

UTS Position Description

UTS:HUMAN RESOURCES

Position Title	Animal Welfare Officer
Unit/Division or Faculty	Research Office
Position Number (if known)	25730
HEW Level	HEW 8
Date	February 2023
ANZSCO Code (HR Use Only)	

POSITION PURPOSE

The Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) is a strategic position that oversees the welfare of animals used in research and teaching, both at the university and in associated field studies and ensures that their welfare meets the highest standard.

The AWO is responsible for providing high-level counsel to the UTS Research Office, the UTS Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC), and Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). This position ensures that all activities proceed in compliance with the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013) (the Code) and the decisions of the UTS Animal Care and Ethics Committee (ACEC).

To meet the challenges of this position, a minimum qualification of a Veterinary degree or other appropriate qualifications, along with demonstrated experience in small animals (rodents) in the university animal research sector, is required. Effective discharge of the duties of the AWO position requires the qualities of personal engagement, enthusiasm, interpersonal and communication skills, leadership, motivation, proactivity, mentoring and networking.

ENVIRONMENT AND DIMENSIONS

Approved Research Office Staffing Level 2022:	56 FTE
Research Ethics Team Staffing Level 2022:	5.5 FTE
Research Office Budget 2021:	\$7 Million
Number of academic staff (2020 FTE):	1825
Number of professional staff (2020 FTE):	2063
External Research Income (HERDC) for 2020:	\$85.9M

The Research Office is a central unit within the portfolio of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and provides support for research activities across UTS in partnership with the faculty research offices and other support units, including identifying and accessing research funding, contracts, ethics, post-award, IP management and commercialisation and research data intelligence.

Research involving animals at UTS is currently conducted by the Faculty of Science, the Graduate School of Health and the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology. This research includes work with rodents, fish and other animals. Rodents are housed in the Ernst Facility, fish in Fish Holding room and geckos in the Gecko Holding room in the Environmental Sciences labs. All facilities are in Building 4. There are also a number of projects conducted in the field in the area of wildlife ecology, involving field observations of animals.

The Ernst Facility (EF) occupies approximately 300 square metres of floor space and incorporates 6 animal holding rooms and 6 surgery and procedures rooms. The Facility is staffed by a Facilities Manager, a

Technical Assistant and several casual assistants. The latter support weekend and holiday monitoring of animals. Together they support approximately 40 research staff and research students associated with approximately 10 research grants and 25 active, current approved protocols. The annual number of rodents accommodated in the facility is approximately 700 (based on 2020 data). The Ernst Facility is an accredited PC2 facility in relation to Gene Technology, microbiology and Quarantine requirements. Two other key UTS researchers have large-scale animal studies accommodated by external institutions (St Vincent's and The Centenary Institute) and are subject to their approval processes.

The Fish Holding and Gecko Holding room are managed within the School of Life Sciences by the Manager of the Environmental Sciences laboratories and the Project Chief Investigators. The Fish Holding room occupies approximately 45 square metres of floor space and have approximately 10 staff and students as its user base. There are also fish holding facilities at the Sydney Institute of Marine Sciences (SIMS) at Chowder Bay. UTS is a core member of SIMS, and staff from the Faculty of Science have in the past conducted research on fish at SIMS.

Altogether, some 6500 individual animals are the subject of ethics approval per annum (2022 data).

In addition to day to day management, the animal facilities are subject to overview by the UTS ACEC. The EF Manager provides reports to the UTS ACEC and the EF User Group.

RELATIONSHIPS

Supervision

The Animal Welfare Officer reports directly to the Research Ethics Manager and indirectly to the Animal Care and Ethics Committee. There are no direct reports to this position.

Collaboration and Communication

The AWO provides expert advice to the Chair of the Animal Care and Ethics Committee. In turn, this committee provides advice to the Vice-Chancellor through the ethics arm of the Research Office, through a yearly report and as required by NSW Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP).

Internally, as required, the AWO communicates with the Animal Care and Ethics Committee, the UTS Institutional Biosafety Committee (when genetic manipulation and/or pathogen protocols overlap with animal research), the Faculty of Science senior management, the Ernst Facility Manager, the Chief Investigators of Research and Teaching protocols and academic and student personnel.

Externally, as required, the AWO communicates with ARRP, with external Animal Ethics Committees, with Fisheries, Parks and Wildlife authorities and with Quarantine agencies.

The AWO is expected to maintain innovation and best practice in animal research and will thus collaborate with peers in veterinary and scientific institutions.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Major Functions	Outcome
Animal welfare - Provide expert and impartial veterinary advice to the ACEC in relation to the conduct of animal research. - Be reasonably available for consultation by phone or video call and to attend to animals in person in the event of animal welfare emergencies arising outside of regular work hours.	- A culture that seeks the highest ethical standard of animal welfare is established and promoted. - Consistent and effective monitoring of animals achieves the goal of optimal wellbeing and minimal suffering and ill health.

• Promote a supportive and open dialogue with and between animal care staff, investigators and animal users groups. • Provide and implement expert veterinary advice in the pursuance of animal research objectives. • Ensure that animal facilities and conduct of animal investigations complies with the Code. • Create and encourage a positive and pro-active culture that aims to achieve the highest ethical standards in relation to the care and use of animals in research and teaching. • Encourage an open and honest culture of monitoring animals that seeks to recognise adverse events at the earliest opportunity. • Ensure that regular monitoring of the wellbeing of animals is instituted and maintained via regular welfare checks and inspections.	• Effective communication with both the ACEC and investigators produces the best possible animal welfare outcomes.
Administration and compliance • Review, investigate and advise on management of adverse events and provide a regular summary report to the ACEC. • Regularly inspect animal facilities and sites associated with the University's animal research activities (this may include visits to external sites) to ensure ongoing compliance. • Maintain training and inspection records. • Monitor and review policies, procedures and guidelines related to the care and management of animals.	• Policies, etc., reviewed regularly. • Animal facilities inspected and compliance maintained or enforced. • Records maintained.
Training and support • To benefit the welfare of animals and improve the efficacy of experimental investigators, ensure best practice in new and established surgical procedures and other forms of interventions, providing oversight and training where appropriate. • Oversee and promote training to researchers, staff and students to ensure the Code's requirements for safeguarding animal wellbeing are met. • Oversee training and assessment of researchers and students to ensure their respective skills and abilities meet competency targets. • Be willing to undertake training and assessment to address gaps in knowledge, skills and experience, as required.	• Researchers, staff and students are provided with expert training in skills and knowledge that engenders competency and confidence in animal handling, to the betterment of animal wellbeing and experimental efficacy.
ACEC application support • Provide expert advice as sought by investigators to enhance experimental and welfare outcomes in research and teaching ethics applications to ACEC. • Provide expert review of all ethics applications for compliance with the Code, encouraging best practice in accordance with current veterinary standards, and	• Expert advice and training provided to investigators to meet the standards of the Code and achieve the experimental outcomes required.

support researchers to address recommendations and conditions imposed by the ACEC. • Provide a suite of workshops and training to support research staff and students in developing high quality ethics applications.	
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POSITION CHALLENGES

The Animal Welfare Officer must:

- Apply the principles of the Code in all aspects of the care and use of animals.
- Demonstrate leadership and direction to promote animal welfare and focus attention of researchers, staff and students as to their responsibilities under the Code.
- Provide expert veterinary advice and opinion without fear or favour to the ACEC in relation to the conduct of animal research.
- Work to develop solutions to issues that require addressing the differing needs and perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including investigators, facility staff, the university and regulatory bodies.
- Ensure inspection and monitoring of research activities is effective to ensure the welfare of animals is maintained at all times and in all circumstances.
- From time to time, this role may be required to travel to facilities and/or fieldwork locations that are off campus for meetings and inspections.

AUTHORITY

The Animal Welfare Officer is expected to provide a high degree of self motivation and broad direction to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the position. The AWO regularly updates their Supervisor and the ACEC as to the current status of compliance, training, assessment and welfare outcomes of animal-based research at the university. The scope of the position may be extended, as directed by their supervisor and agreed to by the AWO, to benefit the wider interest of animal welfare at the university.

Leadership Capabilities For Role

Category	Leading Strategically	Collaborating and Engaging	Leading Teams	Presence and Awareness	Leading Performance
Capabilities	Maintains Perspective	Encourages CollaborationEncourages Collaboration	Choose an item.	Leads with Ethics and IntegrityLeads with Ethics and Integrity	Informs OthersInforms Others
	Leads Innovation	Demonstrates Courage	Choose an item.	Leads with Perception and Composure	Demonstrates Technical ExpertiseDemonstrates Technical Expertise

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Animal Welfare Officer must:

- Work within the guidelines of the university's Health & Safety Management System, providing leadership and taking reasonable care to protect the health and safety of both themselves and others.
- To this end, the AWO must be conversant with UTS guidelines and processes, including the local area Health and Safety Plan, and be proactive in implementation.
- As for all staff, the position must report hazards and incidents, communicate and consult with stakeholders regarding work health and safety risks in the area of responsibility.

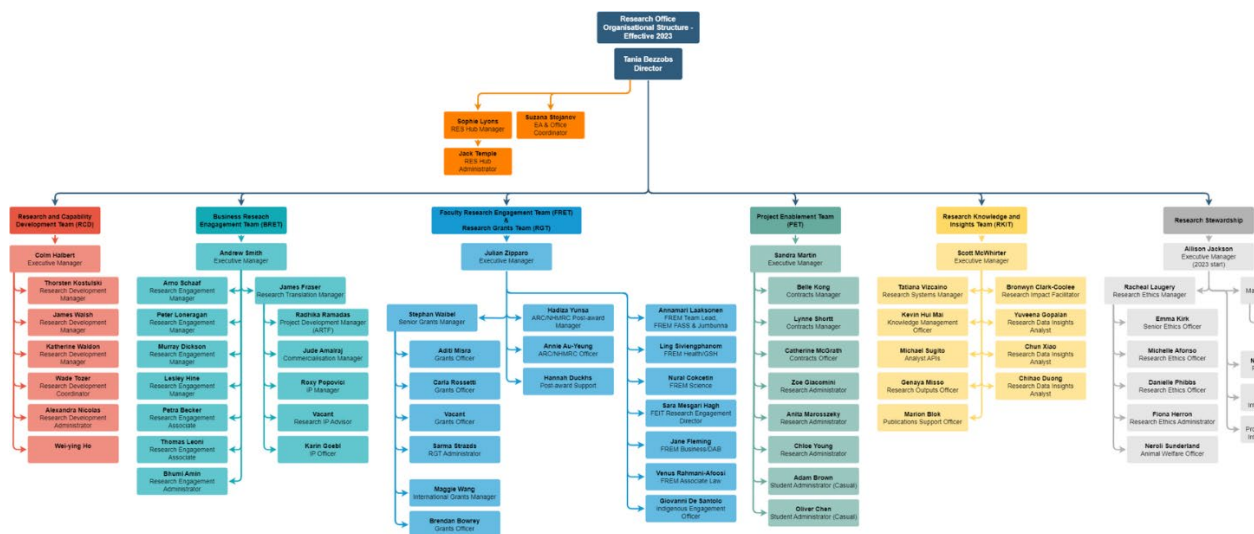
RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Animal Welfare Officer must:

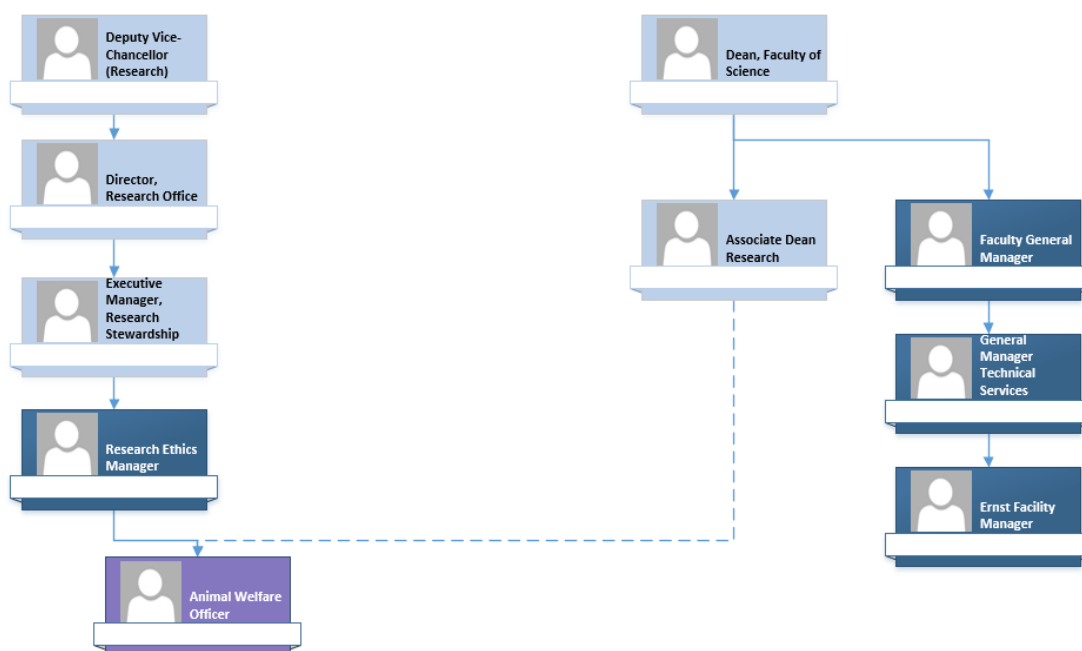
- Manage records as required.
- Ensure training, assessment and other essential records are captured into the official recordkeeping system.

ORGANISATION CHART

Please see below the Organisational Chart for the Research Office.



The following chart below shows the relationships to this position; the position it reports to, direct reports and peers (where appropriate).



UTS KEY SELECTION CRITERIA



UTS:HUMAN RESOURCES

POSITION: Animal Welfare Officer

FACULTY/UNIT: Research Office

Skills and Attributes

- High ethical standards in relation to the care and use of animals in research and teaching.
- A self-motivated and pro-active individual.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- A high level of accuracy, literacy, numeracy and attention to detail.
- The ability to prioritise and carry out a diverse range of competing tasks to a high standard.
- Good problem solving skills with the ability to demonstrate flexibility.
- The ability to build trust and maintain confidentiality.

Knowledge

- Familiarity with current legislation, standards and codes of practice relating to the care and use of animals in research and teaching, and their implications for the conduct of research in a university environment.
- Familiarity with a wide range of animals typically used in animal research facilities and in fieldwork settings, particularly small animals (rodents) and wildlife.
- An understanding of the aims and procedures involved with the use of animals for scientific purposes.
- An understanding of OGTR Physical Containment level 2 (PC2) requirements for an animal facility.

Qualifications

- A degree in Veterinary Science and eligibility for registration in NSW or other appropriate qualifications plus relevant veterinary experience.

Experience

- Demonstrated experience overseeing the welfare of a range of animal species used in research and teaching, including mice, rats, fish, reptiles and birds.
- Experience of animal surgical and non-surgical techniques, diagnosis, treatment, anaesthesia and euthanasia.
- Experience in the interpretation and application of the NSW Animal Research Act, and the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th edition (2013).

Desirable

- Ability to conduct training of staff and students in range of animal techniques and to conduct competency assessment for techniques included in approved protocols.
- A qualification (e.g., Cert IV) in training and assessment of competency of staff and students.