

University at Buffalo Institutional Animal Care and Use Program

Policy on Re-use of Research Animals Between Protocols

Purpose

This policy describes the procedure for obtaining approval for transferring animals between approved IACUC protocols (research animal re-use).

In carefully selected instances, re-use of animals can serve as a method to reduce the number of animals used in research and teaching. However, if both research protocols contain procedures with more than momentary pain or distress, the potential cumulative impact on the animals' well-being must be evaluated. This is especially true when there are surgical or category E procedures on both protocols, or when genetically modified animals with vulnerability phenotypes are used. Animals that are genetically modified and/or that have undergone an activity involving the use of a hazardous agent on one IACUC protocol must continue to meet all associated compliance expectations on any subsequent IACUC protocol. This includes expectations set forth by the Environment, Health & Safety and Institutional Biosafety Committees. Transfer of animals between protocols (once approved by the IACUC) is accomplished by completion of the LAF's Animal Transfer Request Form which must be approved by an LAF Veterinarian before any transfer is completed.

As per *The Guide*, "Principal Investigators are strongly discouraged from advocating animal re-use as a reduction strategy, and reduction should not be a rationale for reusing an animal or animal(s) that have already undergone experimental procedures, especially if the well-being of the animals would be compromised." Thus, additional scientific justification is needed for transferring animals between protocols and should be included as an amendment to receiving IACUC protocol for review by the IACUC committee.

Definitions

- **Animal re-use**: The sequential use of the same research animal(s) on more than one protocol, including those which have undergone a previous experimental procedure, retired breeding colony animals, and animals used for training.
- **Experimentally naïve**: No research procedures except genotyping and identification procedures have occurred.
- **Sending protocol**: The protocol in which the animals were originally housed under.
- **Receiving protocol**: The protocol in which the animals will be moved to.

Policy for Transfer of Research Animals to Another IACUC Protocol

1. If you intend to transfer animals to another IACUC protocol, you must state this on your approved IACUC protocol in the "Animal Use and Housing-Disposition" section of Click protocol form.

Effective Date: 3/28/2025

Next Review Date: 3/2028

First Approved: 3/27/2025

Revised: --

- a. This **includes** re-use on other approved IACUC protocols for which you are the PI, those for which you are NOT the PI, and those for use at other institutions. This **does not include** transferring research animals to the LAF's Animal Holding Protocol.
 - b. Amendment Approval Process:
 - i. In the "Disposition" section, if you are only selecting an option under "1. Disposition plans for the animals when research is completed" and no other changes are made to the protocol, the amendment may be approved administratively.
 - ii. If any additional details are added to the "Disposition" section under "2. If other, provide an animal disposition description," the amendment will be subject to the full amendment review process.
2. If you intend to transfer animals from another protocol in which a procedure was performed or the animal strain is not approved on the receiving protocol, you must submit an amendment addressing the following questions and make the corresponding changes to your protocol, the receiving protocol.
- a. What is the source of the animals to be transferred (sending PI and IACUC protocol number)?
 - b. What are the number, species, and strain of animals to be transferred, including genetically modified strains? Be sure to include the full strain nomenclature, including whether there are spontaneous or induced mutations, knock-outs, knock-ins, floxed alleles, transgenes, or endonuclease-mediated mutations. If a given strain's phenotype might interact with one of your procedures (e.g., an epilepsy model), please describe.
 - c. What procedures have the animals already undergone under the sending protocol (include pain categories) and what procedures might they undergo under the receiving protocol (include pain categories)?
 - d. What is the justification for re-use of the animals between protocols? Please provide additional details if animals will receive multiple survival surgeries or multiple category D or E procedures of any type?
 - e. Note that if the animals are experimentally naïve and the strain (see item 2b) is already approved on the receiving protocol, no amendment is needed.

References:

1. National Research Council. 2011. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition. Washington (DC): The National Academies Press. p. 5. [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th edition. National Academies Press \(nih.gov\)](#)
2. United States Department of Agriculture. 2023. Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations. [Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations \(usda.gov\)](#)