



Guidance on Role and Responsibilities of Principal Investigators in Animal Research

1.0 Scope and Application

This document outlines the role and responsibilities of the Principal Investigator (PI) on Animal Use Protocols (AUP) and provides procedures to follow if a change in PI is required.

2.0 Guiding Principles

- A. Eligibility to serve as PI
 - a. Eligible individuals
 - i. Tenured or tenure-track faculty
 - ii. Non-tenure track faculty
 - iii. Emeritus faculty
 - iv. Administrative & Professional employees in Scientific & Research Services job family
 - b. Eligibility determined on a case-by-case basis
 - i. Individuals with graduate/professional training status (including postdoctoral researchers and fellows, and graduate students)
 - ii. While the ACUC recognizes the temporary employment status of trainees, the committee also acknowledges the training benefit of serving in the PI role
 - iii. Permission may be granted; however, it is strongly recommended that the faculty advisor serve as the PI
 - iv. To request permission, email acucsecretary@fsu.edu and include:
 - 1. Curriculum vitae
 - 2. Letter of support from faculty advisor (for graduate/professional trainees); or
 - 3. Letter of support from Department Chair
 - c. Not eligible to serve as PI
 - i. Undergraduate student
 - ii. Individuals holding non-regular academic appointments, including adjunct and affiliate faculty
 - iii. Non-University employees
- B. The PI holds primary responsibility for the ethical and compliant conduct of animal research within their laboratory and must ensure the following:
 - a. Completion of all institutionally required investigator training courses
 - b. Confirmation that the research protocol does not unnecessarily duplicate previously reported research
 - c. For protocols involving USDA Category D and E procedures, a review of relevant scientific literature, sources, and databases to confirm that no valid

alternatives exist to procedures that may cause more than momentary pain or distress, whether relieved or not

- d. Enrollment of all individuals at risk in the FSU Occupational Health and Safety Program
 - e. Authorization and appropriate training of all protocol team members with animal-handling responsibilities, including:
 - i. Biology, handling, and care of the species involved
 - ii. Aseptic surgical methods and techniques (if applicable)
 - iii. Alternatives to animal use or methods that minimize distress
 - iv. Proper use of anesthetics, analgesics, and tranquilizers (if applicable)
 - v. Procedures for reporting animal welfare concerns
 - f. Prior approval from the ACUC before initiating any significant changes to the protocol
 - g. Notification to the ACUC of any unexpected results that impact the animals, including unanticipated pain or distress, morbidity, or mortality, which must also be reported to Laboratory Animal Resources veterinarians
 - h. Familiarity with and compliance with all applicable institutional, state, and federal regulations and policies
 - i. Adherence to FSU ACUC Guidelines and Policies unless a specific exemption is requested and approved. The PI is responsible for ensuring that all laboratory personnel comply with these guidelines and policies. Guidelines and policies are available at: https://www.research.fsu.edu/research-offices/acuc/policies_guidelines/
- C. For extended absences (such as sabbatical leave or off-campus unavailability), the PI must notify the ACUC (acucsecretary@fsu.edu), specifying the expected duration of the leave and identifying the individual(s) who will be responsible for oversight of animal activities and immediate animal welfare decisions during the absence. The ACUC discourages assigning such responsibility to undergraduate students. In the case of a pressing animal health problem, if the responsible person is not available, LAR veterinarians have the authority to treat the animal, remove it from the experiment, institute appropriate measures to relieve severe pain or distress, or perform euthanasia if necessary.
- D. Procedures for PI Change
- a. Change in PI on an AUP requires submission of an amendment, followed by review and approval of the FSU ACUC
 - b. PIs with an active AUP must notify the ACUC (acucsecretary@fsu.edu) of their intent to leave FSU, preferably six months prior to the anticipated separation date. A written plan must be provided, addressing:
 - i. Use and disposition of animals currently on census
 - ii. Expectations for the AUP following the separation date
 - iii. Plans for transporting animals to another institution, if applicable
 - c. In the event of unplanned unavailability or immediate separation of the PI
 - i. The department chair must notify the ACUC (acucsecretary@fsu.edu) immediately and identify an eligible individual to assume PI role and responsibilities

- ii. If an amendment to change the PI has not been submitted within 7 days of notification of PI unavailability, animals currently on census will be transferred to the Laboratory Animal Resources holding protocol until the amendment designating the new PI has been approved by the ACUC.

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