

# Ethical guidelines for secondary school students using animals and animal parts in practical classes



Australian and New Zealand  
Council for the Care of Animals  
in Research and Teaching

## Introduction

The use of animals or animal parts in practical classes is a privilege that brings with it the responsibility to avoid cruelty to animals. Students should make a commitment to the welfare of these animals and respect them for the contribution they make learning. Outlined below are five issues to think about. These will help you meet your responsibilities.

## Why are animals or animal parts used in practical classes?

Animals should only be used to enhance learning outcomes. Animals may be harmed to achieve these outcomes and thought should be given to whether the learning outcomes can be achieved without the use of animals or animal parts. Students and staff should think about the Three Rs (Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement) when using animals in schools.

## What are the requirements for animal welfare and animal handling?

The welfare of the animals you use is your responsibility and not just your teacher's responsibility. If you have to handle animals during a practical class, it is important to follow the instructions you are given about the correct handling techniques for the species you are working with.

## What are the laws covering the use of animals and animal parts in practical classes?

The use of animals in research, testing and teaching in New Zealand is covered by the Animal Welfare Act 1999. This Act has an underlying principle of a "duty of care". The act requires that approval be received from an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) for using animals in schools. To get this approval the use of animals must be justified, the species and number used identified, the way the animals will be used described, and the learning outcomes of the practical work balanced against any potential harm to the animals used. The skills of the staff involved and the supervision of the students are also evaluated. The questions raised by AECs should be asked by each student regarding the use of animals in their practical classes.

## What do you think about using animals or animal parts in practical classes?

You should discuss the use of animals with other students and staff. You should form your own opinion and, with appropriate justification, feel free to discuss your opinion in an open environment. You should feel free to make suggestions that might improve future practical classes.

## Think about your responsibility to make sure that good use is made of the learning opportunity

You should know the purpose of the lesson and the concepts that are being taught in the class. This involves being prepared by doing any reading of background material before coming to class, knowing about the procedures in a practical class, and being generally prepared to maximise the learning experience. You should also be prepared to use every opportunity to develop manual, observational, and recording skills during the practical class.

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To achieve its mission, ANZCCART promotes:

- excellence in the care of animals supplied for or used in research, testing, and teaching;
- responsible scientific use of animals;
- the three Rs policy of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement as they apply to the use of animals for scientific purposes;
- informed discussion and debate within the community regarding these matters;
- strategic partnerships to contribute to the education and training of scientists, students and the broader community.

Websites: [www.rsnz.org/advisory/anzccart/](http://www.rsnz.org/advisory/anzccart/) and [www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ANZCCART/)