
Valdosta State University Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee

Standard Operating Procedure Number 001

INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE & USE COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

PURPOSE: This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) specifies activities involving the use of vertebrate animals that require submission to, and review and approval of, an Animal Use Protocol (AUP) by the Valdosta State University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The role of the IACUC is to facilitate all activities conducted by Valdosta State University faculty, staff, and students involving animals by assisting these individuals in meeting their obligations to plan and conduct animal studies and utilize animals in teaching in accordance with scientific and humane principles.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

Activity – An element of research, testing, or teaching procedures that involves the care and/or use of animals. IACUC approval must be obtained prior to any activity involving the use of animals. Excluded under this definition are activities involving only observation that do not interfere or interact with the animals. For example, using feeders or providing animals with shelter would not be excluded.

Animal – Any live non-human vertebrate animal used or intended for use in research, training, experimentation, testing, propagation, or related purpose, with the exclusion of embryos, tissue, and other biological samples.

- ♦ For embryos, the point in development at which oviparous, ovoviviparous, and viviparous species become regulated animals is specified by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). Viviparous and ovoviviparous species become regulated at parturition from the maternal animal. Oviparous species become regulated when they hatch from the egg. For fish, the VSU IACUC has determined a similar stage in development as the "buttoned-up" stage (when the embryo has fully absorbed the yolk sac and must forage on its own).
- ♦ For tissues and other biological samples, only those that have been collected from a live animal by a Valdosta State University investigator are regulated.

Animal Use Protocol (AUP) – The application form required by the Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) for approval of proposed research, testing or instruction utilizing vertebrate animals.

IACUC OVERSIGHT: Valdosta State University IACUC approval is required for research, testing, and instruction that:

- ♦ Is conducted by VSU faculty, staff, and/or students and/or
- ♦ Is conducted in VSU facilities, including campus facilities and laboratories, satellite facilities, and field stations (i.e., animal use areas).

Excluded from VUS IACUC oversight are activities involving only observation of animals outside of VSU facilities, providing the activity does not interfere with the animals (i.e., the activity is limited to passive observation).

Investigators must submit an Animal Use Protocol (AUP) to receive an approval from the VSU IACUC before any animal activity begins.

When a VSU researcher is collaborating as a co-investigator with a researcher at another organization, the following policies will apply regarding IACUC oversight:

- ◆ If the animals will be housed and/or used only within the collaborating organization's facilities, the VSU IACUC will recognize and accept the approval of the collaborating organization's IACUC if that IACUC has an approved Animal Welfare Assurance from OLAW, as applicable.
- ◆ If the animals will be housed and/or used only within the collaborating organization's facilities and the collaborating organization does not have an approved Animal Welfare Assurance from OLAW, the VSU IACUC will consider amending its Animal Welfare Assurance to cover the non-assured performance site, as applicable. This arrangement would make VSU responsible for both the adequacy of the facilities and the housing and/or use of the animals at the performance site. Because of the responsibility VSU would assume, these requests will be evaluated very carefully on a case-by-case basis. Also, the non- assured institution may be held responsible for costs incurred by VSU to conduct site visits to ensure compliance with federal regulations and policies and VSU IACUC policies and procedures.
- ◆ If animals are housed and/or used only within VSU facilities, the VSU IACUC must review and approve the AUP. The requirement for review of the protocol by the collaborating organization's IACUC is at the option of that IACUC.
- ◆ If animals will be housed and/or used at both VSU and the collaborating organization, and if the collaborating organization has an approved Animal Welfare Assurance, the two IACUCs may exercise discretion in determining under which institutional program the research will be performed and the IACUC will have oversight. Such determination will be described in a written agreement, and both IACUCs will keep full documentation regarding the animal activity and IACUC review and approval. The IACUC with oversight will inform the other IACUC of any significant questions or issues raised during semi-annual program reviews and facility inspections that are related to a research activity for which the other IACUC bears some responsibility or exposure.

The VSU IACUC utilizes the OLAW Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Guidebook as operating guidance. Additionally, the IACUC has adopted the principles of the National Research Council Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (the Guide). These principles apply for all vertebrate animals. Individuals or organizations conducting animal activities supported by VSU or utilizing animals supplied by VSU must satisfy the IACUC that their animal care and use procedures are in compliance with federal regulations, the Guide, and all internal operating procedures.