

15.03.07 Use of Vertebrate Animals

Revised [July 27, 2026](#)

Next Scheduled Review: July 27, 2031

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Regulation Summary

The Texas A&M University System (system) recognizes the importance of animal research to human, animal, and environmental health, and is committed to the humane and ethical treatment of vertebrate animals used in research, teaching and testing in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Definitions

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Regulation

1. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Member Responsibilities

- 1.1.1 Each member involved with the use of live vertebrate animals in research, teaching or testing must establish a rule for carrying out this regulation.
- 1.1.2 All animals used in research, teaching or testing regardless of the funding sources, must be provided humane care and treatment. Members must also make provisions for appropriate husbandry and veterinary care for vertebrate animals owned by the institution but not involved in research, teaching, and testing.
- 1.1.3 The chief executive officer (CEO) or designee of each member that conducts research, teaching or testing with animals must appoint an Institutional Official (IO) for their animal research program, unless the CEO will also serve as the IO. The IO serves as the person at the member that has overall responsibility for the vertebrate animal care and use program.
- 1.1.4 The CEO, or designee, of each member that conducts research, teaching, or testing with animals must establish an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and appoint the members of the IACUC, or enter into an agreement with another member with an IACUC for IACUC services. The

delegation of CEO's authority to appoint IACUC members must be specific and in writing.

- 1.1.5 The CEO, or designee, of each member that conducts research, teaching, or testing with animals must appoint an Attending Veterinarian (AV) for the institution which can include entering into an agreement with another member to utilize that member's Attending Veterinarian's services.

- 1.1.5.1 The AV or their designee must have direct or delegated authority for activities involving animals at the member, serve as a voting member of the IACUC, and be involved with the coordination of campus programs for the provision of adequate husbandry and veterinary care of research, teaching, and testing with vertebrate animals.

- 1.1.6 Each member must obtain United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) registration or license if required by the Animal Welfare Act.

- 1.1.7 Each member must obtain a Public Health Service (PHS) Animal Welfare Assurance (Assurance) from the National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) prior to performing any activity involving animals supported by PHS, Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Veterans Administration (VA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), or other Sponsor with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with PHS.

- 1.1.8 Each member must establish appropriate interinstitutional agreements prior to engaging in collaborative animal research where animal research is to be conducted at sites, including at companies and other entities, other than at the member's institution.

- 1.1.9 Each member must establish an occupational health and safety program for individuals working with and around animals used for research, teaching, and testing. Relevant requirements for an occupational health and safety program may be found in the *Guide for the Care and use of Laboratory Animals*, *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Testing*, and *Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals*.

1.2 Compliance Requirements

- 1.2.1 The Animal Welfare Act (for covered species) and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (the *Guide*) must be followed when conducting research, teaching or testing activities involving non-agricultural animals and biomedical research activities in agricultural animals.

- 1.2.2 The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia must be followed when conducting research, teaching, or testing activities involving all vertebrate animals. For wildlife and other non-routinely used vertebrate animal species guidelines published by professional or veterinary organizations not in conflict with the *Guide* and the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia may be appropriate to adopt.

- 1.2.2.1 Exceptions made to the above mentioned guidelines and requirements can be made by the member's IACUC, as appropriate.
- 1.2.3 The *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching* (Ag Guide) must be followed when conducting research, teaching or testing activities involving agricultural animals intended for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency or for improving the quality of food and fiber. This is in addition to applicable components of the *Guide*.
- 1.2.4 For wildlife studies, the IACUC must determine if the studies are observational only, which should include consideration of the USDA's current guidance on field studies. If not, the IACUC will defer to 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 to determine IACUC oversight. Additionally, wildlife research must comply with relevant existing federal, state, and local laws and requirements, including permitting where applicable.
- 1.2.5 For vertebrate animal research, teaching, and testing where the animal work occurs outside of the United States and its territories, including field studies, the requirements of Section 2 below apply. Additionally, the following requirements also apply:
 - 1.2.5.1 All transfer or transport of animals must be in compliance with United States laws and treaties (e.g. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)).
 - 1.2.5.2 All vertebrate animal research, teaching, and testing must be in compliance with national and local laws, and other requirements, of the non-US country.
 - 1.2.5.3 Approval for research, teaching, or testing activities conducted outside the United States, and its possessions and territories, must be obtained from the sponsor's or international institution's animal oversight authority, as applicable.
 - 1.2.5.3.1 The member's IACUC may accept the protocol approval from a research institution in the other country(ies), when applicable.
 - 1.2.5.4 If the animal work occurring at the international site is supported by funds from PHS, HHS, NSF, VA, NASA, or other Sponsor with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with PHS, the international site must have an active Foreign Assurance with OLAW or the international site must be incorporated under the member's own Assurance.
- 1.2.6 IACUCs should consult with the TAMUS Research Compliance Office, when needed, for a final determination on oversight of an animal activity prior to contacting a regulatory agency.

2. INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

- 2.1 Member IACUCs will be appointed and structured, and perform the duties and functions as described in the applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines. Members will defer to the strictest regulatory requirements when deciding IACUC membership, as appropriate.
- 2.2 The use of vertebrate animals within each member, whether for research, teaching or testing purposes, must be described in a protocol, according to the applicable compliance requirements in Section 1.2 above. The protocol is a form designed to capture relevant information regarding the appropriate use of vertebrate animals in research, teaching or testing activities.
- 2.3 An approved IACUC protocol is required prior to the initiation of research involving vertebrate animals used in research, teaching or testing.
- 2.4 An approved and current protocol for all vertebrate animal activities must be in place at all times vertebrate animals are housed or used for research, teaching or testing.
 - 2.4.1 All modifications to approved vertebrate animal activities (protocols) must be approved by the IACUC prior to initiation of the changes.
 - 2.4.2 A member's IACUC may not serve as another institution's IACUC without an appropriately executed agreement in place describing the relationship, including acceptance of the member's IO.
- 2.5 IACUCs of members that are not subject to USDA or PHS oversight must follow the *Guide* as a reference document, and the Ag Guide, as applicable.

3. PRIVATELY OWNED ANIMALS

- 3.1 Privately owned vertebrate animals, such as pets, may not be used by a member's faculty, students, or staff in research, teaching, or testing without prior approval of the IACUC or Veterinary Clinical Studies Committee (VCSC) (designated to review research with pet animals). IACUCs and VSCSs shall establish their own policies and processes for this approval. This requirement applies to animal research, teaching, and testing activities conducted on or off campus and includes, but is not limited to, activities completed:
 - 3.1.1 in the field by member faculty, students, or staff;
 - 3.1.2 by member students as part of the completion of a course or their degree either at the system member's school or at another institution
 - 3.1.3 by graduate veterinarians for continuing education offered by a System member; and
 - 3.1.4 through participation in veterinary clinical research studies (reviewed by a Veterinary Clinical Studies Committee).
- 3.2 Members must make provisions for appropriate animal husbandry and veterinary care for privately owned animals housed in their facilities when those animals are not used for research, teaching, or testing.

- 3.3 Members with veterinary teaching programs will provide care to privately owned animals according to their program's mission and educational model.
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Related Statutes, Policies or Requirements

[American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, Current Version](#)

[The Animal Welfare Act \(7 U.S.C. §§ 2131-2159\) and Amendments and the Animal Welfare Regulations \(9 C.F.R.\)](#)

[Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals \(National Institutes of Health\), Current Version](#)

[Health Research Extension Act of 1985](#)

[U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training](#)

[Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Current Version](#)

[Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, Current Version](#)

[Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, National Research Council. 1997. *Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals*. National Academies Press.](#)

Member Rule Requirements

A rule is required to supplement this regulation. See Section 1.1.

Contact Office

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