

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), Research Resources Facilities (RRF), Institutional Official (Executive Vice President for Health Affairs), or Institutional 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:

1. Reporting Procedures:

- a. 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 an RRF veterinarians. A current roster of IACUC members may be obtained from the IACUC (502-852-7307).
- b. Concerns may also be reported to any of the RRF management staff, including veterinarians, Facility Manager, and Facility Supervisors or Assistant Supervisors (502-852-5268).
- c. Concerns may also be submitted via the University’s Compliance Helpline (877-852-1167) or the “Compliance Helpline Reporting” option on ULINK under the External Links section of the Faculty/Staff tab (<http://louisville.edu/compliance/helpline>).
- d. 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.

2. 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.

3. IACUC Response to Reports of Animal Welfare Concerns:

- a. 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

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substantiated, recommend the correction of the reported concern. Alternates for these individuals may also be selected such that the investigative subcommittee consists of three IACUC members, including one veterinarian. All IACUC members will be notified of a pending Subcommittee meeting, except where a potential conflict of interest exists.

- b. 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.
- c. If, and when, a letter reporting a deficiency is forwarded to an outside regulatory agency (*i.e.*, OLAW, AAALAC), funding agency (through the Office of Grants and Contracts), 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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