varied from time to time without altering the Constitution.

7.0 Approval Agency

Vice-Chancellor

8.0 Revision Log

This table will be used to insert the dates of the different versions made on the policy/procedure.

Version	Date of Approval	Comment
1.0	11 December 2019	Approved by the Senate
2.0	2 March 2021	Approved by the Senate

9.0 Policy Sponsor

Pro Vice Chancellor Research

10.0 Contact Person

The following person may be contacted in relation to this policy:

Manager Research Grants & Ethics/Secretary- Animal Research Ethics Committee

Email: shailin.gonelevu@fnu.ac.fj

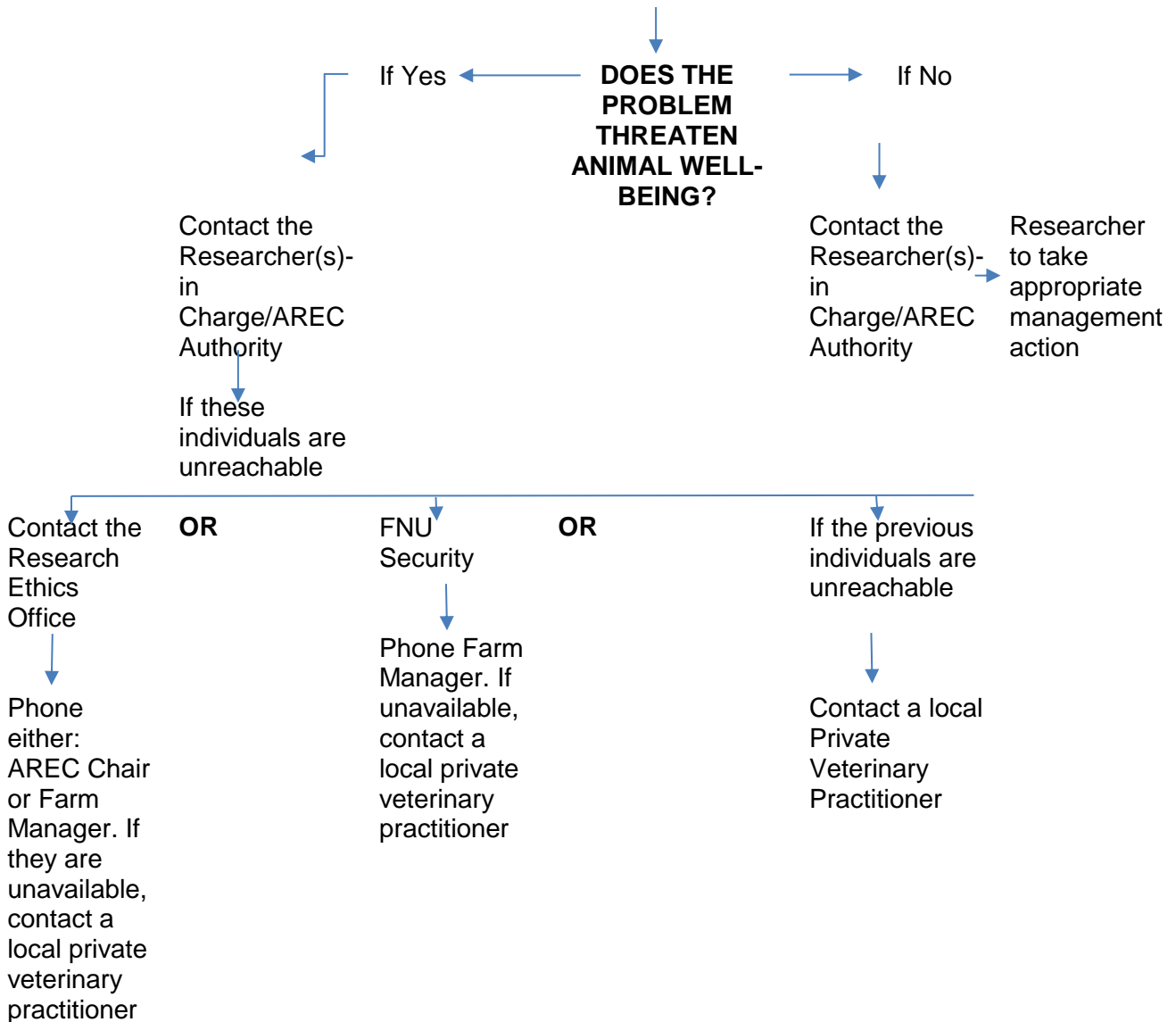
Phone: +679 3394000

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APPENDIX A

Fiji National
 University Animal
 Research Ethics
 Committee
**STANDARD
 PROCEDURES
 FOR ANIMAL
 CARE/ ANIMAL
 HEALTH
 EMERGENCIES**

↓
 When animal care
 or animal health
 problem arises, the
 following question
 should be asked:



APPENDIX B

FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

GUIDELINES COVERING THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS USED FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- a) The following provisions supplement, are to be read in conjunction with the Constitution of the Animal Research Ethics Committee. The Governing Provisions there mentioned, set out the legal obligations imposed on the University and its members.
- b) In these Guidelines, "researcher" refers to the person named as Principal Investigator in an application (whether for research or teaching) which has been approved by the FNU AREC.
- c) Unless otherwise provided, the Guidelines apply to all dealings with vertebrate animals kept on University properties, including observational, nutritional, metabolic, physiological, surgical, or psychological activities.
- d) Scientific and teaching activities must not commence until written approval has been obtained from the FNU AREC.
- e) All experiments involving live animals shall be carried out under the supervision of a member of staff with appropriate training and experience.
- f) Daily animal care records should be kept, to determine the duration of problems, should they arise. The daily animal care records will be used to monitor the animals' well-being and the efficiency of husbandry practices. A **Daily Activity Log** must be maintained and displayed where the animals are held. A template for the Daily Activity Log may be obtained from the Animal House Manager.
- g) On completion of experiments, researchers shall ensure that animals are returned to grazing paddocks or animal houses that are clearly marked for identification purposes. In addition, the exact nature of the experiment is recorded on individual animal records. Individual animal records must be maintained for animals that are used for more than one research protocol.
- h) Any unforeseen sign of pain, suffering, or distress in any animal must be reported promptly to the FNU AREC Emergency Contact person and/or the Animal House Manager (see appendix A).
- i) Researchers in doubt as to their responsibilities should seek guidance from the Research Ethics Officer or FNU AREC Chair.
- j) The justification for continuing or repeating experiments must be on the basis of the results obtained as well as the potential effects on the welfare of the animals and must continuously be subject to review.
- k) Researchers should note that, apart from legal and moral considerations, activities involving the use of animals that produce undue pain, distress, or discomfort may result in data that are unsatisfactory or misleading when extrapolated to normal conditions.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

- a) Other than in exceptional circumstances, any large mammals may not be tethered as part of a research protocol. In addition, any large mammals may not normally be tethered in metabolism cages. Should tethers be required during acclimatization, they may be used for a maximum of one week. Alternatives to tethering in terms of conditioning are to be investigated, and researchers are advised to seek advice from the Animal Research Ethics Committee. The maximum time that sheep may be held in metabolism cages is 28 days.
- b) Wild animals can suffer severe stress on their first contact with humans and new surroundings. Researchers must use the most effective techniques for minimising stress during restraint, capture, marking, transport, maintenance, and killing (where necessary) of wild animals. Wherever and whenever deemed appropriate, prior permission to carry out these procedures on wild vertebrates must be obtained from the relevant authority.

- c) All animals should be pre-adapted to close confinement before entry to the FNU Livestock Farm and other animal facilities.
- d) Domestic farm animals should be healthy, well-grown, adequately vaccinated, and treated for internal and external parasites, unless this affects explicitly the research proposed, before entry on to any FNU property.

ANIMAL SURGERY

- a) In these Guidelines, chronic surgical experiments are those in which a surgically manipulated animal is allowed to recover from anaesthesia, while acute experiments are those in which it is not.
- b) Persons undertaking chronic surgical experimentation will typically be required to have satisfactorily completed appropriate training or have an equivalent amount of practical experience in conducting surgical techniques.
- c) Acute surgical experiments may be carried out by persons without surgical training provided the animal is suitably anaesthetised, and the operation is supervised by a suitably qualified person.
- d) The FNU AREC may on application grant exceptions to the above where it is satisfied that adequate justification had been provided and the supervision and training provided are sufficient.
- e) Neither this Section nor the FNU AREC Constitution applies to surgical operations on University farms, which are considered a normal part of routine husbandry practices.

STUDENT RESEARCHERS

- a) Postgraduate or other students involved in animal research may not be listed as a Principal Investigator on an application submitted to the FNU AREC, but they must be mentioned in the application as students.
- b) Before commencing their work, all such students should complete an appropriate training course in animal welfare, such as the Animal Research Ethics Online Course. The FNU AREC could recommend any person named on an application complete the Animal Research Ethics Course unless the person can demonstrate that they have attended or completed equivalent training.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications on the care of experimental animals can be found [here](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following useful documents are available [here](#):

- a) Post-operative Care of Animals allowed to return to Consciousness following Surgery
- b) The Disposal of Dead Animals and their Parts
- c) The Re-use of Ruminants with Gastrointestinal Cannulae
- d) The Use of Pentobarbitone for the Purpose of Humane Animal Destruction
- e) Sheep which are housed on a Long-term Basis
- f) Tethering of Sheep
- g) Use of Treadmills

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The FNU AREC has developed a number of Standard Operating Procedures in consultation with FNU Researchers. These Standard Operating Procedures are available from the FNU AREC web pages.

APPENDIX C

FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

1. Definition of grievance

This mechanism is to be set up to handle the following situations:

A formal complaint from a person not satisfied with the outcome or process following an enquiry or concern adequately expressed.

- a) Complaints from independent people who are not associated with the University with respect to the use of animals in research or teaching.
- b) Disputes between researchers or teachers and the FNU AREC with respect to the use of animals in research or teaching.
- c) Disputes between members of the FNU AREC.

It is the University's policy that staff or student complaints will not jeopardize their employment or entitlements for voicing concern or initiating an enquiry or complaint concerning the use of animals within the University.

2. Making a complaint

- a) A complaint must be in writing, dated, and signed.
- b) The complaint must be lodged with the Animal Research Ethics Committee Secretary.
- c) Receipt of a complaint must be acknowledged immediately in writing.
- d) Complaints must be passed promptly to the FNU AREC Chair.

3. Investigation of Complaints/Grievances

- a) The responsibility for investigating a complaint lies with the FNU AREC Chair.
- b) The FNU AREC Chair must decide whether there is immediate danger of animal pain or distress. If so, the FNU AREC Standard Procedures for Animal Care/Animal Health Emergencies apply. Where necessary, the powers given by the FNU AREC to the Executive to halt or suspend a project will also apply.
- c) The FNU AREC Chair shall investigate complaints in the manner provided below.
 - The FNU AREC Chair may delegate the investigation, in whole or in part, to other appropriate persons, including member(s) of the FNU AREC, or other University staff. The FNU AREC Chair remains responsible for the investigation.
 - If the complaint is made against the FNU AREC Chair, or involves a potential conflict of interest for the Chair, the FNU AREC Chair must immediately inform the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (PVCR), who will appoint someone else to conduct the investigation. This person will have the same powers as the FNU AREC Chair.
- d) Any person acting under this section is called an "Investigator."
- e) The Investigator may at all times, where possible, try to resolve the complaint informally.
- f) Where formal processes apply, the Investigator must notify in writing all those judged to be affected by the complaint.
- g) The FNU AREC and the PVCR must be notified of the complaint as soon as practicable.
- h) The Investigator may investigate by making all enquiries deemed relevant, including, but not limited to, unannounced inspection of facilities, the examination of records, discussion with appropriate individuals, inviting any person with an interest in the proceedings to attend a meeting of the FNU AREC for discussions and seeking any further relevant expert advice.
- i) The Investigator shall keep an adequate record of the progress of the investigation.

4. Outcome(s) of the Investigation

- a) The Investigator shall prepare a written report for presentation to the FNU AREC as soon as practicable.
- b) If a complaint has been resolved informally, the report may simply state that fact.
- c) In other cases, the report shall set out the enquiries undertaken and contain the Investigator's recommendations on all the issues raised. These may include whether any project or procedure should be modified, whether any person was at fault, and any further action that might be suggested.
- d) The FNU AREC shall consider the report and may accept, modify, or reject any of the recommendations.
- e) A member of the FNU AREC referred to in the recommendations (including the Chair as in cases under 3.) may present their views when the report is discussed but must withdraw during the determination of the FNU AREC decisions.
- f) The FNU AREC shall provide a report to the complainant and all interested parties, detailing the procedures undertaken and the outcomes from the investigation, and the decisions and/or recommendations of the FNU AREC on the matter. People provided with a copy of the report will be given the opportunity to make comments back to the FNU AREC.
- g) Upon receipt of relevant comments from all interested parties, the FNU AREC will proceed to reach and implement its decisions on the report as it finds appropriate.

5. Appeals against FNU AREC Decisions

- a) Any person objecting to an FNU AREC decision shall formally write to the University Research Committee (URC) to review the decision. Such a request must be made in writing as soon as practicable after the decision is brought down, and must set out in detail the reasons for dissatisfaction.
- b) On receipt of such a request, the URC may review the decision in any way seen fit. All available documentation on the investigation and the FNU AREC deliberations shall be made available to URC. Upon deliberation, URC shall send the file back to FNU AREC with the recommendations to review the decision if URC believes that the decision by FNU AREC shall be reviewed. The final decision will be of FNU AREC.

APPENDIX D

FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICATION AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. Meetings and Dates

The FNU AREC usually meets monthly, to examine applications for approval, and to consider related matters.

2. Procedures at Meetings

The FNU AREC operates in accordance with the University's standard procedures and guidelines. At least one member must be present from each of the categories A, B, C & D for a quorate meeting. If there is no quorum, the meeting may proceed and input from the unattended category obtained. The outcomes are communicated to the researchers and ratified at the next quorate meeting.

3. Applications

Applications must be submitted on the FNU AREC Application form.

4. Closing Dates, Late Applications and Out-of Session Meetings

Committee meetings are usually held on the last Friday of each month. Applications for each month's agenda close 14 days before the meeting, i.e., 12 pm on Friday. No late applications will be added to the agenda once it has closed.

5. The Approval Process

Approval is signified by the FNU AREC, providing an FNU AREC Authority, which includes an approval number; FNU AREC-XXXXX.

Applications may be dealt with in the following ways:

- a) Approved with no conditions.
- b) Approved with pre-conditions (which must be satisfactorily addressed prior to the issue of an FNU AREC Authority) or conditions (which will remain in force for the duration of the FNU AREC Authority).
- c) Approved but approval number temporarily withheld, pending the provision of further information to the satisfaction, in most cases, of the Executive Committee. In such cases, the research may not proceed until the approval number is issued.
- d) Deferred, so that the application can be resubmitted to the Committee in the light of its previous comments.
- e) Not Approved.
- f) In cases of (d) and (e), the researcher, in most cases, is requested to consult with the Chair to provide additional information before resubmitting.

If, during consideration of an application, the FNU AREC identifies a point of concern, the Principal Investigator may be contacted by phone during the meeting to resolve the point of concern. This interaction and resolution are to be recorded in the minutes.

Where researchers are only conducting observations with no interference, i.e., no manipulation of the environment, the researchers are required to notify the FNU AREC in writing. This notification should outline the location(s), dates, and species to be observed. If researchers are in doubt about whether an application is required or not, they may contact the FNU AREC Chair.

7. Duration and Completion of Approvals

All protocols (including teaching and breeding) will be granted approval for a period of 12 months. If a project is designed to extend beyond one year, it is the researcher's responsibility to reapply to the FNU AREC each year via a variation, and submit a Progress Report on work completed to date.