

## For applications submitted to the Ethics Committee

### Checklist for research with animals

Version 3.1 from 26 June 2025<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

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The checklist for research projects involving animals is meant to help researchers when they prepare their application for submission to the Ethics Committee in accordance with §6 of the **Rules of Procedures** of the Ethics Committee. Based on the submitted documents, the Ethics Committee must be able to assess whether the animals involved in the research will be treated humanely, will be housed, monitored and cared for appropriately, and unnecessary suffering avoided (Rules of Procedures §10 para. 2). Thus, reference must be made to all circumstances relevant to ethical aspects referred to in §10 para. 2.

The application should **document an ethics-sensitive research approach**. The answers to the questions should demonstrate the applicants' ethical awareness and their nuanced engagement with the ethical issues that arise directly from the planned research project. In particular, the specific ethical challenges, goal conflicts and planned measures for addressing these issues should be explained. Generic phrases or vague statements should be avoided; instead, a careful consideration of the ethical implications specific to the research project is required.

In most cases, this checklist for research with animals will be sufficient; however, for e.g. on-farm research on animal husbandry the **checklist for research with humans** is also relevant.

For the application, there is **no standard form** to fill out. However, a clearly worded, well-structured application, with all required information will reduce the need by the Ethics Committee to ask for further information or further documents, and thus ensure a rapid review process.

The application may be submitted in **German** or **English**.

The application should be as succinct as possible, i.e. answer each question as concisely as possible, and avoid repeating information in answer to different questions. The answers to the questions will differ in length, but the application should encompass **no more than 5.000 words** (excl. attachments). If the checklist for research involving humans is also relevant, the application may of course be longer.

**All questions of the checklist** must be answered (if a question is not relevant, please answer 'not applicable'). Your application must include the numbering of the questions and their wording, as written in the checklist.

Applications must **be submitted in good time**, so that the final ethics statement can be issued before the start of data collection. Take into account, that the Ethics Committee might request additional information after discussing your application in a meeting<sup>2</sup>, and that this will need to be provided before the final ethics statement can be issued.

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<sup>1</sup> This document is continuously revised and updated. Please make sure that you download the latest version from the [website of the Ethics Committee](#).

<sup>2</sup> The submission deadlines and dates of the meetings of the Ethics Committee can be found on its website

# Checklist for research involving animals

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## 1. General information about the application to the Ethics Committee

- Name, e-mail, title, position (e.g. project leader, PhD student, supervisor (for research in the framework of MSc theses), and Institute of the person submitting the application to the Ethics Committee.
- Title of the application (it should be closely aligned with the content of the application, i.e. not the title of a larger research project in which it may be embedded)
- For research in the framework of a doctoral study:
  - Name of the supervisor
  - Has the supervisor reviewed and approved the application?
- For other research:
  - Name of project leader
  - Has the project leader reviewed and approved the application?
- Funding agency to which the research project is submitted for funding
- Reason for the application: what is the statement of the Ethics Committee needed for? (e.g. requirement of journals where the results will be published, request of a funding body, see GeschO §5 para. 2)
- Give reasons as to why this research is not classified as an experiment on animals which requires legal approval.
- Should the statement of the Ethics Committee be issued in German or in English? If in English, please make sure you provide an English project title
- Period of (planned) data collection (please note that data collection can only begin after the Ethics Committee has issued the final approval)
- Total number of words of this application: (max. 5.000 excl. attachments)

## 2. Research plan

Brief description of the research project (max. 600 words). Please explain for both research under laboratory and field conditions (e.g., on farms, in ecosystems):

- 2.1. the current state of knowledge and the objective of the research project
- 2.2. the research question and the hypotheses that will be tested
- 2.3. is the research in this application embedded in a larger project? If so, please briefly explain this context

Describe and justify the methods, following the [ARRIVE-Guidelines 2.0](#). It may include the following aspects:

- 2.4. Test planning: Study design, e.g., description of treatments and controls, including groups to be compared, including control groups.
- 2.5. Measurement parameters: Which are collected and how?
- 2.6. Intervention on the animal: What is to be done, when and how often, where and why? (including capture, isolation, restraining, marking, tagging, transporting, etc.)
- 2.7. Experimental animals: Number, species, sex, age, stage of development, breeding line if applicable
- 2.8. Sample size: Explain how it was determined for the different groups
- 2.9. Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Describe any criteria for inclusion and exclusion of animals or groups of animals
- 2.10. Randomization: How are animals selected, how are they assigned to control or experimental groups?

- 2.11. Blinding of observers: Is blinding possible or why not? Who knows about group assignment (with/without intervention) and when?
- 2.12. Statistical methods: Which ones are used to test the assumptions?

### **3. General ethical aspects of the research project**

- 3.1. What are the expected benefits to society?
- 3.2. Can the results of this study be applied to other species?
- 3.3. Are there conflicts of interest on the part of the researchers or project partners involved? If yes: which? (e.g.: is there a clear agreement regarding the authorship of planned publications? Are there research results that may be undesirable for funders or some project partners?)
- 3.4. If students participate in the research project: how is the principle of voluntary participation taken into account? (e.g. when collecting data as part of a course, is there an alternative form to complete the course requirements?)
- 3.5. Will the project contribute to Open Data? (i.e. will anonymised, processed or unprocessed raw data be made available to other researchers?) If yes: which data? When? In which repository? If not, please briefly state why not.

### **4. Ethical aspects of housing, care, and supervision**

- 4.1. Responsible person(s)
- 4.2. Who takes care of sick animals? Who euthanizes, if necessary?
- 4.3. What data is collected on mortality? (number of deaths and number of animals which had to be euthanized, reasons)
- 4.4. What measures are taken to ensure that project staff are sufficiently qualified? (knowledge, experience)
- 4.5. Origin of the animals and what happens to the animals after the research project? Will they be re-used in other research projects?
- 4.6. How are the animals housed and kept, including environmental enrichment?
- 4.7. What measures are taken to ensure that animals can express their natural behaviours?
- 4.8. Describe the measures taken to prevent pain, suffering, and anxiety.

### **5. Ethical aspects of the experimental procedures**

- 5.1. Who is the responsible/executing person?
- 5.2. What measures are taken to ensure that project staff are sufficiently qualified? (knowledge, experience)
- 5.3. Describe steps to minimize pain, suffering, and anxiety associated with the interventions (see 3R).
- 5.4. What treatments are applied in the framework of the experiment?
- 5.5. How will expected or unexpected adverse events be reported?
- 5.6. Are there discontinuation criteria (humane endpoints)? If yes: which? What signs are monitored and how often are they monitored?
- 5.7. How does the intervention affect post-release behaviour/survival?

## 6. Ethical aspects in case of interventions in the ecosystem

- 6.1. What other animal species are affected and how? Are they protected species?
- 6.2. What are the expected effects on animals not in the focus of the research project that are covered by the Animal Protection Act?
- 6.3. Which measures are being taken to minimize the suffering of vertebrates?
- 6.4. Research with vertebrates in the wild: what are the expected impacts on the ecosystem?

### For further information

Website of the Ethics Committee: <https://short.boku.ac.at/ethics>  
Office of the Ethics Committee: [ethikkommission@boku.ac.at](mailto:ethikkommission@boku.ac.at)