Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Education

General Overview

*Note: Content not specific to UT Tyler is from the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS)
UT Tyler Animal Care Environment

This educational program serves only as a very broad overview. All personnel involved with animal care at UT Tyler are held accountable for all policies and procedures contained in the UT Tyler IACUC Policy Handbook and for any updates.
The UT Tyler Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

- The UT Tyler IACUC is responsible for overseeing all animal care activities, including:
  - Adherence to UT Tyler, state, and federal regulations
  - Approval of educational and research protocols involving animals
  - Compliance monitoring and reporting
The IACUC

- The UT Tyler IACUC reports to the Institutional Official (IO) who is appointed by the President of the University.

- The IO for UT Tyler is Dr. Michael Odell, Associate Vice-President for Research who also directs the university’s Office of Sponsored Research (OSR).
The IACUC: The Animal Care Environment

The objectives of the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) and the UT Tyler Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) are to provide humane and scientifically appropriate care for research animals at UT Tyler.
The IACUC: The Animal Care Environment

- All personnel coming into contact with animals at UT Tyler are responsible for adhering to ethical principles of humane animal care:
  - Respect for life
  - Societal benefit
  - Non-maleficence

- The prevention of distress and pain is an essential component of animal care, and emphasizes the importance of everyone handling and caring for animals appropriately.
The IACUC Responsibilities

- The IACUC reviews all protocols that require the use of animals, and approval of the protocol by the IACUC is required before any animal work can begin.

- The IACUC must base its decisions on fundamental scientific principles as well as the laws and regulations that govern the use of animals research.

- If a proposed protocol fails to meet these criteria, the IACUC can either require the investigator to make modifications or can refuse to permit the project to begin or continue.
The IACUC Responsibilities

The IACUC is also responsible for:

- Inspecting animal facilities and evaluating animal care programs twice a year
- Reporting their findings and plans for correction of deficiencies to the Institutional Official
- Serving as an information resource on animal welfare concerns for institutional personnel and the community at large
IACUC Legal and Moral Responsibilities

- The UT Tyler IACUC includes a veterinarian with experience in laboratory animal medicine, scientists from within the institution who use research animals, a nonscientist and a person not affiliated with the institution.

- Federal mandates state that the legal and primary moral responsibilities for good animal care rest with the institution itself.
IACUC Legal and Moral Responsibilities

- At UT Tyler, the IACUC and Institutional Official exert the necessary controls to ensure quality animal care.

- If the IACUC fails to comply with its ethical, moral and legal duties, it can cost UT Tyler’s ability to receive public funding for animal research, in addition to fines and loss of animal privileges.
The UT Tyler IACUC: Reporting of Deficiencies

- Any observations of deficient animal care and treatment must be reported

- Reporting can be anonymous through phone calls or postal mail, or it can be reported to the IACUC Chair
The UT Tyler IACUC: Reporting of Deficiencies

- Contact information for anonymous reporting can be found in the UT Tyler IACUC Policy Handbook

- No University employee, IACUC member, laboratory personnel, or other personnel will be discriminated against or be subject to any reprisal for reporting concerns regarding any deficiencies in animal care and treatment.
The IACUC: Laws and Regulations

3 major federal laws govern what we do at UT Tyler regarding the use of animals for research and non-research purposes:

- Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
- The U.S. Government Principles for Use of Animals
- The Animal Welfare Act
Federal Regulations

- Though these laws have some overlap with each other, they are different in some respects in terms of their requirements and how they are enforced.

- The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) enforces compliance of the PHS, and specific guidelines for this law are in *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* ("The Guide").
Federal Regulations

☐ UT Tyler’s animal practices and protocols are governed by the PHS and *The Guide*.

☐ All personnel working in any respect with animals: researchers and their assistants, educators and their assistants, and animal care personnel are responsible for knowing how these laws affect their respective roles.
Federal Regulations: The Guide

- For example, a vivarium employee not directly involved with a protocol but is charged with overseeing feeding and watering should be able to recognize a significant health change status in an animal, and know who to contact.

- This employee should also know how to recognize signs of pain and distress out of the ordinary, and know who to contact.
The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

- *The Guide* is a booklet prepared by The Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources (ILAR).

- The purpose of the *Guide*, first published in 1963 and last revised in 1996, is to help institutions address issues that concern the humane care, use and maintenance of laboratory animals.
The Guide

- The Guide outlines and references adequate veterinary care, facility environment and housing requirements, personnel qualifications, sanitation standards, surgical and postsurgical care, acceptable euthanasia techniques and facility construction guidelines.
The Animal Welfare Act and the US Principles

- Both of these federal regulations are enforced by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

- UT Tyler is subject to random and unannounced inspections by either the USDA or OLAW.
The Animal Welfare Act

- *The Guide* and UT Tyler regulations are based on The Animal Welfare Act:
  - Groups or institutions that sell, auction, exhibit, transport, breed or conduct research with animals are subject to regulation by the Animal Welfare Act.
The Animal Welfare Act

- The Animal Welfare Act regulates the use of all warm-blooded vertebrates in research except birds, rats and mice bred exclusively for research and farm animals used or intended for use as food or fiber. The Act also excludes farm animals intended for use in studies to improve animal nutrition, breeding, management or production efficiency. The Animal Welfare Act covers all wild mammals, even wild rats and mice.

- The regulations deal with housing, handling, feeding, watering, sanitation, ventilation, transportation, separation of species and veterinary care for these animals.
Federal regulations and UT Tyler policies mandate that any employee working in laboratory animal facilities or with substantial animal contact be enrolled in an Animal Occupational Health and Safety Program.
UT Tyler’s Animal Occupational Health and Safety Program

- This includes persons involved in direct care of animals and/or their living environments.

- This also includes persons with periodic contact with animals (live or sacrificed), their viable tissues, body fluids, or wastes.
UT Tyler’s Animal Occupational Health and Safety Program

This policy then will include researchers, educators, vivarium staff, laboratory assistants, physical plant and housekeeping employees, and at times, students, visitors and guests.
UT Tyler’s Animal Occupational Health and Safety Program

- Initiation into the occupational health program involves completing the Health Risk Survey, submitting it to the Director of UT Tyler’s Environmental Health and Safety department.

- After review by a health care professional, the employee may be cleared for animal contact, or may be called in for recommendations to see their personal health care provider for immunizations or other intervention to minimize adverse health problems.
UT Tyler’s Animal Occupational Health and Safety Program

- Personnel must do an update survey every three years, or more frequently depending on the risk level.

- All personnel are to be familiar with details concerning this program in the UT Tyler IACUC Policy Handbook.
Lesson 4. Alternatives Search (for PIs)

- Your protocol form should ask you for an assurance that you have considered alternatives to the use of animals if painful or distressing procedures are proposed.

- This is to satisfy mandates by the Animal Welfare Act and PHS Policy to avoid or minimize discomfort, pain, and distress consistent with sound scientific practices.

- Alternative procedures are those which may replace animals with nonanimal methods, reduce the number of animals used, or refine the methodology to minimize animal pain or distress. For more information on what is meant by alternatives to the use of animals, please refer to the course Working with the IACUC, which is part of this series.
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Alternatives Search (for PIs)

Assurance

- The assurance often takes the form of a written narrative that describes which sources were used to determine that alternatives were not available. Typically, you may be asked to provide the results of a database search including information on:
  - The databases searched.
  - The date the search was performed.
Alternatives Search (for PIs)

Assurance (continued)

- The years of citations covered by database searches.
- The key words and/or search strategy used when searching a database.
- It is strongly recommended that this information be sought during development of a protocol.
Assurances

Online Searchable Databases Include:

- PubMed
- NAL Catalog (AGRICOLA)
- AltBib
- ToxNet
- ISI Web of Knowledge
Additional Reading