Virginia Tech Animal Research Policy

No. 13035

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Affected Parties:
Undergraduate
Graduate
Faculty
Staff
Other

1.0 Policies
2.0 Operations
3.0 Working with Federal and Other Regulatory Agencies
4.0 More Information
5.0 Approval and Revisions

1.0 Purpose

1.1 Governing the Use of Animals in Research and Training

It is the intent of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) to encourage, safeguard, and ensure the humane treatment of all animals* used in research, instruction, and testing and to comply with all applicable governmental laws, principles, and standards governing such uses.

The implementation of this policy is also intended to increase the reliability of acquired data and to promote efficient use of time and finances by research investigators, instructional faculty, and their technical and clerical assistants.

*The term animal as used here includes any (nonhuman) vertebrate animal.

1.1.1 The Functional Unit: Animal Resources

The functional administrative unit that is charged with the responsibility for assuring the humane care and treatment of all animals used in research, instruction, and testing at Virginia Tech is the Office of the University Veterinarian and Animal Resources (OUVAR).

OUVAR is an administrative unit under the supervision of the Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, who reports to the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation, the designated Institutional Official for regulatory compliance. OUVAR has executive responsibility for the implementation of all Virginia Tech policies involving the humane care and treatment of animals.

1.1.2 Applicability of Policy

This policy, its amendments and additions, apply to all situations which involve the use of animals for research and instruction at Virginia Tech, regardless of the particular college or university division in which the animals are used or the source of funding involved.

1.1.3 Policy Implementation

The organizational structure for the implementation of these policies is centered in the Office of the University Veterinarian and Animal Resources, and includes the following administrative, advisory, and auxiliary relationships (See Appendix B).

1. **University Administration**

   The Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation is the university official with final responsibility for the humane care and treatment of animals. The Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation assists the University President in maintaining continuing relationships with state and federal agencies.

2. **The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)**

   The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) consists of scientists from each of the university departments where animals are commonly used, and at least one individual who is unaffiliated with the university and has primary vocation in a non-science area. The University Veterinarian and the Associate Vice President for Research Compliance serve as ex-officio voting members. Among the members is at least one Doctor of Veterinary Medicine qualified in laboratory animal medicine. IACUC members are appointed by the designated Institutional Official (the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation) and serve a three-year term; approximately one third of the membership is re-appointed each year.

   The Committee considers matters involving university policies and procedures regarding the humane treatment of animals used in research, teaching, and testing, and compliance with university and governmental regulations; it recommends policy to the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation.

3. **Office of the University Veterinarian and Animal Resources (OUVAR)**

   Director of Animal Resources (D-AR)

   The Director of Animal Resources is the chief executive officer of OAR. The D-AR reports directly to the Associate Vice President for Research Compliance. The Director serves as coordinator for the Animal Resources program at Virginia Tech, and as a member of the IACUCC.

   Animal Resources Supervisors

   The AR Supervisors supervise daily operations of the university's laboratory animal facilities and assists the Director with other duties. The AR Supervisors report directly to the D-AR.

   Facility Supervisors

   Each defined lab animal facility has a Supervisor who is responsible for its daily operation and function.

1.1.4 Function and Responsibility

The Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation has the responsibility to determine an appropriate policy for the use of animals at Virginia Tech and to recommend this policy to the University President. Policy is discussed and reviewed by the IACUC in consultation with the D-AR; the IACUC forwards its recommendations to the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation.

1. **Delegation of Responsibilities**

   The D-AR and the IACUC will specify the additional responsibilities necessary for function and operation of the animal care program, and delegate these responsibilities to appropriate groups and individuals.

2. **Approval of Protocols**

   All research, teaching, and testing procedures involving the use of living vertebrate animal species must be reviewed through the IACUC. IACUC approval indicates that the protocol shows proper regard for the humane care and treatment of animals and is in compliance with federal laws, regulations, policies and other legislation.

3. **Implementation of Rules**

   The IACUC and the D-AR have the responsibility to become informed of and to inform the University community of governmental and other regulations involving animals used for research, teaching, and testing at Virginia Tech, and to insure compliance with these regulations.

4. **Enforcement**

   The Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation, in cooperation and consultation with the IACUC, is responsible for the surveillance and enforcement of Virginia Tech policy regarding the use of animals.

   Overseeing

   Ultimate responsibility for proper implementation of procedures and practices involving the care and use of animals lies with the individual in whose name the protocol has been filed. This individual must be a faculty member. Daily supervision of care and/or experimental procedures, but not the responsibility, may be delegated.

   The IACUC conducts periodic inspections (every 6 months) of all Virginia Tech animal facilities, including satellite facilities. Recommendations for improvements or modifications to management or physical plant are forwarded by the IACUC to the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation.

   Violations of Laws, Regulations, and Policies

   Possible violations of governmental laws/regulations or of Virginia Tech animal policy will be considered by the IACUC. Action will be taken according to the nature, severity, duration, and repetitiveness of the offense. The IACUC has the authority to suspend or terminate a research, teaching, or testing activity if it determines that the activity cannot be brought into compliance with existing laws or policy (See Appendix A).

2.0 Operations

All facilities that house animals are defined by the IACUC. The creation of new facilities or the extension of existing premises may be accomplished only with approval of the IACUC.

Animals may not be held outside defined holding facilities for periods exceeding 24 hours unless prior approval is provided by the IACUC.

2.1.1 Facilities

Lab animal housing at Virginia Tech is provided in multiple facilities. Central facilities are available to the entire Blacksburg campus. They are fully staffed and operated by OAR.

Satellite facilities are directed, staffed, and operated by the user department or division.

2.1.2 Animal Purchase and Procurement

Animal procurement will be in accordance with established IACUC policies.

3.0 Working with Federal and Other Regulatory Agencies

Virginia Tech, in planning and implementing its policy for animal care, cooperates with those governmental and other agencies also concerned with animal welfare to insure compliance with applicable laws and to coordinate efforts toward responsible animal care.

3.1.1 Compliance with Animal Welfare Act

Virginia Tech is in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, Public Law 89-544, 1966, as amended (P.L.91-579 and P.L. 94-279, 7 USC 2131 et. seq.); and cooperates with the USDA to facilitate periodic site visits.

3.1.2 Public Health Service

In accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Public Health Service, Virginia Tech has a Letter of Animal Welfare Assurance on file with the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW). The letter states that the University endorses the "U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research and Training," and is in compliance with the "Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" as amended in 1986, et. seq.

3.1.3 AAALAC Accreditation

Virginia Tech recognizes that approval by the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC) is a highly regarded and widely accepted assurance of quality, and is committed to obtaining AAALAC accreditation for all University facilities.

4.0 More Information

If you have read through all the material, have explored all avenues and still have a question or need a policy clarified, call the contact person listed for the area you have a question about. Please have the section you have a question about displayed on your terminal when you call.

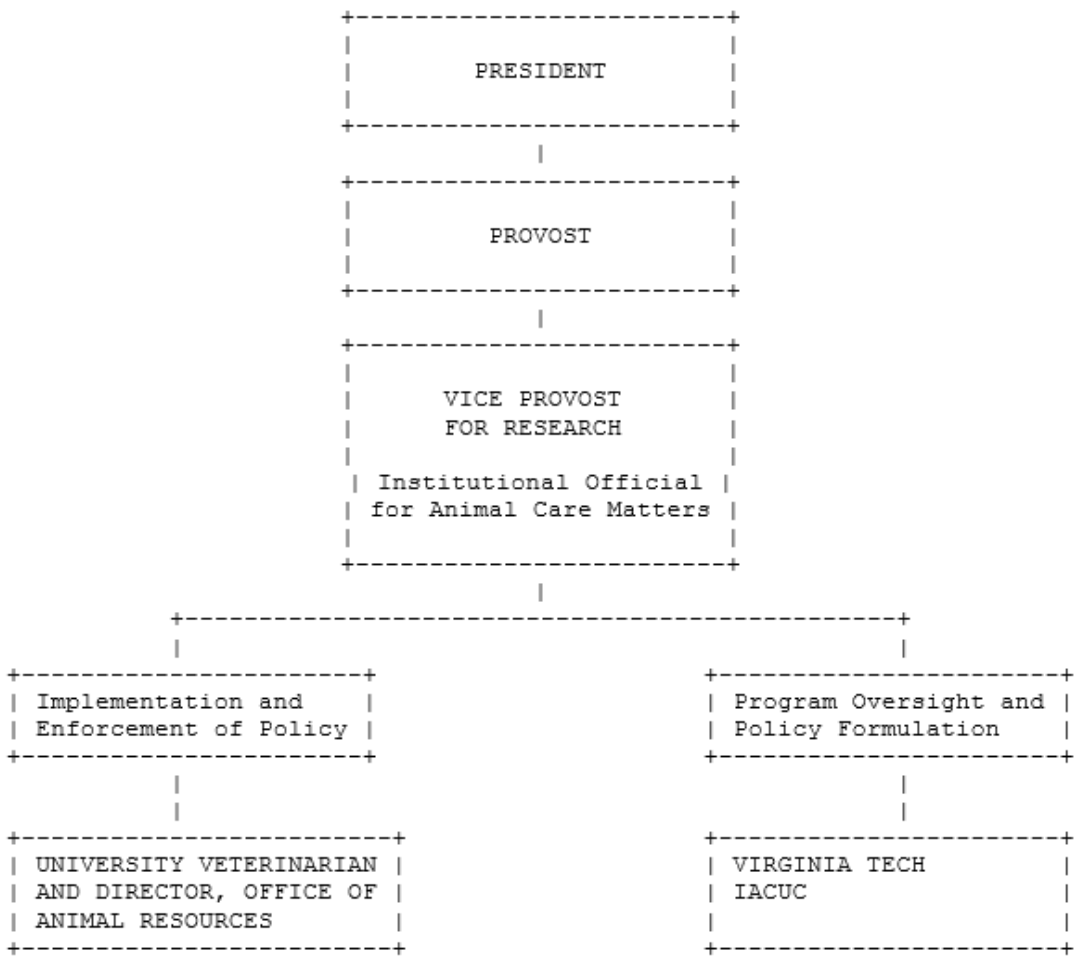
1. David Moore, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 540-231-4991, moored@vt.edu.

5.0 Approval and Revisions

Revised March 23, 2001
Revised September 28, 2010
Revised August 6, 2014 (formatting only)

Appendix A – Enforcement of Animal Research Policy

All possible infractions of Virginia Tech IACUC Policies will be dealt with through the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Appendix B – Organizational Diagram - Animal Resources

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University|
Office of Animal Resources
Administrative Relationships