

# IACUC Update

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
The University of Texas at Austin

July 2015

Volume 8, Issue 10

## Why does the IACUC need to understand the scientific merit of proposals when evaluating animal welfare in research?

The primary focus of a Scientific Review Group (SRG; e.g., NIH study section) is scientific merit. The primary focus of the IACUC is animal welfare. The two bodies have differing constitutions, mandates, and functions. However, since it is not entirely possible to separate scientific value from animal welfare some overlap is inevitable. SRGs may raise concerns about animal welfare and IACUCs may question the scientific rationale or necessity for a procedure.

SRGs are composed of scientific experts from the extramural research community in a particular area of expertise. As such, members review the scientific and technical merit of an application. In addition, SRGs have authority to raise specific animal welfare concerns that can require resolution prior to a grant award.

The IACUC is *required* by the Federal law and regulations to include consideration of the U.S. Government Principles in its review of protocols. Principle II calls for an evaluation of the relevance of a procedure to human or animal health, the advancement of knowledge, or the good of society. Other review criteria mandated by Federal laws and regulations refer to sound research design, rationale for involving animals, and scientifically valuable research. If an IACUC member does not understand any of these points, or adequate detail is not provided, then it is necessary for the IACUC to ask for clarifications about the research in order to evaluate the animal protocols in the appropriate context.

In general, federal agencies have clear-cut guidelines for describing Vertebrate Animals procedures and review of these protocols usually focuses entirely on the animal procedures. By contrast, research funded by organizations that do not have the peer-

review/SRG structure (i.e., foundations, industry, internal funds, etc.) may require additional scrutiny by the IACUC regarding the rationale for work and scientific merit. In such instances, it is important that the investigators provides sufficient justification for the work, and in some cases, provide the proposal itself, in a jargon-free format that is understandable by the IACUC reviewers.

## Laboratory Assistance Program

The Laboratory Assistance Program (LAP) is to get ARC staff and research staff together in the context of the actual work being performed. The LAP is intended to be a voluntary lab assistance and outreach program. Since these visits are not part of an official inspection, the interactions can be more informal, and the goal is not to identify problems that must be reported, but instead to make sure research personnel are aware of the expectations and approved practices for animal studies, so that adjustments can be made if need.

Participation by research groups is optional, however PIs are **strongly encouraged** to take part in the program. For more information, please see the attached flyer.

## Revised IACUC Guidelines

The IACUC has recently updated several guidelines. The changes include slight updates to the guideline titles, grammatical edits, and in some cases, additional points of consideration. For specific changes, please refer to the attached document.

The revised guidelines are available on the IACUC website and have been loaded into eProtocol.

The next IACUC Full Committee Review (FCR) is **August 10, 2015**.

The submission deadline for review at this FCR is **July 17, 2015**.

Animal Welfare Assurance  
**A4107-01**


AAALAC Accredited Since  
**October 29, 2001**

Please contact the Office of Research Support with any questions, comments, or concerns.  
voice: (512) 471-8871 | web: <http://www.utexas.edu/IACUC> | email: [IACUC@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:IACUC@austin.utexas.edu)



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Date: 06/15/15  
To: Individuals Using Animals in Research  
From: Glen Otto, DVM, Director of the Animal Resources Center   
Subject: The Laboratory Assistance Program (LAP)

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Based on evolving federal guidelines, the Vice-President for Research and the IACUC requested in 2012 that the ARC implement a program whereby the veterinarians and/or experienced managers/technicians have more interaction with labs performing animal work. As a result, the ARC has developed a Laboratory Assistance Program (LAP).

Although the IACUC formally visits research laboratories and animal procedure areas twice a year, in many cases these inspections don't coincide with those times that surgeries or procedures are actually being performed. Likewise, although labs routinely ask the ARC for assistance and training as new studies are planned, we are not always present when the actual research procedures are being performed. The intent of the LAP initiative is to get ARC staff and research staff together in the context of actual work being performed, because that is the best way to have meaningful discussions of the specific techniques being used. The goal of the LAP is to disseminate information regarding guidelines, policies and standards to assure that research personnel are well-informed on issues of appropriate animal care and use. In addition, this type of direct engagement can result in a sharing of tips, alternate methods and best practices that may allow the research laboratory to streamline and improve their animal-related research methods.

The LAP should not be confused with the "Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM)" program, which is a formal, mandatory IACUC/ARC program put in place to selectively monitor a subset of research procedures that have been approved by they IACUC. The LAP is intended to be a voluntary lab assistance and outreach program. Since these visits are not part of an official inspection, the interactions can be more informal, and the goal is not to identify problems that must be reported, but instead to make sure research personnel are aware of the expectations and approved practices for animal studies at UT, so that adjustments can be made if needed. These sessions also give ARC personnel a better understanding of the practical issues that affect research projects and procedures, which allows them to better represent the research community when policies and guidelines are discussed and formulated in conjunction with the IACUC.

Participation by research groups is optional, but PIs are strongly encouraged to have their groups take part in the program. Approximately 30 labs have participated in the LAP over the course of the last three years, and the responses have been uniformly positive. The sessions are customized for each research group. The first session is usually an informal laboratory group meeting to discuss the currently approved protocols, procedures and personnel. Based on that preliminary review, plans are made for ARC staff to visit the lab at a later point when some of the most critical procedures are being actively performed. Topics of discussion often include proper sterile technique, anesthesia monitoring, postoperative care and associated record-keeping, which is very relevant considering that these are some of the most common issues that are cited when labs are visited during formal IACUC or AAALAC evaluations.

The triennial site visit by our accrediting agency (the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, International; AAALAC) will occur this fall. As a result, this summer would be an excellent time for labs to take advantage of the ARC Laboratory Assistance Program to assure that their practices and procedures will be considered humane and compliant when evaluated by peer review. The coordinator of the LAP is:

Jennifer Cassaday, LATG  
ARC Compliance and Training Manager  
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If you have any questions regarding the LAP program or other free training opportunities available from the ARC, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,

Glen Otto, Director, Animal Resources Center

**The University of Texas at Austin  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
Guideline Listing**

Number	Guideline Title	Changes
001	Guidelines to Promote the Psychological Well-Being of Non-Human Primates	No changes
002	Guidelines for the Humane Euthanasia of Laboratory Animals	No changes
003	Guidelines for the Use of Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) for Rodent Euthanasia	No changes
004	Guidelines for the Use of Cervical Dislocation for Rodent Euthanasia	No changes
005	Guidelines for Animal Use in Human Subject Study Environments	Minor wording updates. Redesigned “Written Description” template
006	Guidelines for Surgical Procedures in Non-Rodent Mammals	No changes
007	Guidelines for Survival Surgical Procedures in Rodents, Birds, and Cold-Blooded Vertebrates	No changes
008	Guidelines for Endpoint Monitoring and Humane Termination	Under section A-Definitions, there appears to be a typo for inappetence, there is a space so it reads as in apptence.
009	Guidelines for Maintenance of Tumors and Hybridomas in Rodents	Added a comma to sentence in A-5: “Rodents exhibiting ulcerated tumors should be euthanized with 24 hours, or sooner if clinical signs of infection, pain or distress are noted.”
010	Guidelines for Safe Anesthetic Use	Extensive wording updates. New section on immersion anesthesia.
011	Guidelines for the Transportation of Animals on The University of Texas at Austin Campus	Added a sentence to #8: ARC staff will transport animals at no charge when they are moved between ARC-managed vivariums. This service can be requested by submitting an “Animal Transfer/Transport Form.”
012	Guidelines for Blood Collection	The website PDF is correct, but the online version inside eProtocol, #B.2 has a typo - it should say 0.5% body mass sampled, rather than 0.05%
013	Guidelines for Tail Clipping Mice	Extensive edits. Change to encompass all rodents, not just mice.
014	Guidelines for the Use of Adjuvants in Antibody Production	Typo corrections in Section B.
015	Guidelines for Veterinary Care, Health Checks, and Illness Reporting	Basic grammar/word choice edits

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Number	Guideline Title	Changes
016	Guidelines for the Use of Drugs and Chemicals in Animal Research	Added Part A #4: If an investigator is going to request IACUC approval to use a non-pharmaceutical grade medication or expired drug, they must check the "I Do Not Agree" response at the bottom of this guideline in the specific eProtocol in which the request is made, and provide an explanation and justification in the text box provided.
017	Guidelines for the Social Housing and Environmental Enrichment of Laboratory Mice and Rats	No changes.