Academic Guideline

Tracking and Holding laboratory animals Outside of UQBR Facilities

1. Purpose and Scope

This document explains the requirements for Holding Laboratory Animals in locations outside of The University of Queensland Biological Resources (UQBR) facilities.

This guide aligns with the Animal Ethics Procedure, and should be read in parallel with:

1. [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/4.20.02-responsible-conduct-research)*,*
2. [Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes) (*animal use code*), and
3. [Animal Care and Protection Act 2001](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2001-064) (*Animal Care Protection Act).*

This guide aims to assist in meeting compliance requirements and safe working procedures when holding laboratory animals outside UQBR Facilities.

This guide must be followed by all UQ staff, students, affiliates or external parties who remove animals from UQBR Facilities.

1. Process and Key Controls

Laboratory animals are generally held in UQBR facilities. If laboratory animals must be held elsewhere, the appropriate approvals, facilities and animal welfare requirements must be met.

University animal ethics committees (AEC) must approve the holding of laboratory animals outside of UQBR facilities.

1. Key Requirements

The holding of laboratory animals in Laboratories outside UQBR facilities constitutes a potentially significant risk to the University including risks relating to animal welfare, occupational health and safety and regulatory compliance. This potential risk is significantly increased if such animals are genetically modified (GM) or contain GM organisms or microorganisms.

Some laboratory animals must only be held in a UQBR facility due to the level of risk posed by them. These animals include laboratory animals containing infectious microorganisms (GM or wild-type) such as animals infected with Influenza A or animals transfected with GM lentivirus.

The following guideline seeks to minimise these risks by specifying the steps to be followed regarding holding of laboratory animals outside UQBR facilities. The holding of laboratory animals outside a UQBR facility is contingent upon there being a sound scientific or animal welfare justification and that the period of holding is of the absolute minimum duration.

* 1. Approvals

The following approvals must be in place before laboratory animals are released from UQBR facilities:

1. The holding areas within the laboratory must be clearly identified and specified and undergo an assessment by UQBR for their compliance with animal welfare, OHS and OGTR requirements.
2. Documented approval has been received from an AEC to hold and carry out experimental work on laboratory animals outside UQBR facilities.
3. Documented approval has been received from OHS-Biosafety to hold laboratory animals in a certified laboratory outside a UQBR facility, e.g. laboratory animals that are category PC2(a) may only be held in a laboratory certified to at least PC2 standard.
4. If all approvals are not provided, then the approved research involving laboratory animals must be conducted in a UQBR facility.
	1. Facilities

The following information must be included in any requests to an AEC for approval to Hold laboratory animals outside a UQBR facility:

1. Appropriate physical containment certifications from UQBR must be in place.
2. Approval from the building manager, laboratory manager or floor manager of the intention to hold laboratory animals in a specified location in a Laboratory.
3. Supply of appropriate personal protective equipment, bins for waste disposal and transport containers.
4. Notification of OHS-Biosafety and approval to hold laboratory animals in an area certified as a PC1-4 Laboratory.
5. Signage upon entry that a specified area is currently holding live laboratory animals.
6. Prior notification to all occupants who will share the space (such as shared air supply) with the laboratory animals, regardless of their involvement. Consideration must be given to laboratory animals allergen exposure in accordance with the [Health Surveillance and Management of Laboratory Animal Allergy and Asthma Guideline](https://staff.uq.edu.au/files/7115/lab-animal-allergy-guideline.pdf).
	1. Animal welfare

The following animal welfare obligations will be considered by an AEC, and inform its decision:

1. Clear responsibility lines for the care of the laboratory animals must be identified. All persons working with laboratory animals must have undergone appropriate training and be determined as competent by the supervisor, completed risk assessments and be listed on animal ethics approvals, prior to being given responsibility for animal welfare. See the Animal Ethics Procedure for more information.
2. Individual laboratory animals must be tracked by UQBR and remain recorded at all times in an appropriate database.
3. Where the period of holding exceeds 24 hours, documented daily checks (at the minimum) must be undertaken which list the animal care provided (including names of those who have checked the laboratory animals, dates, time and signature)
4. Clear labelling on transport containers, indicating:
	1. the number of laboratory animals,
	2. date of arrival,
	3. ethics number,
	4. approved period of holding, and
	5. the person responsible for the laboratory animals.
5. Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities
	1. OHS - Biosafety

It is the responsibility of the OHS-Biosafety team to:

* Ensure all GM proposals for laboratory animal work outside UQBR facilities include facilities that have been approved as suitable by UQBR, and a procedure for holding animals outside UQBR facilities, before approval of the proposal.
* Provide advice on the suitability of a specific laboratory to hold laboratory animals outside a UQBR facility.
	1. UQ Biological Resources

It is the responsibility of UQBR to:

* Ensure the laboratory has been inspected and assessed as suitable before removal of the laboratory animals from the UQBR facility, which removal is contingent upon AEC approval.
* Provide written advice to the Project Supervisor and the University Animal Ethics Unit on the suitability of the laboratory to hold laboratory animals outside a UQBR facility.
* Provide advice on the procedure for removing primary containment devices to/from UQBR facilities and animal husbandry requirements.
* Provide advice on the suitability of a specific laboratory to hold laboratory animals outside a UQBR facility.
	1. Animal Ethics Committees (AEC)

It is the responsibility of the AEC to:

* Ensure proposed laboratories have been inspected and assessed as suitable before approving the removal of laboratory animals from UQBR facilities.
* Ensure justification is validated as to why the research cannot take place in a UQBR facility.
* Provide a statement on the maximum duration of holding and the number of laboratory animals at the time of the animal ethics application or request for modification of AEC approval.
* Ensure precise identification of the area where the laboratory animals will be held is included at the time of the animal ethics application or request for modification of an existing animal ethics application.
* Identify individuals responsible for the care of the laboratory animals and their experience in animal care, experience in any techniques to be performed.
* Ensure the animal ethics application contains a description of the method by which an individual laboratory animal will be tracked and the outcome recorded (e.g. remain recorded as live on Genotrack or listed as being held at the new location, and immediate notification of termination).
	1. Project Supervisor

It is the responsibility of the Project Supervisor to:

* Ensure all relevant individuals are listed on the animal ethics approval for the project.
* Ensure all UQ staff, students, affiliates or external parties have completed the required training before handling the laboratory animals.
* Ensure the AEC-approved procedure for the project is being followed.
* Ensure all GM proposals for laboratory animal work outside UQBR facilities includes a procedure for holding laboratory animals outside of UQBR facilities.
* Ensure the welfare of laboratory animals being Used for their project, e.g. regular checks occur and animal husbandry care conducted. Welfare includes providing and documenting, at the very minimum daily animal care.
* Ensure all individuals in the laboratory and in its immediate vicinity are aware laboratory animals will be held there and have access to laboratory animals allergy information and appropriate personal protective equipment.
* Ensure information regarding animals is regularly provided to UQBR in order to ensure they are tracked on a central database once removed from UQBR facilities and the database is immediately informed of their fate. This is irrespective of the length of time between removal and final fate.
	1. Individuals

All individuals involved in the tracking and holding of laboratory animals outside of UQBR facilities, including staff, students, affiliates or external parties must:

* Complete appropriate training – both theory and practical, prior to handling laboratory animals.
* Ensure they are listed on the animal ethics approval for the project.
* Mitigate risks and potential risks by undertaking actions identified in the risk assessment.
1. Monitoring, Review and Assurance

Assessment of a proposed laboratory for the holding of laboratory animals outside UQBR facilities must be conducted by UQBR. Please contact the UQBR Director for more information.

The laboratory must be assessed against the following criteria:

* Justification for removal from a UQBR facility, e.g. specialised equipment, behavioural experiments requiring dedicated space unavailable in a UQBR facility.
* Proposed length of holding and numbers of laboratory animals to be held.
* Type and Suitability of the primary containment caging, environmental and welfare parameters including but not limited to - freedom from noise and disturbance, ambient temperature, airflow, light cycle.
* Planned care provision and the suitability or training level of designated individuals responsible for the laboratory animals including knowledge of laboratory animal escape and recovery procedures.
* Suitability of containment levels, e.g. laboratory animals that have been held in a PC2 UQBR facility can only go to a PC2 or higher-level laboratory unless they have been segregated and this process has been documented.
* Consideration of escape and recapture planning.
* Management of Laboratory Animal Allergen exposure.
* Waste or carcass and dirty cage handling, transport and disposal procedures.
1. Appendix
	1. Definitions

**AEC** - the University of Queensland Animal Ethics Committees established in accordance with the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Queensland) (as amended from time to time) and the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes being:

* Anatomical Biosciences AEC
* Production and Companion Animals AEC
* Molecular Biosciences AEC
* Health Sciences AEC
* Native/Exotic Wildlife and Marine Animals AEC

**Affiliates** - academic title-holders, visiting academics, emeritus professors, adjunct and honorary title-holders, industry fellows, and conjoint appointments.

**Designated and Certified Animal Containment facility** – Facilities designed to ensure that the laboratory animals and the microorganisms that may be used in conjunction with the laboratory animals do not escape from containment and meet the regulatory requirements for certification.

**GM** – Genetically Modified.

**Holding/Held** – Using laboratory animals in a facility for any procedure, test experiment, inquiry, investigation, teaching activity, or study and “Hold” has a corresponding meaning.

**Laboratory** – Defined space where research, experiments, teaching, study or investigations are performed. May or may not be certified by the OGTR or the UQ-IBC.

**Laboratory animals** – Rats, mice, guinea pigs and rabbits.

**OGTR** - Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

**OHS** – Occupational Health and Safety.

**PC1-4** - Physical containment levels 1-4, usually certified by the OGTR.

**Project Supervisor** – First-named investigator on animal ethics application.

**Staff** – continuing, fixed-term, research (contingent funded) and casual staff members

**Students** –a person enrolled as a student at the University or undertaking courses or programs at the University.

**Tracking** – The process of recording the status of live Lab Animals continuously in a central database once they have left UQBR facilities, and the timely provision of information on their fate to that database irrespective of the length of time.

**UQBR** – The University of Queensland Biological Resources.

**UQBR Facilities** –Designated and Certified Animal Containment Facilities operated by the UQBR.

**Use/used** – generally means to cause or permit to be used.

This includes to:

* acquire or purchase an animal
* accommodate, provide for, or care for an animal
* breed with an animal
* identify the animal (e.g. microchip, ear tag, brand)
* dispose of an animal
* drive, load ride, transport or work an animal.

*Please note: should animal research be conducted in Australian states other than Queensland, this definition may change. Further information on this definition is available* [*here*](https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/animals-science/using-animals/activities)*.*

* 1. Key contacts

UQ Biological Resources Director: uqbrdirector@uq.edu.au

OHS-Biosafety: biosafety@uq.edu.au

Animal Ethics Unit: animal.ethics@research.uq.edu.au

1. Meta Data for Document Management

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