

## 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) 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. A *quorum* is required to conduct official business, such as protocol suspension or full committee review. A *quorum* is a minimum of 50% of the voting members. New members if needed must be properly trained upon appointment.
- The IACUC must ensure that new protocols be reviewed and the existing protocol approvals not 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 will be lifted when public health officials deem it safe to resume normal activities. The UK-IACUC will implement any additional recommendations made by OLAW 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 ORI personnel are to be gathered and held on file by ORI staff and the IACUC chair and vice chair. Each member will be asked to assure that he/she has access to telephone and internet services. ORI staff will acquire and maintain special remote access to the files on their workstations. They will be tasked with maintaining the flow of information (*i.e.* protocol review and meeting announcements), *via* email, to the IACUC members. ORI staff will organize teleconferences or web meetings to facilitate called IACUC meetings. The eSirius internet portal and/or SharePoint will be maintained during the pandemic or other significant emergency and will serve as a secure, password-protected, access point for all protocols. The IACUC website will serve as an access point for other relevant information. The eSirius system and/or SharePoint and the IACUC website are to be maintained by ORI staff.

#### **Protocol Review:**

New protocols, amendments, and renewals will be submitted through the eSirius system and/or SharePoint. All submitted protocol, amendments, annual renewals, and three year renewals will be evaluated by Designated Member Review (DMR). The review team will consist of at least one

veterinarian and one scientific reviewer for all reviews except annual renewals. Annual renewals will be reviewed by one reviewer. The veterinarian reviewer will be assigned *via* a rotating scheme. The scientific reviewer will be assigned by the chair, and if he/she is not able, by the vice chair. If neither is able, ORI staff will assign designated reviewers.

eSirius system and/or SharePoint will be used to access all protocols. All members will be notified by email when a protocol is being reviewed. Any member will have the ability to comment on a protocol or 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 ORI staff will 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 ORI staff is involved in the inspection) will be emailed to the IACUC chair and vice chair and copied to ORI-IACUC 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 will be inspected annually. The Continuing Protocol Review (CPR) program will be suspended until the pandemic or emergency status has been changed by public health officials.

### **Meetings:**

The traditional convened meeting, physically attended by IACUC members, will be replaced by teleconferences or web 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 eSirius system and/or SharePoint, 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 a *quorum* of members participate in the teleconference or web meeting. This will be documented by a roll-call at the beginning of the meeting. Voting will be conducted by voice vote with a roll-call if the meeting is conducted via teleconference.

### **Training:**

Training will be carried out using the AALAS learning library and other resources available through the IACUC website. 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 Lessons" module in addition to other required modules.

Approved and Adopted by the  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
April 21, 2010