

UNIVERSITY RULE

15.99.07.M1 Use of Vertebrate Animals

Approved March 4, 2016

Revised May 31, 2022

Next Scheduled Review: May 31, 2027

Rule Statement

Texas A&M University is committed to the humane and ethical treatment of vertebrate animals used in research, teaching and testing and complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, polices and guidelines. This rule applies to all employees and students who use vertebrate animals in research, teaching or testing.

Rule Statement

This rule establishes roles and responsibilities for those involved in the care and use of vertebrate animals in research, teaching or testing and provides guidance in complying with federal, state and local requirements.

Definitions

Each of the following terms used in this rule is defined in TAMUS Regulation 15.99.07 (Definitions).

- Animal
- Animal Facility
- Animal Welfare Act
- Attending Veterinarian
- Institutional Official (IO)
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

- Public Health Service (PHS) Policy
- Use of Animals

Other terms used in this rule have the meaning set forth below:

Animal Care and Use Program – the research, teaching or testing activities conducted by and at an institution that have a direct impact on the well-being of animals, including animal and veterinary care, policies and procedures, personnel and program management and oversight, occupational health and safety, IACUC functions, and animal facility design and management.

Animal Welfare Office (AWO) - a central administrative office(s) in the Division of Research, or as otherwise designated by the Vice President for Research, that is responsible for providing support to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee(s) and coordinates with the Animal Care and Use Program(s). The office(s) is also responsible for administering a program of compliance oversight and for maintaining institutional records relating to the university's Animal Care and Use Program.

Agricultural research, teaching or testing - research, teaching or testing activities involving horses, and other farm animals, not limited to livestock or poultry, used or intended for use as food or fiber, or used or intended for use for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency, or for improving the quality of food or fiber.

Non-compliance - failure to comply with state and federal regulations, system policies or regulations, university rules or procedures, IACUC procedures or the requirements to conduct research, teaching or testing using animals.

Official Procedure/Responsibilities/Process

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. All vertebrate animals used in research, teaching, or testing regardless of the funding sources, shall be provided humane care and treatment. The President has appointed the Vice President for Research to serve as the IO with administrative authority to commit institutional resources to ensure that the animal care and use program will comply with state and federal requirements. As IO, the Vice President for Research executes the USDA registration(s), PHS assurance(s), and reports submitted to these agencies and has been delegated authority to appoint members of the IACUC(s).
- 1.2. The use of vertebrate animals within the University, whether for research, teaching or testing purposes, shall be described in an Animal Use Protocol (AUP). The AUP is a document designed to capture relevant information regarding the appropriate

use of the animals in research, teaching or testing activities.

- 1.3. For each project involving animals used in research, teaching, or testing, an AUP must be approved by the IACUC.
- 1.4. An approved and current AUP for all animal activities must be in place at all times when animals are housed or used for research, testing or teaching.
- 1.5. All modifications to approved animal activities must be approved prior to initiation of any changes.

2. PHS ASSURANCE AND USDA REGISTRATION

The University's Animal Welfare Assurance(s) is on file with the Public Health Service indicating the institution's commitment to humane animal care and is maintained in accordance with federal regulations. This statement(s) is applicable to all research, research training, experimentation, biological testing, and related activities involving live vertebrate animals supported by the PHS and National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The University is registered with the USDA and complies with all federal regulations for USDA covered species.

3. INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

- 3.1. The IACUC(s) shall be appointed, structured, and shall perform duties and functions as set forth in the most current version of the documents referenced at the end of this rule or other applicable documents promulgated by relevant government agencies.
- 3.2. The IACUC(s) shall be appointed by and report to the IO. More than one IACUC may be appointed by and report to the IO. In addition to federally prescribed membership requirements, the IACUC(s) will include a representative from the AWO(s).
- 3.3. The IACUC(s) shall review proposed animal work outlined in the AUP, review amendments to AUPs, conduct semi-annual facility inspections, conduct semi-annual reviews of the Animal Care and Use Program, and investigate reports of noncompliance and concerns involving the care and use of animals. The IACUC(s) shall prepare reports to the IO following each semiannual evaluation and may make recommendations to the IO on topics related to the institution's animal program, facilities, or personnel training.
- 3.4. The IACUC(s) may approve, require modifications in (to secure approval), or withhold approval of AUPs. The IACUC(s) may also suspend previously approved research, teaching or testing activity covered by this rule for noncompliance with protocol description, or other occurrence of noncompliance. A decision by the IACUC to withhold approval of research, teaching or testing may not be overridden by the IO.

3.5. Each IACUC shall carry out all of those duties specifically assigned to it by government regulations and policies. In addition, the IACUC shall have full authority to enter any area where animals are used or housed for research, teaching or testing to ensure compliance.

3.6. The IACUC(s) will maintain standardized procedures (SOPs) consistent with federal requirements.

4. USE OF VERTEBRATE ANIMALS IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, TEACHING OR TESTING

Use of vertebrate animals in agricultural research, teaching or testing is as set forth in System Regulation 15.99.07.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

5.1. Principal investigators (PI) are primarily responsible for compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations involving activities covered by this rule and are responsible for:

5.1.1. assuring that animal work is appropriately reviewed and approved prior to initiation of any activities or changes to approved activities. Regardless of funding sources, an AUP involving the use of animals in research, teaching, or testing must be prepared and signed by the principal investigator and must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC. If research is collaborative or involves other institutions, appropriate compliance approval must be completed at each participating institution.

5.1.2. assuring that conduct of animal research, teaching or testing activities is restricted to the animal activities described in the approved AUP or approved amendments, and is in congruence with funding grants, if applicable.

5.1.3. assuring that all participants in animal activities are appropriately qualified through training and education to perform their responsibilities as listed in the AUP.

5.1.4. assuring that all participants in animal activities are enrolled in an Occupational Health and Safety program.

5.1.5. assuring that all animal activities involving hazardous and biohazardous activities are approved by the appropriate safety committees.

5.1.6. abiding by all determinations of the IACUC, including, but not limited to directives to terminate participation in designated research, teaching or testing activities;

- 5.1.7. notifying the IACUC as soon as possible after the discovery of any unanticipated or adverse event not described in the IACUC approved AUP that impacts the health or safety of animals covered by this rule, including reporting any animal concerns or noncompliance.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ANIMAL FACILITY MANAGEMENT

- 6.1. Colleges and units that direct or manage vivaria and/or animal housing locations, including satellite locations, are responsible for:
 - 6.1.1. assuring that the location and associated activities related to animal husbandry, conform to standards established in the Animal Welfare Regulations, *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* or *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching*, as applicable;
 - 6.1.2. assuring that all facility personnel engaged in activities with animals are appropriately qualified through training and education to perform their responsibilities and are enrolled in an Occupational Health and Safety program;
 - 6.1.3. involving the Attending Veterinarian in the renovation or design and development of new vivaria and complying with directives from the IACUC and/or Attending Veterinarian.

7. ATTENDING VETERINARIAN

- 7.1. The role and responsibilities of the Attending Veterinarian(s), or designee(s), is as set forth in System Regulation 15.99.07. In addition, the Attending Veterinarian(s), or designee(s) shall:
 - 7.1.1. have unrestricted access to all animals, all areas where animals are used or housed, and associated husbandry and medical records;
 - 7.1.2. have the full authority to treat, remove from the experiment or location, initiate appropriate measures to relieve severe pain or distress, or humanely euthanize animals;

8. CARE AND USE OF NON-UNIVERSITY OWNED ANIMALS

Care and use of non-university owned animals shall be consistent with System Regulation 15.99.07.

9. REPORTING

- 9.1. The IACUC through the Institutional Official is responsible for ensuring the prompt

notification to governmental authorities after the discovery of any incident that requires notification to the IACUC, OLAW, USDA, or other governmental authority with respect to the care or use of animals that are involved in research, teaching or testing activities covered by this rule.

9.2. Anyone who is aware of potential violations to existing animal care and use regulations or observes misuse or mistreatment of animals are strongly encouraged to report their concerns to the IACUC, the Attending Veterinarian or to the AWO. Concerns may also be reported anonymously via EthicsPoint.

9.2.1. Reports should be written and include a factual description of the incident or concern including the date, time, location, animal species, numbers and identification of animals, personnel involved and any other relevant information. Anonymous reports are accepted if sufficient detail is provided to enable adequate investigation of the allegations.

9.2.2. Except as provided above in 9.2.1, all allegations of mistreatment or noncompliance will be taken seriously and investigated by the IACUC. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible and appropriate and permissible under the law. No university employee or student shall be discriminated against or subject to any reprisal for good faith reporting of actual or potential violations.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[System Regulation 15.99.07, Use of Vertebrate Animals](#)

The Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131-2159) and amendments and the Animal Welfare Regulations (9 CFR chapter 1).

Health Research Extension Act of 1985 and Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (National Institutes of Health)

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching

United States Department of Agriculture Animal Care Policies

AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals

Contact Office

Division of Research
979-845-8585