INSTITUTIONAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

What is the function of the IACUC?
The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) oversees the responsible use of animals in University research and instructional activities, including field research. The IACUC reviews protocols, reviews the animal care and use program, and monitors University animal facilities to ensure compliance with institutional and federal standards and regulatory requirements.

What are the regulations that the IACUC enforces?
All research activities must conform to the statutes of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the guidelines of the Public Health Service as issued in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (revised 2010). The AWA covers many, but not all, of the common laboratory species. The institution must register with the USDA, and may be inspected at any time, without prior notification. PHS Policy has been law since 1985, and is enforced by the Office for Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The PHS Policy covers all cold- and warm-blooded vertebrates. The PHS Policy utilizes the NIH Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the Guide) as the guidelines and standards with which institutions must comply.

How often does the IACUC meet?
The IACUC meets on the third Thursday of every month. Meeting dates and submission deadlines can be found on the IACUC website.

GETTING STARTED

What do I need to do to get started?
You will need to complete the specified training requirements, as well as, enroll in the Occupational Health Program (OHP) before you are able to work with animals. The training requirements can be found on the IACUC website, or by clicking here.

Who needs to complete training and enroll in the Occupational Health Program (OHP)?
Anyone who works with animals must complete training and OHP. An OHP waiver may be requested in circumstances where the named PI of the protocol does not plan to handle the animal in the conduct of the planned animal research activity. These requests require approval by the University’s veterinarian.

How long does my training last?
Your training is only good for three years. The CITI on-line training program will send you e-mail messages asking you to update your training, sixty days before it expires. OHP participation is a one-time enrollment, except for those employees who handle non-human primates and require continued medical surveillance.

Contracting with foreign entities to work with animals
Contracting with foreign entities is only permitted after receiving prior certification from the IACUC. For information on how to receive IACUC certification for animal work with foreign entities, please click here.

Domestic work with animals, outside University of South Alabama
ANIMAL CARE AND USE FAQs

Contracting with domestic entities, outside of the University of South Alabama is only permitted after receiving prior administrative certification from the IACUC. For information on how to receive administrative IACUC certification for animal work with domestic entities, outside of the University of South Alabama, please click here.

PROTOCOLS

How do I fill out a protocol?
USA uses a program called GRANITE to submit protocols. The IACUC Office provides a guide on how to fill out a protocol on the IACUC website, or you can click here. There is also a tip sheet that the IACUC Office provides on the IACUC website, or you can click here.

What types of projects must be submitted for IACUC review?
USA requires IACUC approval for all work with live vertebrates. The IACUC must review ALL projects involving the use of ANY vertebrate animals for ANY purpose (including, but not limited to, biomedical and behavioral research, teaching, testing, and exhibition projects) to ensure compliance with USA policies and federal regulations. Even studies which involve no direct contact with vertebrate animals but which affect animals through influencing or changing their habitat (e.g. observing the result of outside stimulus on bird calls, observation of fish or wildlife after modifying their habitat or interrupting their daily routine) must be submitted for the Committee's consideration prior to initiation.

What are the definitions and classification for animal pain or distress?
Potential Pain/Distress: Procedures are classified according to the level of potential pain or distress that the animal may experience. If more than slight or momentary pain and distress could be caused by the procedure, then relief must be provided (pain class B). If relief cannot be provided (pain class C), there must be scientific justification for the withholding of relief, the justification must be included in the animal use protocol, and it must be approved by the IACUC. Additional information can be found in the USDA Animal Care Resource Guide, Policy #11, Painful Procedures.
USDA Pain Codes
C - No Pain or Distress
D - Pain or Distress with Relief
E - Pain or Distress without Relief

What are the attributes of major survival surgery and multiple survival surgery?
Multiple Major Survival Surgery: A major survival surgery penetrates and exposes the body cavity or produces substantial impairment of physical or physiologic functions (such as laparotomy, thoracotomy, craniotomy, joint replacement and limb amputation). Scientific justification is required in the animal use protocol, if more than one major survival surgery is to be performed on an animal during the course of the protocol experiment.

What is food and fluid restriction?

General
Certain experimental paradigms require the use of food or water restriction in order to accomplish studies such as operant conditioning work. The IACUC is required to approve these restrictions to ensure they are scientifically justified, minimize the level of restriction, and have criteria in place to monitor the health of animals on these studies.

Specifics
ANIMAL CARE AND USE FAQS

Animal use protocols employing food or water restriction must provide the duration of restriction, level of restriction, and justification for the restriction as part of the protocol description. Furthermore, the early removal criteria must provide methods to assess the animal's health while on restriction. Typically, this will require a frequent monitoring method such as daily weighing of the animal. Note that pre-surgical food restriction is detailed in the surgery procedure as part of the animal use protocol, and does not need specific justification.

Does PHS Policy apply to the production of custom antibodies?
The generation of custom antibodies is considered an activity involving vertebrate animals and covered by PHS Policy. Antibodies are considered customized if produced using antigen(s) provided by or at the request of the investigator (i.e., not purchased off-the-shelf). An organization producing custom antibodies for a grantee must have or obtain an assurance, or be included as a component of the grantee’s assurance. In addition, the applicant must provide the date (verification) of project-specific IACUC approval for the production of the antibodies.

My grant is for five years; however, my protocol indicates that I can only get approval for three years. How do I get an extension?
The three year limit on animal protocols is explicitly stated in the Federal regulations. We cannot grant extensions after the three year expiration date; you must file a new protocol.

What about use of dead animals or animal parts?
If the animals are specifically raised for you, then you need a protocol. If you are obtaining animals or tissue that was already dead then you do not need an IACUC protocol. However, the IACUC requires you to submit a brief memo, if obtaining commercially purchased (ie, grocery store, slaughterhouse, Carolina Biological, etc) animal tissue. The memo needs to be received by the IACUC office before the animal tissue is purchased. The information to be disclosed is available here.

My project has changed quite a bit. What do I do?
You should contact either the IACUC Office or the Department of Comparative Medicine’s veterinarian as soon as possible. The University veterinarian or the IACUC chairperson will determine whether an amendment or a new protocol is required.

NOTE: By federal law and University policy, Investigators that have a subcontract that involves animal work, are also obligated to notify the IACUC and Grants Administration of any change to the related protocol or the subcontract. For information on how to notify the IACUC about changes with subcontracts, click here.

When should I submit modifications to my protocol?
By federal law and University policy, Investigators are required to notify the IACUC of any changes made to an active protocol. Typical modifications may include addition/removal of personnel, animal numbers, lab change, species of animals, modifications to the experimental methods or procedures, special requirements for animal husbandry and housing, etc. The amendment form can be found by going to the IACUC web page and clicking on Protocol Amendment Request Form, or by clicking here: Protocol Amendment Request Form

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**Animal Care and Use FAQs**

Information on how to notify the IACUC about changes with subcontracts, click [here](#).

**What if my research involves fish?**
Please refer to "Guidelines for the Use of Fishes in Research" made available by the American Fisheries Society.

**What if my research involves reptiles and/or amphibians?**
Please refer to “Guidelines for Use of Live Amphibians and Reptiles in Field and Laboratory Research, 2nd edition”.

**If I wish to transfer animals listed on one of my protocols to another, do I need to do so formally?**
Yes. When protocols are approved, the number of animals to be used in the studies covered by that protocol is also approved. The Department of Comparative Medicine (DCM) tracks the number of animals used and assesses charges for their care based on the protocol to which they are assigned. Neglecting to transfer animals from one protocol to another may risk exceeding quota for on-going studies. Moreover, DCM needs to know in which studies the animals are involved to be able to provide appropriate veterinary care if needed. Animals can be readily transferred from one of your protocols to another by contacting DCM.

**Accreditation and Assurance Number**

**Where can I find information on IACUC accreditation, or assurance if required by the granting agency?**

**AAALAC Accreditation Letter**
For use when funding agencies request a copy of the most recent USA AAALAC accreditation letter. You can view/download that document by clicking [here](#).

**Animal Welfare Assurance Number is A3288-01**
Most recent renewal date: 10/23/08. Expiration date: 12/31/12. This applies to all animal activities, regardless of the funding source.