

## IACUC POLICIES, PROCEDURES, and GUIDELINES

### Procedure for Conducting IACUC Business During a Pandemic or Other Significant Emergency Requiring Social Distancing

#### Background:

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has suggested institutions should plan for absenteeism of ~40% if a contagion reaches pandemic status. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare at NIH (OLAW) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) expects each institution's IACUC to continue to conduct business according to requirements found in the PHS Policy, the Animal Welfare Act and Regulations, and the Guide.

The following activities must continue even during a pandemic:

- The IACUC must continue to be properly constituted. In the event of a pandemic, a properly constituted IACUC shall be defined as no fewer than five members to include: the IACUC Chair, the Attending Veterinarian, a scientist, a non-scientist, and a non-affiliated (community) member. The IACUC Chair (or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair) retains the authority to implement and/or withdraw implementation of this plan based on information from the CDC and/or local authorities as described below.
- The IACUC must ensure that new protocols be reviewed, and the existing protocol approvals don't expire. If they do, no further animal activities (*e.g.*, data collection) should be conducted and animals must be transferred to holding protocols.
- The IACUC must meet at least twice per year, at six-month intervals
- The IACUC must ensure semiannual inspections (of facilities where animals are held > 12 hrs.) and program reviews continue. Inspections and reviews must occur at six-month intervals.

This plan is triggered when the CDC and/or local public health officials have deemed that a pandemic or other significant emergency is occurring, and that social distancing is advised. The plan may be lifted when public health officials deem it safe to resume normal activities. The UK-IACUC may implement any additional recommendations made by OLAW/USDA if the pandemic worsens. The plan is broken down into sections to focus on different aspects of the IACUC's requirements and duties.

#### Communication:

The telephone numbers and email addresses for all IACUC members, veterinarians, and Office of the Attending Veterinarian (OAV) personnel are to be gathered and held on file by OAV staff and the IACUC chair and vice chair. Each member may be asked to assure that he/she has access to telephone and internet services. OAV staff may acquire and maintain special remote access to the files on their workstations. They may be tasked with maintaining the flow of information (*i.e.* protocol review and meeting announcements), *via* available electronic means, to the IACUC members. OAV staff may organize teleconferences or web meetings to facilitate IACUC meetings. The Electronic Protocol Processing System internet portal (or an alternate electronic system) may be maintained during the pandemic or other significant emergency and may serve as a secure, password-protected,

access point for all protocols. The Electronic Protocol Processing System (or an alternate electronic system) and the IACUC website are to be maintained by OAV and Research Communications staff respectively.

### **Protocol Review:**

New protocols, amendments, and renewals may be submitted through the Electronic Protocol Processing System (or an alternate electronic system). All submitted protocols, amendments, and three-year renewals may be evaluated by Designated Member Review (DMR). The review team may consist of at least one scientific reviewer and one veterinary reviewer as available. The IACUC Chairperson has delegated the authority to assign the primary reviewer to the OAV-IACUC office.

In some cases, the IACUC members may be given up to 48 hours to review and comment on protocols directly related to the study of a pandemic or other significant emergency.

The Electronic Protocol Processing System (or an alternate electronic system) may be used to access all protocols. All members will be notified by email (or other means available) when a protocol is being reviewed. Any member will have the ability to comment on a protocol. Any member will have the ability to recommend that it be brought to full committee review at the next called meeting.

### **Facilities Inspections:**

At least 2 IACUC members are required for an inspection. If this is not possible, veterinary or animal health technicians and/or OAV staff may be drafted as agents of the IACUC to serve as inspectors. A report of the veterinary or animal health technicians' findings (if no IACUC member or OAV staff is involved in the inspection) will be emailed to the IACUC chair and vice chair and copied to OAV staff. Facilities used for PHS-funded projects or for USDA-covered species will be inspected twice annually at approximately six-month intervals. Facilities used for agricultural activities may be inspected annually. The Continuing Protocol Review (CPR) program may be suspended until the pandemic or emergency status has been declared ended or been resolved.

### **Meetings:**

Before the meetings all members will receive, by email, the documents normally provided to members during a physically convened meeting. Members will be instructed to preview relevant material in the Electronic Protocol Processing System (or an alternate electronic system), if it is necessary for the conduct of business. Written minutes of the meeting will be maintained in accord with the PHS Policy (IV.E.1.b.). Full meetings will be held twice annually at approximately six-month intervals. More frequent meetings can be called at the discretion of the IACUC Chair, the Attending Veterinarian, or the Institutional Official. During meetings, protocols brought for full committee review will be considered, the semiannual program review will be completed, and any other business requiring a full committee (*i.e., review of alleged noncompliances*) will be conducted. Full meetings will require that no less than five members (as stated under the background section) participate in the teleconference or web meeting. This will be documented by a rollcall or sign-in verification at the beginning of the meeting. Voting will be conducted by voice vote with a rollcall if the meeting is conducted via teleconference.

**Training:**

Training may be carried out using the AALAS Learning Library and other resources available through the IACUC website or distributed via email. If new members are appointed during the pandemic or other significant emergency to maintain quorum, they will be required to take the “Essentials for IACUC Members” module in addition to other required modules.

Approved and Adopted by the  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
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