128.1 Overview

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) investigates reports of alleged noncompliance or concerns regarding animal care and use at the University of Kentucky in accord with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Welfare Regulations, the National Institutes of Health Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Public Health Service (PHS) policy, and the University's PHS Assurance.

This policy outlines the IACUC’s procedure for evaluating and investigating animal welfare concerns and alleged noncompliance including deviations.

A standing Investigative Subcommittee (IS) is appointed by the IACUC chair to evaluate and investigate specific reports of alleged noncompliance (e.g., deviations) and concerns. The IS is responsible for: assessing the validity of the allegation, concern or deviation; if necessary, conducting an investigation and if appropriate developing a recommendation for corrective action; determining if additional investigation or review is needed by the convened IACUC; and reporting findings and making recommendations to the convened IACUC.

In certain instances, the IACUC chair may conduct an investigation of any alleged noncompliance or animal welfare concern using an ad hoc investigative committee or designee instead of the standing investigative subcommittee. Examples of concerns that may require an ad hoc committee include but are not limited to high profile incidents or programmatic deficiencies. Upon receipt of an allegation or animal welfare concern, the IACUC chair, the ad hoc committee or designee conducts a preliminary assessment to determine if the allegation provides sufficient information to suggest that a violation has occurred. If the allegation is found to be sufficiently specific and credible, for allegations that could lead to corrective action the Principal Investigator (PI) will be informed as soon as appropriate in light of the nature of the allegations. Unless the PI agrees that the violation has occurred and agrees to correct it, an investigation will be conducted as described in this document. For the protection of all parties, relevant records or research related information may need to be secured.

The IACUC has the option to further review the IS or IACUC Chair or ad hoc committee’s findings and recommendations and make the final determination regarding whether: 1) an incident involved noncompliance; 2) potential sanctions or corrective actions are needed; 3) incident should be reported to Institutional Official, appropriate regulatory and/or funding agencies.

128.2 Incident Reporting
Concerns or deviations submitted by DLAR veterinarians and animal care staff are sent directly to the IS in accord with IACUC established reporting procedure. These reports
should include at minimum the date the incident occurred, a brief description of what occurred, the relevant protocol number, the Principal Investigator (PI) name, and contact information.

Concerns submitted by other individuals may be reported to any IACUC member, DLAR or Office of Research Integrity (ORI) staff member. The allegations may be submitted through several existing mechanisms (e.g. telephone, e-mail, etc.). The report should at a minimum include the date the incident was noticed or occurred and a brief description of the incident.

Upon receipt of a concern, the individual who receives the information summarizes the incident/concern and submits it to the IS following established report mechanisms (e.g. e-mail).

128.3 Investigative Subcommittee (IS) Composition and Review Procedures
The IACUC chair appoints a standing IS of three or more individuals, at least one of which should be a DLAR staff veterinarian and one of which should be an ORI staff member. Membership on the IS is open to all IACUC voting members and alternates. Membership is staggered so that the IS is not entirely comprised of all new members at any given time. An IS chair is appointed to lead the group. The IS chair can serve more than once during his/her three year term on the IACUC.

The IS chair is responsible for reporting to the IACUC chair and the Attending Veterinarian (AV) the following: any incident that places the animals at immediate jeopardy or harm; or any concern that needs immediate action by the IACUC or the Attending Veterinarian.

If an IS member has an conflict of interest involving any aspect of a report, then he/she is responsible for disclosing the conflict; the member in conflict does not participate in the review. An IS member, who is not a DLAR staff veterinarian, may also serve as the lead investigator for each case as an alternate to the IS chair.

The lead investigator or designee is responsible for notifying the Principal Investigator (PI) whose protocol is subject to the allegation and for soliciting his/her input. The PI is informed as soon as appropriate in light of the nature of the allegation. When notifying the PI of the allegation, the lead investigator shall advise of the nature of the allegations and the focus of the review and shall inform the PI of the opportunity to provide comments and other relevant information in response to the allegation.

In conducting the review, if appropriate, the lead investigator or his/her designee will consider all relevant evidence, which may include a review of pertinent records, observation of animals, consultation with inside or outside experts, and obtaining additional information from the complainant, animal care staff, and/or protocol study personnel. Based upon the inquiry, the lead investigator prepares a brief summary report including a description of the evidence reviewed, a summary of the findings, and a set of recommendations for IACUC action. If a member's term on the IS is ending and
he/she is a lead investigator for a case, the member completes the ongoing investigation.

Each IS member has the right to request additional information. The IS may conduct its reviews through face-to-face meetings or via electronic communication. The IS makes a determination regarding whether the entire IACUC needs to conduct further review of the incident or concern at a convened IACUC meeting using the criteria listed below.

**128.4 IS Criteria for Determination**

**Convened IACUC Review and Discussion of Investigation Report Required**-This criteria includes incidents which resulted or could have resulted in harm to an animal(s), or other serious, repeated violations or those identified by National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) or USDA as being reportable.

**Convened IACUC Discussion of Report Not Recommended Unless Requested by IACUC Member**-This criteria includes incidents involving a deviation but animals were not or would not have been harmed and/or procedural/administrative issues with minimal consequences to animal welfare.

**128.5 Convened IACUC Review**

If convened IACUC review of the report and detailed discussion is not required, then the IS, IACUC Chair, or *ad hoc* committee review including the protocol number is listed on an agenda for a convened IACUC meeting. Any IACUC member may request a copy of the summary report and request that the concern be discussed at the meeting.

If the incident requires convened IACUC review and discussion, ORI staff includes the investigation report in the agenda for a convened meeting of the IACUC. The report may include IS, IACUC Chair, or *ad hoc* committee recommendations for corrective action. The IS, IACUC Chair, or designee presents the report to the IACUC at the convened meeting.

The IACUC reviews the reports following standard operating procedures. Any IACUC member with an actual or perceived conflict of interest discloses the conflict and does not participate in the review or vote.

The IACUC determines appropriate course of action (e.g. dismissal of concern; corrective action; suspension of IACUC approval; recommendations for sanction to VPR).

In addition, the IACUC makes a determination whether the incident is reportable to federal regulatory or funding agencies using the criteria for reporting outlined by OLAW and USDA.

The IACUC notifies the PI in writing of any action taken by the convened IACUC.
128.6 Record Keeping
The IS, IACUC Chair, or ad hoc committee records deliberations are provided to the ORI using a variety of mechanisms (e.g. e-mail). The convened IACUC review of alleged noncompliance or concerns are maintained by the ORI following standard operating procedures.

128.7 Reporting to Federal Agencies
If the IACUC determines that the concern is reportable as required by OLAW or USDA, the IACUC, through the VPR, and with input from the Attending Veterinarian, promptly reports the serious or continuing noncompliance, or serious deviations, or suspension in accord with the agency’s reporting requirements.

128.8 Follow-Up
The IACUC staff sends an official letter to the PI with an investigation summary, the committee’s determination and the committee’s action. The committee’s action may include training requirements, documentation of specific activities, counseling, etc. These actions are to be completed by the established dates reflected on the letter. Any items not completed by the established dates are brought back to the IACUC for further consideration. A formal motion may be brought forth by the Chair to the committee for vote. This motion may include additional sanctions including the potential for protocol suspension.

Approved and Adopted by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee March 16, 2011

Amended and Approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee April 20, 2011

Amended and Approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee January 18, 2012

Amended and Approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee March 19, 2014

Amended and Approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee January 21, 2015