The IACUC is responsible for overseeing and evaluating all aspects of animal care and use, and is charged with reviewing proposals that involve animals to ensure that the criteria established in the PHS Policy and the Animal Welfare Regulations (AWRs) are implemented.

The following kinds of activities are exempt from IACUC review:

- Activities involving animals that perform tasks, participate in club activities, or appear in exhibits or demonstrations;
- Use of tissues, organs or other parts of dead animals if received as such; and
- Noninvasive observation of wild animals in their natural habitat. Field studies that involve killing, trapping, banding, darting, implantation of telemetry devices, or any other invasive manipulation require IACUC approval.