



GUIDE to Professional Conduct

Conduct

Institute of Animal Technology Registration and Accreditation Board
Revised and reissued January 2008



Institute of Animal Technology

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A INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Animal Technology, (the Institute) whose purpose is to advance knowledge and promote excellence in the care and welfare of animals in science, seeks also to enhance the standards and status of those engaged in this field.

To this end it has formulated the following Ethical Statement to which every member must adhere:

"In the conduct of their professional duties animal technologists have a moral and legal obligation, at all times, to promote and safeguard the welfare of animals in their care, recognising that good laboratory animal welfare is an essential component of good laboratory animal technology and science"

It is recognised that, in the current social climate, the Institute and its members must be above reproach.

Registered members of the Institute are, therefore, further bound by the provisions of this Guide, and as a condition of registration sign a written undertaking to this effect.

B THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Anyone who comes into contact with or works with a member of the Institute is entitled to expect that you will:

- (a) ensure the welfare of animals entrusted to your care in the course of your professional duties, treating them humanely and with respect
- (b) uphold and foster the good reputation of animal technology as a profession and of the Institute as your professional body
- (c) maintain and continue to develop your professional knowledge and skills
- (d) foster and maintain good relationships with your professional colleagues
- (e) ensure the integrity of any report or certificate which you are asked to provide
- (f) respond swiftly and courteously to any complaint or criticism

C YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO ANIMALS ENTRUSTED TO YOUR CARE IN THE COURSE OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

You **MUST**:

1. Treat all animals of whatever species with respect and with their welfare as a primary consideration.
2. Work closely with your colleagues to establish best practice in welfare and husbandry for all animals in your care and housed or introduced into your place of work.

D YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR COLLEAGUES

Poor relationships between professional colleagues serve only to undermine public confidence in the profession as a whole.

You **MUST**, therefore:

cooperate fully with your colleagues at all times.

You **MUST NOT**:

1. Speak or write disparagingly about a colleague unless, in the interests of justice, you are bound to do so when giving evidence in a court of law.
2. Make any statement, verbally or in writing, or write or contribute to any article or paper in your capacity as an animal technologist without being properly qualified so to do. (*Any personal benefit derived from such an article or statement must be disclosed.*)

E YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE INSTITUTE AS YOUR PROFESSIONAL BODY

You **MUST**:

1. Comply with the provisions of this Guide as amended from time to time, in accordance with your written undertaking on registration with the Institute.
2. If you are faced with any ethical issue which is not covered within this Guide, you must, before taking action, seek advice from the Institute, unless for some reason it is impossible to do so. In the latter case you must act within the spirit of the Guide and inform the Institute of your actions at the earliest opportunity.
3. If you are a Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), you must also comply with the Institute's NACWO Guidelines, working in cooperation with the holder of the Certificate of Designation and with the Named Veterinary Surgeon for the establishment.

You **MUST NOT**:

1. Make any false declaration either when applying for registration or when transferring from one class of membership to another.
2. Use any post nominal letters or any other description to which you are not entitled.

F YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE LAW

You must take all necessary steps to ensure that you understand and comply with the current legislation affecting the profession including:

The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (*and any Guidelines or Codes of Practice there under*)

The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 (*insofar as the duty of care is concerned*)

All sections of **The Protection of Animals Act 1911** not repealed by the **Animal Welfare Act**

G YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Under the Institute's Articles of Association the Council is required to appoint a Preliminary Investigation Committee to consider complaints against members and to decide whether or not the matter should be referred to the Disciplinary Committee

You **MUST** therefore:

1. Reply promptly and in full to any request from the Institute for comments in relation to any allegation or complaint made against you.
2. Be prepared to justify to colleagues any action or decision taken in the course of your professional duties.

GUIDANCE notes

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

All information derived from your employer's business, the establishment in which you work, or the animals housed there is confidential and **must not** be disclosed to any third party **EXCEPT** to a Home Office Inspector appointed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

UNLESS:

1. You have your employer's consent.
2. You are obliged by law to do so e.g. under the Health & Safety at Work Act or when giving evidence in a court of law.
3. When in exceptional circumstances, and after you have exhausted all internal processes, you honestly believe that animal welfare or the public interest are sufficiently compromised as to override your normal ethical obligation. In such a case you should seek advice from the Institute before making any disclosure.

MAINTAINING STANDARDS

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is essential to update your knowledge and skills in animal technology and laboratory animal management and to ensure your continued competence. You should also encourage and assist those working under your supervision to do the same

1. Courses, symposia, lectures and practical training are all accepted as units of CPD, and attendance at any of these should be entered on the Record card supplied by the Institute for this purpose.
2. Members are personally responsible for all work done either personally or by someone under their supervision. In the latter case it is essential to take steps to check the competence of those carrying out the work.
3. If in the course of your work you are asked to undertake any procedure or function which you know to be beyond your knowledge or skills or outside your legal competence you should decline to do so.
4. Any member whose professional advice is not accepted must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the person rejecting the advice is made aware of any harm or damage to animals or property which may result. This should be put on record.

CERTIFICATION

A certificate is 'a written statement of fact made with authority'. The authority in this case comes from the member's professional status

1. Other documents e.g. reports, forms or witness statements may also involve the same level of responsibility.
2. It is, therefore, vital that all such documents are prepared with care and accuracy so as to ensure that all the information given is true. Misleading, inaccurate or untruthful reports reflect badly on the whole profession. They may also invalidate the scientific work or research to which they relate.
3. If you are asked to sign a report or certificate which another person has prepared, you must read it carefully so as to be sure that you understand the implication of everything therein. You should only sign if the matters to which it refers are within your personal knowledge and are true and accurate.
4. In connection with all certificates or reports it is wise to remember the four Cs:

CAUTION

Check the document thoroughly and be sure that you understand to whom you are responsible in signing it.

CLARITY

Make sure that:

1. The terms are expressed as simply as possible and that they are not capable of more than one interpretation.
2. No part has been left blank so that it could be completed by another person.
3. That the document is on a single sheet of paper or on consecutively numbered pages, each of which must be separately initialled.
4. That the original is signed and dated, and that you keep a copy for your records.
5. That, if possible, there are no alterations but in the event that any are necessary, each one must be initialled by the member signing the document.

CERTAINTY

1. Sign only what you know to be true.
2. Do not testify to any future event.
3. Do not attest to what another person has declared without knowing it to be true.

CHALLENGE

Always consider what your defence would be if the accuracy of your certificate or report were to be called into question, taking care to keep a written record where appropriate.

THE PRACTICE OF YOUR PROFESSION

1. You must comply always with any guidance or Codes of Practice in relation to laboratory animal science produced by the Home Office or other relevant Government department.
 2. You are expected to support the Institute's policy of the three Rs (refinement, reduction and replacement) in relation to regulated procedures involving laboratory animals.
 3. You must participate fully in any ethical review process established in your place of work.
 4. It is against the law for you to carry out any surgical procedure on animals under your care UNLESS
 - You are acting under the authority of and in accordance with the provisions of a licence in the Certificate of Designation under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- OR
- if such intervention is necessary as a matter of first aid or to relieve pain and suffering.

5. It is also against the law for you to give any medical treatment or administer any medicinal products EXCEPT:
- in accordance with the provisions of a licence or Certificate of Designation (as above).
- OR
- where such intervention is necessary for first aid or the relief of pain and suffering (as above).
 - under the direction of a veterinary surgeon or in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act.
6. If you are responsible for the storage of animal medicines at your place of work, you are legally and ethically obliged to keep them safely, ensure that no one else has access to them and keep records of their use.
7. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 every employee has a responsibility
- to take reasonable care for themselves and for anyone who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
 - to cooperate with their employer or others in observing any duty or requirement under the Act.
 - to avoid any careless interference with any equipment or material provided in the interests of health and safety.
8. You must not knowingly become involved in the supply or use of animals listed in Schedule 2 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, other than within the provisions of the Act.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

1. In accordance with Article 44 (g) of its Articles of Association the Institute has appointed a Preliminary Investigation Committee to carry out a preliminary investigation into any complaint or allegation against a member said to have been in breach of the Ethical Statement or (in the case of a registered animal technologist) this Guide, to have been convicted of a criminal offence which would make them unfit to be a member of the Institute, or to have behaved in such a way as to bring the profession into dispute.
2. It is for the Preliminary Investigation Committee to decide whether there is sufficient substance in the allegation to refer it to the Disciplinary Committee, established by the Council under Article 44(h) of the Articles of Association.
3. It is for the Disciplinary Committee to consider and determine any case which is referred by the Preliminary Investigation Committee and, in the event of a 'guilty' finding, to decide upon and impose the appropriate sanction.

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www.iat.org.uk

Registered Office: 5 South Parade, Summertown, Oxford OX2 7JL