



## INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE #8

### REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT ANIMAL CARE AND USE

This document outlines procedures for reporting concerns about Animal Care and Use.

- Section 1: Reporting, Receiving, and Handling Concerns
- Section 2: If Immediate Action Is Required
- Section 3: If Further Investigation Is Required
- Section 4: If No Action Is Required

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### SECTION 1: REPORTING, RECEIVING, AND HANDLING CONCERNS

#### Investigator Obligations

All USM researchers working with live animals, on campus or in the field, have an obligation to treat animals with care and in accordance with all relevant guidelines or standards. In addition, all USM faculty, students, and staff have an obligation to take reasonable actions to remedy and report deficient animal care and use at USM facilities and in the field by USM researchers if and when they become aware of these deficiencies.

In most cases, concerns about animal care or use should be directed initially to the Principal Investigator (PI) or animal care facility manager. If the concern is not addressed satisfactorily, or if the individual prefers not to speak directly to the PI or animal care facility manager, a confidential inquiry or complaint may be made to the IACUC Chair, the Attending Veterinarian (AV), the Director of the Office of Research Integrity (ORI)/Research Integrity Officer (RIO), or the Vice President for Research (VPR).

#### Report Submissions

Reports may be submitted verbally or in writing. Written submissions may be made by sending a completed adverse event form, available on USM's IACUC [website](#), to [iacuc@usm.edu](mailto:iacuc@usm.edu). Verbal reports may be made to the IACUC Chair, AV, ORI, or VPR. For confidential consultations and inquiries, contact the University's Research Integrity Officer (RIO), Dr. Don Sacco, at [Donald.Sacco@usm.edu](mailto:Donald.Sacco@usm.edu) or (601) 266-5997.

Anonymous reports may be submitted here: [Anonymous Concern Reports](#)

## **Confidentiality**

Reasonable care will be taken to protect the identity of all individuals making complaints about animal welfare, consistent with relevant regulatory and legal reporting requirements, especially if anonymity is desired. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that individuals who report concerns will be protected against discrimination, retribution, and harassment. Reasonable care will be taken to preserve the confidentiality and respect the rights of those whose actions are the subject of the complaint.

## **Report Distribution**

Reports of concerns involving the care and use of animals submitted to [iacuc@usm.edu](mailto:iacuc@usm.edu) will be reviewed carefully and promptly by the RIO. As appropriate, at the RIO's discretion, the report may also be reviewed by the:

- IACUC Chair
- Attending Veterinarian
- Vice President for Research

## **Review to Determine Action**

After review and consultation, a determination will be made as to whether the report requires:

- Immediate action
- Further investigation
- No action

## **SECTION 2: IF IMMEDIATE ACTION IS REQUIRED**

### **Immediate Action Notification**

If immediate action and further investigation are needed, the RIO or designee will notify the respondent and the complainant by email, phone, or in person.

### **Investigation**

The AV or designee will perform an investigation as soon as possible to determine whether the immediate health and well-being of animals are compromised.

### **Correct Deficiency**

Deficiencies compromising the immediate health and welfare of the animals will be corrected immediately by the AV or designee. The AV or designee has the authority to:

- Immediately stop any or all animal research related to the allegation if deemed necessary
- Contact oversight authorities for guidance in addressing reported incidents as needed

### **Line of Authority**

The authority of the Vice President for Research (VPR) of The University of Southern Mississippi has been extended to the Attending Veterinarian in giving the AV the authority to demand an immediate cessation of animal activities related to an allegation, insofar as animal welfare remains an ongoing concern. Such an action must be reported to the VPR, IACUC Chair, and Director of ORI as soon as possible.

### **Written Report**

A written report of findings and actions taken will be prepared by the RIO in consultation with the AV or designee and the IACUC Chair and forwarded to the VPR.

### **SECTION 3: IF FURTHER INVESTIGATION IS REQUIRED**

When additional investigation into an allegation is needed and appropriate, the relevant investigations will be made as promptly as is feasible by the IACUC Chair, AV, and/or RIO. Any corrective actions deemed necessary will be performed promptly.

### **Written Report**

A written report of findings will be prepared by the RIO in consultation with the AV or designee and the IACUC Chair and forwarded to the VPR.

### **SECTION 4: IF NO ACTION IS REQUIRED**

If no action is necessary, a written report explaining the basis of this determination will be prepared by the RIO in consultation with the AV or designee and the IACUC Chair and forwarded to the VP for Research.