

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee		UNTHSC
Title: IACUC Roles and Responsibilities		
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A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy and the “Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals” (Guide) have defined the mandated roles and responsibilities of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). They also require the IACUC to provide oversight of animal care and use activities.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility for the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNT HSC)’s IACUC to abide by the following procedures.

C. PROCEDURES

a. MEMBERSHIP

- i. The President of UNT HSC appoints the Institutional Official (IO)
- ii. The IO appoints the IACUC members and the IACUC Chair.
- iii. The IACUC shall have no less than five members and shall include at least one:
 - 1. Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, with training or experience in laboratory animal sciences and medicine, who has direct or delegated program responsibility for activities involving animals at the institution;
 - 2. Practicing scientist experienced in research involving animals;
 - 3. Member whose primary concerns are in the nonscientific area;
 - 4. Individual who is not affiliated with the institution in any way other than as a member of the IACUC, and is not a member of the immediate family of a person who is affiliated with the institution. This individual should represent community interests and concerns.

b. AUTHORITY

- The IACUC has the mandated authority to:
- 1. Review at least once every six months the institution’s program for humane care and use of animals, using the Guide and the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) as bases for evaluation.

2. Inspect at least once every six months all animal facilities (including satellite facilities) and animal study areas using the Guide and Act as bases for evaluation.
3. Prepare reports of the IACUC evaluations conducted as required by 1. and 2. above, and submit the reports to the IO. A majority of the Committee members must sign the reports indicating their approval of the information submitted. Reports shall be maintained and made available to regulating agencies upon request. Reports must contain a description of the nature and extent of adherence to the Guide and Act and must identify specifically any departures from their provisions, and must state the reasons for each departure. Reports must distinguish significant deficiencies from minor deficiencies. A significant deficiency is one which is or may be a threat to the health or safety of the animals. If program or facility deficiencies are noted, the reports must contain a reasonable and specific plan and schedule for correcting each deficiency. If some or all of the facilities are accredited by AAALAC, the report should identify those facilities as such.
4. Review concerns involving the care and use of animals.
5. Make recommendations to the IO regarding any aspect of the animal care program, facilities, or personnel training.
6. Review and approve, require modifications in (to secure approval) or withhold approval of those components of activities related to the care and use of animals.
7. Review and approve, require modification in (to secure approval), or withhold approval of proposed significant changes regarding the use of animals in ongoing activities.
8. Be authorized to suspend an activity involving animals.

c. PROCEDURES

- i. The IACUC shall establish procedures to ensure that:
 1. Unnecessary pain or distress is avoided.
 2. Anesthesia and analgesia are properly and effectively used where indicated; the only exception to this may be when agents must be withheld as a requirement of the study.
 3. Painful studies requiring exemption from the use of either anesthetics or analgesia are subject to particular scrutiny, not only prior to approval, but during the experiment.
 4. Postoperative care commensurate with current veterinary concepts is provided.

- ii. The IACUC shall establish and implement policies which will provide for a system of animal care that meet the needs of the UNTHSC and include:
 - 1. The requirement that all animal care and experimentation is conducted within the guidelines as set out in the AWA and PHS policies, and any other federal, state, or institutional regulations that may be in effect.
 - 2. Ensuring adequate numbers of animal care personnel are present, and that animal users and animal care personnel are qualified to perform their duties. All individuals shall receive training in the humane care and use of animals.
 - 3. Ensuring that facilities and equipment meet the standards of all applicable regulations and policies.
 - 4. Providing standards of husbandry and veterinary medical care that meet or exceed regulatory mandates.
 - 5. Ensuring that all activities and procedures that involve animals are carried out humanely and that analgesics, anesthetics, and tranquilizing drugs are used to minimize pain.
 - 6. Ensuring proper methods of euthanasia, with appropriate guidelines for timely euthanasia to minimize pain and suffering.
- iii. The IACUC shall assure that all animal users have the opportunity to become familiar with all federal, state, city, and institutional requirements that may apply to their work.
- iv. The IACUC shall ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life. Adequate veterinary care must be available at all times for all animal species used by UNTHSC.
- v. The IACUC shall ensure the living conditions of animals will be appropriate for their species and contribute to their health and comfort. The housing, feeding and nonmedical care of the animals will be directed by a veterinarian or other scientist trained and experienced in the proper care, handling, and use of the species being maintained or studied.
- vi. The IACUC shall ensure that no research, testing project, teaching program, or any other study (including field studies) involving animals be commenced without prior IACUC approval of a written Animal Protocol Review Form, further, no animals shall be acquired before such approval. This includes internally-funded projects.
- vii. The IACUC shall review the animal care and use components of proposed research projects to ensure that procedures and practices are in compliance with the Guide, AWA, Assurance Statement, and any other regulations or policies which apply. When necessary, the IACUC will require further supportive information from the investigator or meet with the investigator to assure that all members of the review committee understand the procedures to be used on the animal. If there is any

variance with the guidelines noted above, the IACUC will require justification for the variance on scientific grounds.

- viii. The IACUC must be aware of all modifications to protocols. When these involve major changes in animal utilization, new protocols must be submitted.
- ix. The IACUC shall review all protocols at least once every three years, with annual confirmation that the studies have not been changed since the commencement of the project. Protocols require renewal with full submission every three years.
- x. The IACUC may invite consultants to assist in the review of complex issues. Consultants may not approve or withhold approval of an activity or vote with the IACUC unless they are also members of the IACUC.
- xi. Prior to Protocol review, IACUC members shall be notified of proposed research projects submitted for review. Written descriptions of research projects that involve the care and use of animals shall be available to all IACUC members, and any member of the IACUC may obtain, upon request, full committee review of those research projects. If full committee review is not requested, at least one member of the IACUC, designated by the IACUC Administrator or Chair, and qualified to conduct the review, shall review those research projects and have the authority to approve, require modifications in (to secure approval) or request full committee review of those research projects. If full committee review is requested, approval of those research projects may be granted only after review at a convened, quorum meeting of the IACUC and with the approval vote of the majority present. No member may participate in the IACUC review or approval of a research project in which the member has a conflicting interest except to provide information requested by the IACUC; nor may a member who has a conflicting interest contribute to the constitution of a quorum.
- xii. The IACUC shall notify investigators in writing of its decision to approve or withhold approval of those activities related to the care and use of animals, or of modifications required to secure IACUC approval. If the IACUC decides to withhold approval of an activity, it shall include in its written notification a statement of the reasons for its decision and give the investigator an opportunity to respond in person or in writing.
- xiii. The IACUC may suspend an activity that it previously approved if it determines that the activity is not being conducted in accordance with applicable provisions of the AWA, the Guide or the PHS Policy. The IACUC may suspend an activity only after review of the matter at a convened meeting of a quorum of the IAUC and with the suspension vote of a majority of the quorum present.
- xiv. If the IACUC suspends an activity involving animals, the IO in consultation with the IACUC shall review the reasons for suspension, take appropriate corrective action, and report that action with a full explanation to OLAW.

- xv. Applications and proposals that have been approved by the IACUC may be subject to further appropriate review and approval by officials of the institution. However, those officials may not approve an activity involving the care and use of animals if it has not been approved by the IACUC.

d. MEETINGS

The IACUC shall meet monthly and as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities and be satisfied that all animal use within its jurisdiction is in compliance with institutional, municipal, and federal regulations.

e. POST-APPROVAL MONITORING

- i. A continuing program to audit approved animal use protocols is an essential component of a comprehensive Animal Care and Use program. Such a program provides an excellent method of ensuring institutional regulatory compliance by allowing a more thorough inspection of individual labs and animal related procedures. Post approval monitoring also gives the investigator the opportunity to discuss concerns and/or changes needed in active protocols. This program allows the IACUC to meet with the personnel involved in animal research giving a personalized review of relevant policies.
- ii. A few protocols shall be monitored every month.

f. GENERAL

- i. The IACUC will regularly review:
 - 1. Its responsibilities to meet changing needs within the institution, the scientific community, and society as a whole and expand its responsibilities, as necessary, to meet the requirements of new regulations and policies.
 - 2. The concerns of the public within our own community.
 - 3. The security of the animals and research facilities.
 - 4. Standard operating procedures.
 - 5. Policies and procedures for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures within the institution.
- ii. The IACUC will maintain liaison with federal and state authorities where applicable.
- iii. The IACUC will develop and maintain liaison with the public and foster an “open door” policy, as appropriate.
- iv. The IACUC will sponsor from time to time seminars or workshops on research animal science and the ethics of experimentation.

- v. The IACUC shall achieve and maintain a high profile within the institution and in the community in order to allay some public concerns regarding animal experimentation.
- vi. The IACUC shall be responsive to the needs and concerns of the research and animal care community at the UNTHSC and work toward a harmonious relationship with those it serves. At the same time, the Committee, must, in all cases, retain its ability to be objective so that it fulfills its responsibilities as the overseer of the animal care and use program.

D. REFERENCES

- a. [The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals \(2011\), National Academies Press, Washington, D.C.](#)
- b. [Animal Welfare Act, Public Law 89-544 as amended; codified at 7 U.S.C. 2131-2159.](#)
- c. [PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, NIH, Office of the Director, Revised 2015.](#)