

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO

Rule 15.99.07.01

Use of Vertebrate Animals

Effective Date: [DATE] | **Next Scheduled Review:** February 17, 2030

Implementing: Texas A&M University System Regulation 15.99.07 (Revised February 17, 2025)

RULE SUMMARY

Texas A&M University-San Antonio (A&M-SA) recognizes the importance of responsible and ethical animal research to human, animal, and environmental health. This Rule implements Texas A&M University System Regulation 15.99.07 and establishes the administrative requirements, responsibilities, and procedures governing the use of vertebrate animals in research, teaching, and testing at A&M-SA.

DEFINITIONS

Animal Welfare Act (AWA) – Federal law (7 U.S.C. §§ 2131–2159) governing the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, and commerce.

Attending Veterinarian (AV) – A licensed veterinarian appointed by A&M-SA's President, or designee, who holds direct or delegated authority over all activities involving animals at A&M-SA.

Guide – The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (current edition), published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Ag Guide – The Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching (current edition).

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) – The committee established or accessed by A&M-SA to oversee the care and use of vertebrate animals in research, teaching, and testing.

Institutional Official (IO) – The individual designated by the President of A&M-SA who bears overall responsibility for the vertebrate animal care and use program.

Member – A component institution of The Texas A&M University System.

OLAW – The National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare.

Protocol – A written description of a proposed use of vertebrate animals in research, teaching, or testing that is submitted to and approved by the IACUC.

Public Health Service (PHS) Assurance – An institutional commitment to OLAW ensuring compliance with PHS policy on the humane care and use of laboratory animals.

Vertebrate Animals – All species of animals belonging to the subphylum Vertebrata, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

Veterinary Clinical Studies Committee (VCSC) – A committee designated to review research activities involving privately owned animals, including pet animals.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Member Responsibilities

1.1.1 Humane Care Requirement.

All animals used in research, teaching, or testing at A&M-SA, regardless of funding source, must receive humane care and treatment. A&M-SA must also make provisions for appropriate husbandry and veterinary care for vertebrate animals owned by the institution but not currently involved in research, teaching, or testing.

1.1.2 Institutional Official (IO).

The President of A&M-SA, or designee, shall appoint an Institutional Official (IO) for A&M-SA's vertebrate animal care and use program. The IO is responsible for the overall administration and compliance of the program. The appointment shall be documented in writing.

1.1.3 Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

The President of A&M-SA, or designee, shall either establish an IACUC or enter into a written agreement with another Texas A&M University System member that has an IACUC to provide IACUC oversight services for A&M-SA. Any delegation of the President's authority to appoint IACUC members must be specific and in writing. The IACUC shall be appointed, structured, and perform its duties in accordance with applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

1.1.4 Attending Veterinarian (AV).

The President of A&M-SA, or designee, shall appoint an Attending Veterinarian (AV), which may include entering into a written agreement with another System member to utilize that member's AV services. The AV or their designee shall:

- a. Have direct or delegated authority for activities involving animals at A&M-SA;
- b. Serve as a voting member of the IACUC; and
- c. Coordinate campus programs for the provision of adequate husbandry and veterinary care for animals used in research, teaching, and testing.

1.1.5 USDA Registration.

A&M-SA shall obtain United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) registration or licensure, as required by the Animal Welfare Act, prior to conducting activities involving USDA-covered species.

1.1.6 PHS Animal Welfare Assurance.

A&M-SA shall obtain a Public Health Service (PHS) Animal Welfare Assurance from OLAW prior to performing any activity involving vertebrate animals supported by PHS, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Health and Human Services (HHS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Veterans Administration (VA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), or any other sponsor with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with PHS.

1.1.7 Interinstitutional Agreements.

A&M-SA shall establish appropriate interinstitutional agreements prior to engaging in collaborative animal research where animal work is to be conducted at sites other than A&M-SA, including at other institutions, companies, or entities.

1.1.8 Occupational Health and Safety Program.

A&M-SA shall establish an occupational health and safety program for all individuals working with or around animals used for research, teaching, and testing. The program shall be developed

in accordance with the Guide, the Ag Guide, and Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals.

1.2 Compliance Requirements

1.2.1 Animal Welfare Act and the Guide.

The Animal Welfare Act (for covered species) and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals must be followed when conducting research, teaching, or testing activities involving non-agricultural animals and biomedical research activities in agricultural animals.

1.2.2 AVMA Euthanasia Guidelines.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines on Euthanasia (current version) must be followed for all vertebrate animal activities. For wildlife and non-routinely used species, guidelines published by professional or veterinary organizations that do not conflict with the Guide or AVMA Guidelines may be adopted. Exceptions may be authorized by the IACUC as appropriate.

1.2.3 Agricultural Animals.

The Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching (Ag Guide, current edition) must be followed when conducting research, teaching, or testing activities involving agricultural animals intended for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency, or for improving the quality of food and fiber. This requirement is in addition to applicable components of the Guide.

1.2.4 Wildlife Studies.

For wildlife studies, the IACUC shall determine whether the proposed activities are observational only, with consideration of current USDA guidance on field studies. If activities extend beyond observation, the IACUC shall apply the requirements of Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. All wildlife research must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, including permitting requirements.

1.2.5 International Animal Research.

For vertebrate animal research, teaching, and testing occurring outside the United States and its territories, the following requirements apply in addition to the requirements of Section 2 below:

- d. All transfer or transport of animals must comply with United States laws and treaties, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- e. All vertebrate animal activities must comply with the national and local laws and requirements of the non-U.S. country.
- f. Approval for activities conducted outside the United States must be obtained from the applicable sponsor's or international institution's animal oversight authority. The IACUC may accept protocol approval from a research institution in another country, as applicable.
- g. If animal work at an international site is supported by PHS, HHS, NSF, VA, NASA, or another sponsor with an MOU with PHS, the international site must hold an active Foreign Assurance with OLAW or be incorporated under A&M-SA's own Assurance.

1.2.6 Regulatory Consultation.

The IACUC shall consult with the TAMUS Research Compliance Office, as needed, to obtain a final determination on oversight of an animal activity prior to contacting a regulatory agency.

2. INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

2.1 Constitution and Structure.

A&M-SA's IACUC shall be appointed, structured, and shall perform the duties and functions required by applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines. A&M-SA shall defer to the strictest applicable regulatory requirements when determining IACUC membership. When A&M-SA enters into a shared IACUC agreement with another System member, the terms of that agreement must clearly describe the relationship, including acceptance of A&M-SA's IO.

2.2 Protocol Requirement.

All uses of vertebrate animals at A&M-SA, whether for research, teaching, or testing, must be described in a written protocol submitted to and approved by the IACUC in accordance with the applicable compliance requirements in Section 1.2. An approved and current IACUC protocol must be in effect at all times vertebrate animals are housed or used.

2.3 Prior Approval.

An approved IACUC protocol is required prior to the initiation of any research, teaching, or testing involving vertebrate animals. No vertebrate animal activity may begin without prior written IACUC approval.

2.4 Modifications to Approved Protocols.

Any proposed modification to an approved vertebrate animal activity must be submitted to and approved by the IACUC prior to implementation of the change. Investigators must not initiate modifications without prior IACUC approval.

2.5 Reference Standards.

A&M-SA's IACUC shall follow the Guide as a reference document, and the Ag Guide as applicable, even if A&M-SA's program is not otherwise subject to USDA or PHS oversight.

3. PRIVATELY OWNED ANIMALS

3.1 Approval Required.

Privately owned vertebrate animals, including pets, may not be used by A&M-SA faculty, students, or staff in research, teaching, or testing without prior written approval from the IACUC or, where applicable, a Veterinary Clinical Studies Committee (VCSC). This requirement applies regardless of whether the activity occurs on or off campus and includes:

- h. Field activities conducted by A&M-SA faculty, students, or staff;
- i. Activities completed by students as part of a course or degree program, whether at A&M-SA or another institution;
- j. Activities by graduate veterinarians for continuing education offered by A&M-SA; and
- k. Veterinary clinical research studies reviewed by a VCSC.

3.2 Husbandry for Privately Owned Animals.

A&M-SA shall make provisions for appropriate animal husbandry and veterinary care for privately owned animals housed in A&M-SA facilities, even when those animals are not actively being used for research, teaching, or testing.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 President.

The President of A&M-SA is responsible for ensuring compliance with System Regulation 15.99.07 and this Rule. The President, or designee, shall appoint the IO and the AV, establish the IACUC or enter into a shared IACUC agreement, and provide the resources necessary to maintain a compliant vertebrate animal care and use program.

4.2 Institutional Official (IO).

The IO is responsible for the overall administration, compliance, and institutional commitment of A&M-SA's vertebrate animal care and use program. The IO serves as the primary point of accountability to funding agencies and regulatory authorities.

4.3 Attending Veterinarian (AV).

The AV is responsible for the veterinary care of all animals used at A&M-SA, advising investigators on animal care and use matters, and ensuring that veterinary oversight is provided in all animal research programs.

4.4 IACUC.

The IACUC is responsible for reviewing and approving all vertebrate animal protocols, conducting semi-annual program reviews and facility inspections, and ensuring institutional compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

4.5 Principal Investigators and Instructors.

Principal Investigators and Instructors who conduct or supervise vertebrate animal activities are responsible for obtaining and maintaining IACUC approval, training all personnel working under their supervision, adhering to approved protocols, and reporting any unanticipated problems, adverse events, or animal welfare concerns to the IACUC and AV.

RELATED STATUTES, POLICIES, AND REQUIREMENTS

Texas A&M University System Regulation 15.99.07, Use of Vertebrate Animals (Revised February 17, 2025)

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, Current Version

The Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. §§ 2131–2159) and Implementing Regulations (9 C.F.R.)

Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (National Institutes of Health), Current Version

Health Research Extension Act of 1985 (42 U.S.C. § 289d)

U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Current Version

Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, Current Version

Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals (National Research Council, 1997)

CONTACT OFFICE

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Texas A&M University-San Antonio One University Way, San Antonio, TX 78224 [Phone] | [Email]

APPROVAL

This Rule is approved by the President of Texas A&M University-San Antonio in accordance with Texas A&M University System Regulation 15.99.07.

President, Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Date