

Version: 1.2 Effective Date: 1/15/2025	SITE INSPECTION POLICY	Supersedes Document Dated: 5/13/2024
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I. Background

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA), Public Health Service (PHS) Policy and the “Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals” (Guide) require the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to conduct facility inspections at least every 6 months. The Guide and the inspection checklist provided by the Office for Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) – as modified for UCB’s animal program - are used for these inspections.

II. Policy

As described and agreed to in UCB’s Assurance with the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and mandated by federal regulations, the Animal Care & Use Committee (ACUC) conducts semi-annual site inspections on a rolling basis of all institutional animal facilities, such as but not limited to housing locations (for animals held over 12 hours), holding and satellite facilities, laboratories, surgical suites, procedure rooms and storage space. No ACUC member wishing to participate in any inspection will be excluded from doing so. In addition to semi-annual site inspections, the ACUC in coordination with the Office for Animal Care & Use (OACU) and the Office of Laboratory Animal Care (OLAC) may conduct inspections of any institutional animal facility space at any time. Furthermore, as appropriate, ACUC may coordinate with other IACUCs through an MOU or similar agreement in the oversight of UCB researchers conducting animal research at non-UCB sites that require inspections.

III. Definitions

- A. Animal Facility – All areas managed or attended to daily by OLAC staff.
- B. Field study - a study conducted on free-living wild animals in their natural habitat. However, this term excludes any study that involves an invasive procedure, harms, or materially alters the behavior of an animal under study.
- C. Procedural Area – Areas where procedures involving live animals take place (i.e., behavioral, surgical, perfusion, etc.).
- D. Satellite Housing Facility – Housing areas managed by the Principal Investigator (PI) (not overseen by OLAC) where animals are maintained or housed for more than 24 hours.
- E. Study area - Any building room, area, enclosure, or other containment outside of a core facility or centrally designated or managed area in which animals are housed for more than 12 hours.

IV. Responsibilities

- A. OACU—The OACU coordinates and schedules ACUC facility site inspections on behalf of the committee and at least one staff member accompanies ACUC members. Following the inspection, the inspection team convenes immediately to debrief. The OACU staff then prepares a report of the evaluations on behalf of the ACUC which is reviewed and approved by the committee.
- B. Principal Investigator—PIs are responsible for providing access to all procedural and housing rooms that are identified and approved by the ACUC as Investigator Care areas. PIs and/or lab members should be available to answer questions from the site inspection team at the time of the inspection. PIs are also required to respond to letters of deficiency sent by the ACUC after inspection and include a corrective action plan.
- C. ACUC—ACUC members are given the opportunity to participate in all semi-annual site inspections. Members are expected to participate in a minimum of one site inspection per semester. After inspection the committee reviews and approves the site inspection reports at a subsequent full committee meeting and the reports are submitted to the Institutional Official (IO) by the ACUC semi-annually.

V. Areas Subject to Inspection

- A. Non-USDA regulated species areas:

Animal Facility

All areas within the animal facility where non-USDA regulated species are housed and/or studied must be inspected by at least 1 member of the ACUC or ACUC designated ad Hoc inspector.

Newly (ACUC) Approved Procedural Areas and Satellite Facilities

In cases where new satellite facilities, or housing and/or procedural areas managed by the PI within the OLAC animal facility are listed for approval by the ACUC in the protocol form, the PI must contact the OACU to set up an ACUC inspection of the area(s) prior to using the space. Once the area has been approved for use by the ACUC, the area(s) will be added to the semi-annual inspection schedule at the time of approval, and the PI will be notified of the approval and ACUC semi-annual inspection month for the space.

Field Studies

All research or teaching done in the field (i.e., as a field study) requires that an AUP be reviewed and approved by the ACUC. The ACUC does not conduct site inspections in areas where field study activities are strictly and exclusively observational in nature.

B. USDA regulated species areas:

Animal Facility

All areas within the animal facility where USDA regulated species are housed and/or studied may use subcommittees composed of at least two committee members and may also invite ad hoc consultants to assist in conducting the inspections. More than one subcommittee containing two ACUC members may be utilized, such that different subcommittees may inspect different areas of a research facility. However, at least once every six months, all of the designated areas of the institution's animal facilities, including animal study areas, must be physically inspected by two ACUC members.

Study Area

Study areas at UC Berkeley include any area not managed by OLAC where USDA regulated species are housed and/or studied for more than 12 hours. The PI must contact the OACU to set up an ACUC inspection of the area(s) prior to housing animals or using the space. The study area will be added to the semi-annual inspection schedule at the time of approval, and the PI will be notified of the approval and ACUC semi-annual inspection month for the area.

Field Studies

All research or teaching done in the field (i.e., as a field study) requires that an AUP be reviewed and approved by the ACUC. The ACUC does not conduct site inspections in areas where field study activities are strictly and exclusively observational in nature.

C. Vehicles:

Any personal vehicle to be used for the purpose of transporting animals (on campus or externally) will be subject to annual inspections performed by the ACUC, as well as an initial inspection prior to the start of any work. Please refer to the ['Animal Transportation' Guidelines](#) for more information.

VI. Methods of Inspections

The ACUC may utilize one or more methods to conduct site inspections:

A. *In-person*

Most site inspections are conducted by in-person inspections of all animal research areas. The team of inspectors includes 1-2 ACUC members, and typically liaisons from OACU, OLAC, and EH&S. For animal facilities used for USDA regulated species, inspections must be physically performed; videos, photographs, written descriptions, or other remote methods are not permitted.

B. *Videos and Pictures*

University of California, Berkeley - Animal Care and Use Program

Semi-annual submissions of videos and pictures of satellite housing facilities and procedural areas may be acceptable for non-USDA regulated species only on a case-by-case basis.

VII. References

- UC Berkeley Animal Care and Use Program Policy https://acuc.berkeley.edu/policies/acu_program.pdf
- UC Berkeley Animal Transportation Guidelines <https://acuc.berkeley.edu/guidelines/transportation.pdf>
- UC Berkeley Animal Welfare Assurance <https://acuc.berkeley.edu/assuranceaccreditation.html>
- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals 8th Edition <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals.pdf>
- Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. (2015). Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. <https://olaw.nih.gov/policies-laws/phs-policy.htm>
- Animal Welfare Act subchapter A-Animal Welfare https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/AC_BlueBook_AWA_508_comp_version.pdf
- Guidance on Flexibilities for Conducting Semiannual Inspections of Animal Facilities
- NIH Notice Number: NOT-OD-21-164 <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-164.html>
- NIH Notice Number: NOT-OD-24-076 <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-24-076.html>