

# INVESTIGATOR CARE OF VERTEBRATE ANIMALS

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## Background

The University of California, Berkeley (UCB) Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) may approve investigator care of animals (PI care) in cases when routine husbandry techniques may alter research results or in cases of highly specialized husbandry. In most cases, protocol-wide PI care will only be approved for unique species such as aquatic animals. In some cases, PI care may be allowed for specific activities involving mammals when non-standard husbandry is required (e.g. following viral vector administration, animals that may excrete toxins, etc.). The ACUC must ensure PIs provide appropriate care for animals in cases where Office of Laboratory Animal Care (OLAC) personnel are not directly responsible for the daily care of animals. Appropriate animal care is defined as provision of proper husbandry (e.g., housing, food, water, enrichment) and health monitoring and reporting.

## Overview

In general, UCB policies require that OLAC, under the auspices of the Attending Veterinarian, provide care for all animals used in research and teaching. The ACUC has overall responsibility for ensuring that the program of animal care sufficiently addresses animal welfare needs. The Attending Veterinarian and OLAC Clinical Veterinarians have day to day responsibility for ensuring the health and welfare of animals used in research and teaching, in accordance with approved Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) and federal regulations and policies. This document outlines responsibilities of the PI and OLAC in cases of investigator provided care.

Note: Exceptions to this document must be specifically addressed in an AUP via standard operating procedures (SOPs) as approved by the ACUC.

## INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASES OF PI PROVIDED CARE:

1. Investigators must attach a detailed written SOP to the applicable ACUC approved AUP outlining the animal care practices to be used. SOPs must include procedures to be followed in cases of emergencies if those procedures differ from standard OLAC emergency plans. SOPs must describe who (e.g. students, PI, etc.) provides and oversees care, including weekends and holidays, and must outline necessary

qualifications to perform these tasks. SOPs must be available and regularly reviewed by the ACUC.

2. Investigators are responsible for notifying OLAC of all housing arrangements under PI care.
3. Investigators who provide animal care assume the responsibility of ensuring animal welfare needs are addressed, including (a) daily feeding, care, and visual observation of animal condition as well as (b) ensuring that appropriate cleaning schedules of enclosures and, when applicable, procedure spaces are maintained. Investigators must ensure that their staff visually monitor the condition of all animals 365 days per year.
4. Investigators are responsible for ensuring that veterinary staff and/or animal care staff are informed of all animal health concerns as soon as detected.
5. Unless otherwise specified in an SOP and the associated AUP, investigators are responsible for ensuring specialized equipment such as environmental chambers, flow through tank systems, lab-dedicated water treatment equipment, etc., are functioning properly. Investigators must ensure that their staff check essential equipment 365 days per year.
6. Animal care practices must meet all standards as set forth in applicable regulations and guidelines. PIs are responsible for ensuring that their staff are fully trained and maintain appropriate husbandry standards for all animals under PI care. OLAC offers this training regularly.
7. All locations where PI care is provided must be accessible at all times to the Attending Veterinarian and designated OLAC personnel. In non-emergency situations, every effort will be made to time access to avoid disrupting any experiments.
8. Unless otherwise arranged, PIs are responsible for providing unique housing, caging, or animal enclosures, and for ensuring census records and daily feeding and cleaning logs are accurate and accessible to the Attending Veterinarian, ACUC members, federal or state inspectors, and others as applicable.
9. It is the PI's responsibility to ensure that all animals covered by their protocol are checked as often as necessary to insure that approved research procedures are followed and to insure that research outcomes comply with approved humane endpoints.

## **OLAC RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASES OF PI CARE:**

1. **Unless otherwise specified in an approved AUP**, OLAC personnel are responsible for ensuring environmental parameters such as temperature, light cycles, ventilation, security, feed storage, and pest control are appropriate.
2. Unless otherwise specified in an approved AUP, OLAC personnel are charged with observing all animal enclosures (cages, tanks) daily to verify that standards of care meet all applicable requirements and that no overt animal welfare issues are present. Although investigators retain primary responsibility for ensuring appropriate care and welfare, OLAC personnel will always have access to animal housing areas.
3. The PI is responsible for maintaining organization and cleaning the facilities that hold PI care animals including: floors, storage areas, study areas, support spaces and emptying trash.

### **Appendix A:**

Example of PI Care Daily Checklist

Building/ Room #:

PI Care Rodent Daily Checklist

Month/Year:

DAY (Initials)	TEMP*		Humidity*	Health Check	Feed/ Water Check	Notification of Animal Health Issues to Vet Staff (Time/ Initials)	Notification of Facility Issues to Facility Supervisor (Time/ Initials)	Cages Changed per SOP	Floors Swept and Mopped (Weekly)	Rooms Stocked/ Organized (Weekly)	Walls, doors, & windows cleaned	Sanitize Equipment (Monthly)
	HI	LO										
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
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\*ALL OUT OF RANGE VALUES, ALARMS, AND BROKEN EQUIPMENT TO BE REPORTED TO THE FACILITY SUPERVISOR IMMEDIATELY