

University of Louisville
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Policies and Procedures

Adoption of Research Animals

Policy: The University of Louisville (UofL) has elected to offer the adoption of animals designated for research or teaching. The adoptable status of an animal is determined by the Attending Veterinarian and/or clinical veterinarian. Adoption is done in consultation with the Principal Investigator and coordinated by Comparative Medicine Research Unit (CMRU). Any such adoption shall comply with applicable regulatory guidance and requirements and the associated UofL guidance and procedures.

Rationale:

UofL, through the CMRU and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), encourages investigators to pursue the adoption of research animals whenever possible. However, adoption is not always a feasible option, particularly for animals with certain health conditions or those exposed to experimental conditions that may compromise the animals' health or well-being in a new environment. This policy outlines criteria and procedures that must be followed to allow a research animal to be adopted.

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (Guide) and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* (Ag. Guide) discuss the termination of research animals at the conclusion of the research project. However, the Guide, the Ag. Guide, PHS Policy³, and the Animal Welfare Act do not discuss the private adoption of research animals when they are retired from research or teaching. The 9 CFR recordkeeping regulations and official policies offer institutions the option of developing and implementing an adoption policy. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine support the private adoption of research animals.

Procedures, Guidelines, and Exceptions:

1. Animal Eligibility for Adoption

For a research animal to be eligible for adoption the following conditions must be met:

- a. The animal must first be offered to other investigators with an IACUC-approved Proposal. If no researcher indicates a desire to use the animal, the animal will then be considered for the adoption program.
- b. The animal must be in good health and of acceptable behavior, as determined by the Attending Veterinarian or designee.
- c. The animal must not have been subjected to a research-related major surgical procedure. Routine veterinary surgeries do not disqualify an animal from adoption.
- d. The animal must not have been administered any drugs other than FDA-approved human or veterinary drugs, food supplements, or pharmaceutically compounded veterinary drugs. All FDA-approved drugs administered to the animal shall be disclosed to the potential adopter.
- e. Animals must not have been exposed to infectious agents. Exposure to other biological hazards, toxins, and chemical hazards will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- f. Genetically modified or immune-suppressed animals are not eligible for adoption.
- g. Animals may not be sold by the adopter, nor may they be released into the wild.
- h. The adopter is responsible for any future medical care/support as may be required.

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- i. Adoption must be listed as a method of disposition in the approved IACUC *Proposal* from which the animal will be removed. A modification may be submitted to the IACUC to amend the methods of disposition.

2. **Adoption Procedures:**

- a. The Principal Investigator (PI) or representative must first submit an adoption form (*Appendix I*) to the CMRU to initiate the adoption process. The PI must indicate that the animal is not needed for research at UofL, state that s/he has no knowledge of any fact that would make the animal inappropriate for adoption, and recommends the animal be offered for adoption. If the PI is aware of any conditions that may have an impact on the animal's suitability as a pet, this must be communicated to the potential adopter and the CMRU.
- b. Any potential adopters will meet with the Attending Veterinarian and/or clinical veterinarian (or qualified designee) to assess the individual's reasons for adoption and willingness and ability to provide for the animal's welfare. The questionnaire (*Appendix II*) should be completed by the veterinarian and adopter. Potential adopters will be screened by the veterinarian to gauge their suitability, knowledge of care of the type of animal, and other qualifications; the CMRU reserves the right to decline a potential adopter based upon the screening. All adoption advertising must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian or designee prior to use.
- c. An CMRU veterinarian will conduct a physical exam of the animal, including blood testing if indicated, and any other tests deemed necessary to determine health status and suitability as a pet. Vaccinations may also be administered as needed. Results of the physical exam and any test results should be furnished to the prospective new owner.
- d. A transfer form should be filled out by the CMRU designee and be signed by the PI, transferring ownership of the animal to the new owner. APHIS form 7006 ("Record of Disposition of Dogs and Cats") should be completed for the transfer of dogs and cats. For other USDA-regulated species, form 7020 ("Record of Disposition of Animals other than Dogs and Cats") must be completed. Forms are available through the USDA APHIS website: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalwelfare/SA_Publications
- e. Spaying, neutering, or other common surgical procedures may be performed by an CMRU veterinarian prior to the adoption at the discretion of an CMRU veterinarian. The individual adopting the animal should complete and sign an Animal Adoption Agreement (*Appendix III*). The CMRU will retain the original copy of this agreement and the new owner will receive a copy as proof of ownership transfer.
- f. On the day the Animal Adoption Agreement (*Appendix III*) is signed the animal should be removed from the CMRU/UofL. Once the animal leaves the facility, it is the possession and the responsibility of its new owner. The new owner accepts lifelong care of the animal, including any future medical costs or other expenses incurred. The University of Louisville will no longer be responsible for the animal, its care or any damage it may cause. The animal may not be returned to UofL to safeguard the biosecurity of the UofL animal colonies.

3. **Other Considerations**

- a. NIH Guidelines state that grant funds issued through the NIH cannot be used to support the adoption process. Investigators with studies funded through the NIH will be responsible for all housing and care costs for animals they wish to offer for adoption until ownership is transferred to the adopter. Investigators should secure other funds for the care of adoptable animals prior to initiating the adoption process, if necessary.

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