

Animal Research (AR) Guidelines for CofC IACUC Investigators

Enacting CDC and Back on the Bricks Guidelines for Social Distancing

Enacted: 3/23/2020

Updated: 9/21/2020

Given the rapidly evolving circumstances regarding COVID-19 and the College of Charleston's continued commitment to the health and safety of faculty, staff, students, our animal population, and the greater community, the Office of Research and Grants Administration, with authority from the Provost, has issued the following revised standards related to research involving animals. Please be aware that further restrictions may be implemented based on recommendations from State or Federal authorities.

Applicability

All IACUC investigators, including student researchers, are expected to follow the AR guidelines specified in this document. Should any member of the animal research team be in violation of these AR guidelines, an adverse event report must be submitted. The IACUC reserves the right to suspend any animal research found in violation of AR guidelines.

IACUC Review Operations

CofC's IACUC is fully functional online and will continue accepting new application PDFs submitted to compliance@cofc.edu. IACUC review and approval of new applications, continuing reviews, and modifications can continue remotely without interruption. Full committee meetings will be conducted via tele/videoconference as needed.

The start date of new applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All protocols must follow the existing [Use of Protective Clothing in the Prevention of Zoonotic Diseases](#) procedures and the Back on the Bricks guidance:

- Maintain 6 feet social distance
- Wear a mask at all times
- Proper PPE must be worn when handling animals
- Stay home if sick
- Indoor maximum occupancy: 30 or maximum posted, whichever is less
- Outdoor maximum occupancy: 50 people

At this time, the IACUC anticipates that most animal research will be allowed to resume, with the exception of some teaching protocols. Teaching protocols that cannot follow the Back on the Bricks guidance will not be allowed to start until further notice.

Ongoing Animal Research

Field Animal Research

At this time, all field research is allowed to resume, as long as social distancing can be maintained, and masks are worn at all times. Campus members are obligated to follow College of Charleston Back on the Bricks policy when conducting research on behalf of the College, regardless of the physical location.

If the field research involves the use of a boat, the deck size of the boat must be considered in determining the maximum occupancy. For example, an 18 ft. boat deck will allow for 2 persons. The owners of the research vessels are responsible for determining the maximum occupancy for each vessel.

For classroom field research, instructors are reminded to develop a plan that will allow for full participation of the class while maintaining six feet of distance between everyone.

Faculty-Laboratory Animal Research

At this time, faculty-led laboratory research is allowed to resume. Masks and proper PPE must be worn at all times when handling animals, and social distancing must be maintained in all vivarium spaces.

Faculty members must consult with the IACUP Director or co-director prior to procuring animals. Contact millkeng@cofc.edu for animals being held downtown, and meierp@cofc.edu for animals held at Grice Marine Lab. Faculty researchers must take a primary role in caring for their research animals. Faculty researchers are also required to provide the animal care plan to the IACUP at the time of procurement. Plans must be posted with animals at their holding location at all times. This includes emergency compassionate care plans, in case of sudden laboratory shutdown.

Should the faculty researcher become ill or quarantined due to close contact, the IACUP Director (Garrett Milliken, millkeng@cofc.edu) or Chair of the IACUC (John Widholm, Widholmj@cofc.edu) must be contacted immediately in order to maintain animal care.

Student Animal Research

The types of teaching protocols allowed may be limited due to social distancing requirements. It is allowed by the IACUC as long as in-person classes are permitted on campus. Should classes move to virtual-only, use of animals for classroom instruction will be prohibited.

For lab courses, faculty must follow social distancing and mask guidelines at all times. IACUC approval does not supersede College-wide Back to the Bricks policy. Consult with your department chair if unsure if allowed.

For independent studies, faculty sponsors are required to coordinate with IACUP staff prior to resumption and at the end of each school semester. Independent studies will be allowed to continue should classes move to virtual-only, with permission of the IACUP and their department chair.

Student researchers and faculty sponsors must take a primary role in caring for their research animals. Student researchers are also required to provide the animal care plan to the IACUP at the time of procurement. Plans must be posted with animals at their holding location at all times. This includes emergency compassionate care plans, in case of sudden laboratory shutdown. Should the student researcher become ill or quarantined, IACUP must be contacted immediately in order to maintain animal care.

Continuing Reviews and Final Reports

Federal regulations do not allow for the extension of continuing reviews and final reports. Continuing reviews are still required to be submitted at least two weeks prior to the one-year anniversary of the last review. No IACUC protocol can extend past 3 years, and final reports must be submitted on time. If the

research must continue past the original 3-year time frame due to COVID-19 interruptions, a new protocol must be submitted to the IACUC for review.

Contact Information

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Please contact compliance@cofc.edu if you have any additional questions about this guidance.