

Florida State University

Animal Care and Use Committee

Training Requirements Policy for Individuals Performing Animal Research

The use of animals in research and teaching is a privilege granted to institutions, investigators, staff and students that commit to meeting high ethical and regulatory standards. In accordance with federal regulations and guidelines, Florida State University requires that all animal users undergo training to ensure that they are qualified to handle and work with animals.  The ultimate responsibility for overseeing training rests with the ACUC, which must consider the qualifications of personnel involved in conducting research as part of its protocol review and approval process. All animal users are required to complete required training prior to working with animals. The ACUC will not approve animal use applications or permit animal facility access until the training has been completed.  Training requirements consist of an animal research core covering rules and regulations, ethics and animal welfare and occupational health and safety. Additional species and technique specific training is required dependent upon the work covered by the individual’s protocol(s). Other specialized or individualized training opportunities are available upon request; contact the LAR office at 644-4262.

The Principal Investigator and all staff/students listed on the original protocol and all subsequent significant changes must complete mandated training prior to beginning work with animals. The addition of new techniques or species may require additional training; investigators will be notified by the ACUC Secretary when this applies. Exemptions from the training requirements may be considered upon request and on a case-by-case basis (see below). Investigators who do not work directly with animals but are the principal investigator on an animal use project are **required** to complete some animal care and use training to verify familiarity with animal research regulations (see below).

**Background:** Federal regulations require institutions to verify that all individuals working with animals are appropriately qualified to perform the procedures for which they are approved. Institutions should provide training to instruct individuals in the humane care and use of animals.

* The U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research and Training, VIII, states*: ‘Investigators and other personnel shall be appropriately qualified and experienced for conducting procedures on living animals. Adequate arrangements shall be made for their in-service training, including the proper and humane care and use of laboratory animals.’*
* PHS Policy,Health Research Extension Act of 1985 Public Law 99-158, November 20, 1985, “Animals in Research” Sec. 495(c) (1) (B): “*scientists, animal technicians, and other personnel involved with animal care, treatment, and use by the applicant have available to them instruction or training in the humane practice of animal maintenance and experimentation, and the concept, availability, and use of research or testing methods that limit the use of animals or limit animal distress; …”*
* The Animal Welfare Act, in section 2.32, states*: ‘It shall be the responsibility of the research facility to ensure that all scientists, research technicians, animal technicians, and other personnel involved in animal care, treatment, and use are qualified to perform their duties. This responsibility shall be fulfilled in part through the provision of training and instruction to those personnel.’*

*‘Training and instruction shall be made available, and the qualifications of personnel reviewed, with sufficient frequency to fulfill the research facilities responsibilities under this section and section 2.31.’*

* The 8th edition of the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states: *“All personnel involved with the care and use of animals must be ade­quately educated, trained, and/or qualified in basic principles of laboratory animal science to help ensure high-quality science and animal well-being. …. Institutions are responsible for providing appropriate resources to support personnel training (Anderson 2007), and the IACUC is responsible for providing oversight and for evaluating the effectiveness of the training program (Foshay and Tinkey 2007).*

*“Training should be tailored to the particular needs of research groups; however, all research groups should receive training in animal care and use legislation, IACUC function, eth­ics of animal use and the concepts of the Three Rs, methods for reporting concerns about animal use, occupational health and safety issues pertaining to animal use, animal handling, aseptic surgical technique, anesthesia and analgesia, euthanasia, and other subjects, as required by statute.”*

#### TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

FSU uses the web-based training resources of the AALAS Learning Library to provide the majority of basic mandated training in the humane care and use of animals in research and teaching. Available at no cost to individuals through the institutional AALAS subscription, individuals are assigned a user name and password for full access to the AALAS Learning Library by the ACUC Secretary. Some training will require other methods for completion. A list of currently required courses is attached.

Hands-on training is also required to ensure proficiency in protocol-related animal procedures and may be obtained through laboratory mentoring (from other researchers in the laboratory who are skilled at the procedure), from Laboratory Animal Resources (LAR) veterinary staff or from Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) staff. The mentoring approach may differ slightly from lab to lab however in summary new lab personnel begin by shadowing experienced individuals (faculty and senior technicians, post-docs or graduate students), observing and asking questions. This is followed by performing work under the supervision of experienced personnel until such time as senior lab members feel the individual is competent to perform work without direct supervision. Individuals also may schedule hands on training with LAR and/or EH&S staff. Competency is monitored by EH&S, LAR and the ACUC by direct observation of handling during lab visits or inspections as well as by routine clinical rounds to observe animal health and well-being in all animal holding facilities.

Personnel are encouraged to engage in additional training, including attendance at specialty meetings or webinars, viewing of additional web based courses or educational information, completion of [Canadian Council on Animal Care training modules](http://ccac.ca/en_/education/niaut), on-line training demonstrations (e.g. [www.jove.com](http://www.jove.com)) and other educational opportunities.

The Animal Care and Use Committee Secretary maintains a database of training completed for all animal users. Investigators and research staff are encouraged to submit documentation of additional training or qualifications for lab personnel to the ACUC Secretary for inclusion in the database.

**Refresher IACUC Training:** All individuals working with laboratory animals (including Principal Investigators) must complete an on-line refresher course at least once every three years. Refresher training must be current for full and annual renewal of protocols covering the animal activities. Assurance that refresher training has been accomplished will be verified during the protocol review process.  At least one module (Working with the IACUC, non-VA version) is mandatory however additional courses may be required as determined by the ACUC and provided in notification from the ACUC Secretary. A protocol will not be approved until all personnel listed on the protocol are up to date with required training. Personnel that have not completed refresher training are not permitted to participate or engage in procedures that impact or affect animal subjects or have access to the animal facilities.

Failure to comply with the policy is considered an act of noncompliance and will be dealt with accordingly. Untrained personnel are prohibited from animal facility access or participation in animal use for research or teaching.  If untrained personnel are observed and/or reported to have participated or engaged in animal activities covered by an approved active protocol, a formal investigation into the matter will be initiated by the FSU ACUC.

**Exemptions to Mandated Training Requirements**

The FSU ACUC exempts three groups of individuals from the full mandated training and a third group that may request a waiver of the requirements. The first three groups include (1) students participating in classes that involve only animal observation or casual handling, (2) non-FSU volunteers for wild bird research projects and (3) short term visiting faculty. In addition, new faculty and post-doctoral fellows that have received equivalent training at other institutions may request an exemption from initial training upon providing adequate documentation to the FSU ACUC for review. Refer to the information listed below for specifics.

**Students in classes/labs:** Students participating in classes or labs that restrict animal use to observation only are exempt from the above training requirements. Students participating in classes that involve casual handling, restraint or non-invasive methods are required to receive training in the form of a review of rules and regulations as well as potential health risks associated with the use of animals. In all cases course/lab instructors are required to have completed the core ACUC training and may be required to complete species or procedure specific training. Course/lab instructors must be qualified to understand the limits of animal use and to assess hazards associated with the use of animals. The instructor/PI for the course is responsible for documenting the student training and training content and make this documentation available to IACUC representatives upon request. A course syllabus can serve as documentation of training.

Students performing more advanced or invasive procedures with animals (e.g. injections) must undergo all ACUC required mandated training.

**Non-FSU Field Assistant Training Plan for wild bird research projects**. The FSU ACUC has approved a training program for U.S. and international volunteers (non-FSU students) involved with specific wild bird research projects. Training includes one core IACUC course with the AALAS Learning Library, review of and quiz covering the Ornithological Council’s Guidelines for Use of Wild Birds in Research and viewing of the USGS Avian Zoonotic Diseases course. Documentation of completion of all three must be provided to the ACUC Secretary.

**Visiting Faculty Performing Animal Research at FSU:** Federal regulations require that all individuals working with animals in research be appropriately trained to accomplish such research in a humane and scientifically acceptable manner. Visiting faculty represent a unique group requiring special consideration in light of the short period of time they are present on campus. The FSU ACUC acknowledges that these individuals may possess equivalent training or animal research experience such that repeat training would be burdensome. In light of this fact, an exemption for training for visiting faculty is as follows:

All visiting faculty experienced in the field of animal research conducting animal research at FSU will be exempt from completing FSU ACUC mandated training provided their work at FSU does not exceed a period of ninety (90) days (within one calendar year). However proof of training from the home institution must be provided to the ACUC or a detailed explanation of experience with procedures to be performed must be supplied for review. All visiting faculty must agree to abide by all relevant FSU ACUC and LAR policies and SOPs.

Visiting faculty working at FSU for more than ninety (90) days (within a calendar year) will be required to undergo the FSU ACUC mandated training or formally request a training exemption.

All animal research performed by visiting faculty must be done under the supervision of an appropriately trained FSU faculty member and under an FSU ACUC approved protocol. It will be the principal investigator’s responsibility to notify the ACUC secretary of any visiting faculty that will be on campus or utilizing FSU facilities.

**New Faculty and Post-Doctoral Fellows:** The FSU ACUC recognizes that newly hired faculty represents a unique group with regard to training as many have undergone training at one or more previous institutions. These individuals may request waiver of the mandated FSU ACUC training requirements when submitting or being added to a protocol. The request must be accompanied by documentation of similar comprehensive training from one or more previous institutions. Such documentation should include a listing of all training the individual has completed with enough detail for the ACUC to compare to current requirements. Examples of documentation may include a certificate of completion along with back-up documentation of covered training or a letter of from the institution describing all completed training. The ACUC will evaluate the information to determine if the previous training is equivalent to or exceeds that currently required by FSU. The ACUC may accept all, some or none of the previous training as equivalent. If gaps in training remain following review, individuals will be required to complete only those specific modules stipulated by the FSU ACUC.

# Medical Monitoring

Training is not the only requirement that must be completed before individuals can access animal facilities or work with animals. All individuals (faculty, staff and students) with animal contact must review the *Medical Monitoring Program for Vertebrate Animal Users* manual and submit a completed *Medical Monitoring Program for Vertebrate Animal Users* enrollment form and return it to the ACUC Secretary or to Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S). In addition, all instructional personnel involved with teaching protocols using animals as well as visiting faculty, staff and students must enroll in the FSU Medical Monitoring Program. Exemptions from enrollment in the program are not permitted. More information on the Medical Monitoring Program is available at the [FSU EH&S website](http://www.safety.fsu.edu/bio.html). If you have questions, concerns, or require further clarification relating to the *Medical Monitoring Program for Vertebrate Animal Users*, contact EH&S at (850) 644-5374 or 644-6895.

Contact the [ACUC Secretary](mailto:ACUCSecretary@mailer.fsu.edu?subject=Sign%20up%20for%20ACUC%20training) to sign up for required ACUC training and assistance with enrollment in the FSU Medical Monitoring Program.

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