



Policy on the Use of Laboratory Animals Outside of the Animal Facilities

All procedures on animals will be conducted within the animal facilities. The use of animals outside the animal facility is an exception and requires prior approval by the University Animal Care Committee (UACC). This policy outlines the procedures to be taken for the use of animals exterior to the facility and provides a framework for the UACC to review work with animals in laboratories outside of the facility.

I. Background

The removal and use of animals exterior to the animal facility requires adequate scientific justification. The reasons for this policy are as follows:

- 1) **Maintenance of SPF animals:** The animal facilities must be kept *specific pathogen free* (SPF), limiting the movement of animals, specifically to and from laboratories is required to maintain SPF facilities.
- 2) **Stress of Transportation:** The movement of animals and exposure of them to novel environments (noise, smell, humidity, etc.) is stressful. To minimise experimental variability, stress should be kept to a minimum prior to euthanasia or any other experimental manipulation.
- 3) **Monitoring of procedures:** When procedures are conducted within the animal facility, trained technical staff are readily available to assist as necessary and help ensure that procedures are done correctly.
- 4) **Allergen Exposure:** Rodents are highly allergenic; prevention of allergies is both an animal care and occupational health and safety issue. By transporting animals out of the animal facility, there is an increased risk of exposure to individuals, some of whom might not suspect that they are at risk of exposure. The ventilation systems within animal facilities are 100% fresh non-recirculating. In some instances, this might not be the case in the laboratories, meaning that other individuals might be exposed through the ventilation system.

II. Procedure to apply for an exemption to use animals outside of the facility

In order to remove live animals from the facility, the relevant section in the Animal Use Protocol must be completed and approved by the UACC. This includes, scientific justification, stress of transportation and external housing as well as mitigation measures for allergen exposure.

The University Animal Care Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate the application to use animals outside of the animal facility.

- a) Evidence that the work cannot be conducted within the facility. This may include the use of specialised equipment which cannot be housed within the animal facility as well as other experimental and facility-specific constraints that preclude work in the animal facility.
- b) Demonstration that all four of the concerns raised with the use of animals outside of the facility will be met.
 - a. Maintenance of *SPF* animals – if animals are to be returned to the facility, what measures will be used to maintain *SPF* status.
 - b. Stress of Transportation - The application must demonstrate species-specific mechanisms of transportation and minimise the time that an animal is outside of the facility.



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- c. Monitoring of Procedures – The location where the animal work will occur needs to be clearly identified to allow for impromptu evaluation of the area to ensure compliance. In addition, pre-inspection of the area may be requested by the committee prior to the initiation of animal work.
- d. Allergen Exposure – Mechanisms need to be put in place to minimise the contact of non-animal users with dead or live animals. For example, it is expected that a dedicated area/room (where possible) will be used; that countertops and equipment also used for non-animal work be cleaned thoroughly between animals and after animal work has been conducted; that animal caging be promptly returned to the animal facility for processing and that dead animals must be bagged and promptly disposed of in an appropriate manner.