



# Anti Vivisection WA (Inc)

ABN 17 235 544 910

*"Working to end experiments on animals!"*

## UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG PASSES STUDENT 'ETHICAL OBJECTION' POLICY

In March this year the University of Wollongong passed a student ethical objection policy, in response to a student's submission on the issue last year, allowing undergraduates to choose humane alternatives to animal use in their courses.

At this point the University of Wollongong is only the 3rd University in Australia to formally have such a policy, so this is a great achievement. Students have more power than they realise, it just takes persistence and some courage.

### Policy On Ethical Objection By Students To The Use Of Animals And Animal Products In Coursework Subjects

#### 1. Preamble

- 1.1. The University of Wollongong is committed to recognition of the diversity of values held by students at the University and seeks to provide avenues for students to complete their chosen field of study without compromising their ethical commitments.

The University, through its Animal Ethics Committee has a responsibility to review any proposed research and teaching involving living animals in accordance with the NHMRC Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (1997) and the Animal Research Act (1985) (NSW).

- 1.2. This policy provides a framework for recognition of and responses to students' ethical or religious objection to animal use in coursework subjects at the University of Wollongong. For the purpose of this policy, animal use includes killing of animals in experimental work, dissection of animals that are already dead, use of animal tissues, use of animal-derived products (such as sera). These uses are relevant to teaching and assessment.
- 1.3. This policy does not cover research-only activity.
- 1.4. The University of Wollongong recognises that some students have conscientiously held ethical, religious or cultural values that entail avoidance of teaching or assessment activities involving animals, animal tissues or animal products.
- 1.5. The University will make reasonable efforts to accommodate those students referred to in
- 1.6. There are subjects and courses in which the use of animals, animal tissues or animal-derived products (such as sera) is inherent and unavoidable, in order to achieve specific learning objectives. These subjects and courses will be identified in the University's Undergraduate Calendar and in Attachment A. The listing of subjects and courses included in the attachment will be reviewed periodically by the University Animal Ethics Committee. Students with conscientious objections to that use should not enrol in these subjects and courses.

## 2. Responsibilities of Academic Units

- 2.1. Academic Units in which teaching involving animals, animal tissues or animal products occurs will advise students in writing in the Subject Outline (and in any information provided electronically) of animal usage and the source of animals, animal tissue or animal products in relevant student information and course and subject materials. This information will be made available to students by the end of the first week of formal contact for each subject.
- 2.2. Academic units will advise students in writing in the Subject Outline (and in any information provided electronically) of their rights to conscientiously object to teaching and assessment activities involving the use of animals, animal tissues or animal products, and the availability of alternatives, where appropriate.  

This advice will be included in student information and subject materials for all such subjects by the end of the first week of formal contact for each subject.
- 2.3. Academic staff involved in teaching of students in relevant academic units may inquire into the basis for a student's objection and its scope, but should not interrogate the student in a manner that is disrespectful of the student's commitments.
- 2.4. Where alternatives to teaching or assessment activity are provided by an academic unit, they should have similar pedagogic goals, be of comparable difficulty, and should require similar amount of time and effort, and be assessed as rigorously as the activity which they replace.

## 3. Responsibilities of Students

- 3.1. Students who intend to avoid a particular learning activity on the basis of conscientious objection should notify the subject coordinator in writing as early as possible, not later than the end of Week 2 of the session.
- 3.2. Students who have notified the subject coordinator of their conscientious objection to animal use in a given teaching or assessment activity may request separate evaluation of their learning experiences in practical components or exams, where appropriate (refer to 1.6). These separate evaluations will be of equal weight to the conventional assessment questions for the equivalent material.
- 3.3. Students who request an alternative to a given teaching or assessment activity, have an obligation to use the alternatives provided, or risk losing marks in any assessment of material from those practical components in theory or practical exams.
- 3.4. Students who are dissatisfied with the alternatives provided for teaching or assessment activities or any perceived unequal treatment by teaching staff may appeal through the Head of Unit, or, if the Head of Unit is involved in the teaching of the relevant subject, the Sub Dean of the relevant Faculty. Students may elect to have another person in attendance at any meetings relating to the resolution of such an appeal.
- 3.5. Students who have notified their subject coordinator of their conscientious objection and who have been assessed through an alternative assessment activity retain their other entitlements and responsibilities as students of the University including those articulated elsewhere in this Code of Practice.

Distributed by:



### Anti Vivisection WA (Inc)

Address: PO Box 1366, East Victoria Park, WA 6101

Telephone: (08) 9487 0947

Web: [www.avwa.com.au](http://www.avwa.com.au) Email: [avwa@tnet.com.au](mailto:avwa@tnet.com.au)