

swissuniversities

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Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation - Mandate

swissuniversities addresses questions related to research with the aim of creating and maintaining an optimal framework for universities, thereby contributing to a successful higher education sector.

To achieve excellence, scientific research must be conducted using appropriate methods. When animal research and experimentation is considered necessary, swissuniversities actively promotes respectful and responsible treatment of animals, and its members undertake to comply with the [swissuniversities policy for animal research](#).

On 30 October 2025, the swissuniversities Chamber of universities approved the mandate for the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation (entering into force on 1 November 2025).

1. Bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation

The Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation is composed of four bodies:

- the Swiss Animal Facilities Network (SAFN);
- the Swiss Animal Researchers Board (SARB);
- the SAFN-SARB Co-Presidency;
- the Communication Group on Animal Research and Experimentation.

1.1. Swiss Animal Facilities Network (SAFN)

Composition:

- The SAFN is composed of the Heads of Animal Facilities (HAFs) from the nine universities that are members of the network¹. Representatives are nominated by their institution and appointed for an unlimited term. The institutions may decide to replace their representative at any time;
- In case of absence, representatives may appoint a deputy who will automatically be entitled to vote;

¹Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, Università della Svizzera italiana, University of Basel, University of Bern, University of Fribourg, University of Geneva, University of Lausanne, University of Zurich

- In addition, representatives of the Animal Welfare Officer Network (AWO-N), the *Réseau des Animaleries Lémaniques* (ResAL) and the Institute of Laboratory Animal Science (*Institut für Labortierkunde* – LTK) take part in the meetings of the SAFN as observers without voting right;
- The SAFN is chaired by a Chair and a Vice-Chair, appointed by the SAFN for two years, renewable;
- Each member university is entitled to a maximum of two representatives and to a single vote;
- If necessary, the SAFN may invite guests to its meetings;
- The coordinator of the SAFN attends the SAFN meetings and ensures an optimal flow of information between the bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation.

Tasks:

- Coordination of the activities of the animal facilities of the universities that are members of the SAFN, with the aim of facilitating the exchange of good practice;
- Coordination of the exchange of information on all topics related to animal facilities management and daily operations;
- Implementation of ad-hoc infrastructure-sharing initiatives (e.g., platforms) to make these services accessible to the entire Swiss university research community;
- Support for the drafting of position statements on animal research and experimentation (especially concerning the consultation on new laws or ordinances);
- Collaboration with the Communication group on Animal Research and Experimentation to support the communication of swissuniversities;
- Bilateral interactions with the federal authorities responsible for animal experimentation within its area of competence (e.g., the FSVO²) as well as with internal (SARB, Communication group on Animal Research and Experimentation, STAAR³) and external partners whose activities are linked to animal research and experimentation (AWO-N, 3RCC⁴, etc.);
- Collection and analysis of data relating to animal research and experimentation at universities in order to have a constant overview of this activity;
- Carrying out the tasks mandated by the Chamber.

1.2. SARB

Composition:

- The SARB consists of researchers active in the field of animal research and experimentation from the nine universities that are members of the SAFN. The researchers, one per institution, are nominated by their institutions and appointed for an unlimited term. An institution may decide to replace its representative at any time;

² Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office

³ Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research

⁴ Swiss 3R Competence Centre

- The SARB is chaired by a Chair and a Vice-Chair, appointed by the SARB for two years, renewable;
- In case of absence, representatives may appoint a deputy who will automatically be entitled to vote;
- If necessary, the SARB may invite guests to its meetings;
- A member of the General Secretariat of swissuniversities attends the SARB meetings in order to ensure an optimal flow of information between the bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation.

Tasks:

- Bilateral interactions with the federal authorities responsible for animal experimentation within its area of competence (e.g., the FSVO) as well as with internal (SAFN, Communication group for Animal Research and Experimentation, STAAR) and external partners whose activities are linked to animal research and experimentation (AWO-N, 3RCC, etc.);
- Support for the drafting of position statements on animal research and experimentation (especially concerning the consultation on new laws or ordinances);
- Coordination of the exchange of information on all topics related to animal research and experimentation;
- Assumes a proactive role in foreseeing, planning and preparing for upcoming issues related to animal research and experimentation;
- Collaboration with the Communication group on Animal Research and Experimentation to support the communication of swissuniversities;
- Carrying out the tasks mandated by the Chamber.

1.3. SAFN-SARB Co-Presidency

Composition:

The SAFN–SARB Co-Presidency is composed of the Chairs of both the SAFN and the SARB. They coordinate their work jointly.

In case of absence, each co-president may appoint a deputy from his/her body (usually the Vice-Chair).

Tasks:

- Liaison between the Chamber and the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation;
- The two members of the Co-Presidency work closely to ensure effective coordination and communication between the SAFN and the SARB and, where appropriate, with the Communication Group;
- Participation to Chamber meetings upon invitation;
- Drafting of consolidated position statements for the attention of the Chamber, and provision of information to the Chamber on relevant matters in the field of animal research and experimentation.

1.4. Communication Group on Animal Research and Experimentation

Composition:

- The Communication Group is composed of communication or public affairs specialists from the nine universities that are members of the SAFN, ideally those in charge of animal research and experimentation matters within their institution. Representatives are nominated by their institution and appointed for an unlimited term. The institutions may decide to replace their representative at any time;
- In addition, one communication or public affairs specialist from each of the 3RCC, the SNSF, the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences, the Commission for Ethics in Animal Experimentation (Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences), and swissuniversities serve as permanent guests;
- If necessary, it may invite guests to its meetings, e.g. from SARB, SAFN or external institutions;
- In case of absence, representatives may appoint a deputy (who will automatically be entitled to vote);
- The Communication group is chaired by a Chair, appointed by the group. The chairmanship of the group is, in principle, rotated annually but may last for a maximum of 2 years.
- A member of the General Secretariat of swissuniversities attends the meetings of the Communication Group in order to ensure an optimal flow of information between the bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation.

Tasks:

- Maintenance of collaborations related to communication on animal research and experimentation, exchange of best practices and experiences, and sharing of existing tools;
- Regular collaboration with the other bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation and the STAAR Commission, the AG Issue Management, as well as with any relevant organization (e.g., SUPRIO);
- Coordination of responses to media inquiries on topics related to animal research and experimentation;
- Regular updating of a list of persons capable of contributing to swissuniversities' responses to media requests;
- Contribution to the elaboration of factual documents (e.g. factsheets) and swissuniversities' position statements on animal research and experimentation, in collaboration with the SAFN and the SARB.

2. Communication

The bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation of the Chamber of universities are an integral part of swissuniversities. Therefore the following rules apply to them:

- External communication concerning the field of animals in research is coordinated by the swissuniversities Communication Department in accordance with the swissuniversities communication concept.
- Excluded from the above rule are publications or presentations of a purely informative nature which do not constitute a position statement (e.g. factsheets).
- Non-public correspondence addressed to partner institutions is also excluded from the above rule.

3. Management

- The Chamber is responsible for the mandate of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation.
- The Research and Development Division of the General Secretariat of swissuniversities provides administrative support within the limits of the resources available.
- A 50% coordinator is responsible for setting up and managing the activities of the SAFN. Members of the SARB and the Communication Group on Animal Research and Experimentation contribute in kind to the functioning of their respective boards.
- As a rule, the SAFN and the SARB meet several times per year. Additional meetings may be convened at the request of the Chair or at least three members. For the Communication Group on Animal Research and Experimentation, the number and format of the meetings are left to the discretion of the Chair. The Co-Presidency meets as needed.
- If this is desired by the bodies, a dedicated Microsoft Teams channel is maintained for group members to share information and questions in real time.

4. Budget

- The SAFN's activities and coordinator's salary are, in most cases, covered by the SAFN's members' facilities. The Chamber of universities, based on a proposal from the swissuniversities General Secretariat, determines the amount of member universities' contributions for a three-year period. The budget is managed by swissuniversities.
- No specific budget is allocated for the SARB, the Communication Group on Animal Research and Experimentation and the SAFN-SARB Co-Presidency.

5. Data protection

The members of the bodies of the Commission for Animal Research and Experimentation are aware of and comply with the data protection obligations applicable to them as members of a body affiliated with swissuniversities. These obligations arise from the Data Protection Act and its implementing provisions, as well as from the swissuniversities Data Protection Handbook.