

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

## **Reporting and Investigating Animal Welfare Concerns**

**Policy:** The humane care and use of animals is of paramount importance to the University of Louisville. Individuals who may have specific concerns about animal care and treatment are strongly encouraged to report their observations of suspected deficiencies to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Comparative Medicine Research Unit (CMRU), Institutional Official (Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation), or the University Integrity and Compliance Office. Individuals generating a report of concern shall not be discriminated against or be subject to any reprisal for generating the report. Individuals who desire anonymity may be certain that the IACUC will handle a report of concern in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Signs alerting personnel to their opportunity to report concerns should be posted in all animal use areas, including laboratories where live animals are used.

**Rationale:** Ethical mores, federal regulations, and accreditation standards dictate that perceived deficiencies and other concerns are investigated thoroughly. The Guide (2011) states, “Safeguarding animal welfare is the responsibility of every individual associated with the Program.” Institutional methods for reporting and investigating animal welfare concerns are mandatory. USDA Regulations place the responsibility for review and investigation with the Institutional Official and IACUC.

### **Procedures, Guidelines, and Exceptions:**

#### ***A. Reporting Procedures:***

1. Concerns regarding misconduct associated with the care and treatment of animals may be reported verbally or in writing to the IACUC chairperson, any committee member, or a CMRU veterinarian. A current roster of IACUC members may be obtained from the IACUC (502-852-6899).
2. Concerns may also be reported to any of the CMRU management staff, including veterinarians, the facility manager, and facility supervisors or assistant supervisors (502-852-5268).
3. Concerns may also be submitted via the University’s Compliance Hotline (877-852-1167) and a trained risk specialist will document your information and generate a written report to the University Integrity and Compliance Office for follow-up or by using the link to the third party vendor on their website(<http://louisville.edu/compliance/hotline>).
4. Mechanisms for reporting concerns will be posted in prominent locations in the facility and applicable website(s) with instructions on how to report the concern and to whom.

***B. Reports should be as specific as possible, i.e., date, time, species involved, animal/project identification number and the names of the UofL personnel involved, if possible.***

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**C. IACUC Response to Reports of Animal Welfare Concerns:**

1. The receipt of a written or verbal report of animal concern by the IACUC will be immediately brought to the attention of the Associate Vice President for Research Services and/or the IACUC Chairperson, unless a conflict of interest exists. This(ese) individual(s) will select (an) additional committee member(s) to constitute a Subcommittee to investigate and, where concerns are substantiated, recommend the correction of the reported concern. Alternates for these individuals may also be selected such that the investigative subcommittee consists of at least three IACUC members, including one veterinarian.
2. At the next regularly scheduled IACUC meeting, the Subcommittee will describe the reported concern and the corrective action that has been taken or recommended. Reports and corrective actions will conform to all applicable University policies.
3. The IACUC will determine whether any of the findings of the subcommittee meet the requirements for external reporting. If so, a letter reporting a deficiency is forwarded to the appropriate outside regulatory agency/agencies (*i.e.*, OLAW, AAALAC, USDA), funding agency (through the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration), or in other instances where notification seems appropriate as determined by the committee. A letter will also be forwarded to the department chair affiliated with the project in question. IACUC and subcommittee members will remain honor-bound to respect report confidentiality.

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