

Online Webinar Series 2026

Professional development for Animal Ethics Committees

The National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC) Online Webinar Series 2026 continues NAEAC's programme of interactive professional development for Animal Ethics Committees (AECs). Building on the 2025 series, the sessions are designed to stimulate discussion, encourage information exchange and support consistent, robust practice across the AEC community.

Three webinars are planned for 2026, each reflecting an area of particular relevance to AEC practice. All sessions are held online and are open to AEC members and administrators.

The series at a glance

WEBINAR	DATE AND TIME	PRESENTERS	FORMAT
1. Artificial intelligence in the 3Rs and AEC space	Wednesday 30 September 2026 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Kevan Cote, Moose Data Ltd Dr Gosia Zobel, EthicoNZ	Presentation and discussion
2. Robust decision making by AECs	Wednesday 4 November 2026 12.00pm to 1.30pm	Prof Nat Waran, NAEAC Chair Dr Jim Wester, NAEAC Deputy Chair	Interactive, scenario based online workshop
3. Good Practice Guide updates for AECs	Wednesday 2 December 2026 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Dr Janine Duckworth, Chair of the NAEAC Good Practice Guide Subcommittee	Presentation and discussion

Joining details will be circulated ahead of each session.

WEBINAR ONE

Artificial intelligence in the 3Rs and AEC space

Date and time: Wednesday 30 September 2026, 12.30pm to 1.30pm

Speakers: Kevan Côté (Moose Data Ltd) and Dr Gosia Zobel (EthicoNZ)

Format: Presentation and discussion

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing the landscape of research, testing and teaching, and with it the work of Animal Ethics Committees. This webinar offers a beginner-friendly look at how AI tools work, then turns to their practical value for animal ethics applications. This includes identifying opportunities for refinement, reduction and replacement and supporting drafting, as well as how AECs themselves might use these tools when screening applications. We'll also walk through pitfalls, from confidentiality and referencing errors to the risks of using AI for data analysis versus data summarisation, and explain why these traps occur and how to avoid or minimise them. Drawing on real-world examples, the session aims to stimulate a deeper discussion with AEC members and researchers regarding practical, cautious strategies for using AI well.

WEBINAR TWO

Robust decision making by AECs: an online workshop

Date and time: Wednesday 4 November 2026, 12.00pm to 1.30pm

Chairs: Prof Nat Waran and Dr Jim Wester (NAEAC Chair and Deputy Chair respectively)

Format: Interactive, scenario-based workshop

Impact grading sits at the heart of the harm versus benefit assessment, yet it remains one of the more challenging and, at times, subjective areas of AEC practice. This interactive, scenario-based session explores different approaches to impact grading, with an emphasis on decision making consistency within each committee and a robust, defensible process.

Two case studies will each be introduced by a NAEAC Committee member to prompt structured discussion. Attendees are encouraged to share how their own committees might approach each scenario.

Aims of the session

- Explore how AECs approach impact grading in practice, using realistic scenarios.
- Promote consistency of grading within committees and a shared understanding across the AEC community.
- Provide a safe space to test decision making, consensus and process.
- Draw out good practice for reaching consensus, weighing 3Rs benefits against study robustness, responding to non compliance, and assessing animal use in teaching on school and university farms.

IMPACT GRADING

Manipulations in New Zealand are graded on a five point scale, A to E. The grade reflects both the level of suffering, discomfort or stress, and its duration. Committees are encouraged to consider measures

that minimise pain or stress, such as anaesthesia, analgesia and humane endpoints, as well as any cumulative effects of multiple procedures.

Further information on impact grading: [NAEAC Welfare Gratings webinar slides \(PDF\)](#)

WEBINAR THREE

Good Practice Guide updates for AECs

Date and time: Wednesday 2 December 2026, 12.30pm to 1.30pm

Presenter: Dr Janine Duckworth (Chair of the NAEAC Good Practice Guide Subcommittee)

Format: Presentation and discussion

The Good Practice Guide for the use of animals in research, testing and teaching is a key reference for AECs. This webinar provides an update on recent and upcoming changes to the guidance and what they mean for committees in practice.

We will walk through the updates, highlight the areas most relevant to day-to-day committee work, and take questions from attendees. The session is intended to help AECs apply the current guidance with confidence and consistency.

HOW TO TAKE PART

AEC Chairs are asked to circulate this information to their committee members. Registration and joining details for each webinar will be sent to AECs ahead of the session.