

## **Policy on Attending Veterinarian Oversight of the Program of Veterinary Care**

The UK animal care and use program is the collaborative responsibility of the Institutional Official, the AV, and the IACUC. This document establishes the mechanism whereby the UK Attending Veterinarian (AV) provides oversight of the welfare and clinical care of animals used in research, testing, teaching, and production; these responsibilities are carried out by a team of individuals, under the oversight of the AV.

Regulatory guidance as follows:

A. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (ILAR, 2011) [the Guide] (Ch. 4 “Veterinary Care”, page 106)

1. “The veterinary care program is the responsibility of the attending veterinarian, who is certified or has training or experience in laboratory animal science and medicine or is otherwise qualified in the care of the species being used. Some aspects of the veterinary care program can be conducted by persons other than a veterinarian, but a mechanism for direct and frequent communication should be established to ensure that timely and accurate information is conveyed to the responsible veterinarian about issues associated with animal health, behavior, and well-being, and appropriate treatment or euthanasia is administered.”

B. Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, 4th edition [the Ag Guide] (Ch. 2 “Veterinary Care”, page 10)

1. “The attending (program) veterinarian is not required to be the sole provider of veterinary care and can delegate authority to other qualified individuals. However, the program veterinarian should be responsible for the veterinary care of all animals and should have frequent and direct communications with others providing care.”

C. Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations USDA/APHIS 2.33(a)(2) and 2.33(b)(3)

1. "Each research facility shall assure that the attending veterinarian has appropriate authority to ensure the provision of adequate veterinary care and oversee the adequacy of other aspects of animal care and use."
2. "...a mechanism of direct and frequent communication is required so that timely and accurate information on problems of animal health, behavior, and well-being is conveyed to the attending veterinarian."

## Policy

### Role and Authority of the Attending Veterinarian (AV)

Important aspects of the role of the AV with respect to the program of veterinary care are as follows:

- The AV must have access to all sites and all animal housing, care, use, and procedure areas, as well as access to animal medical records.
- The AV has the oversight authority to ensure that timely provision of veterinary medical care and emergency veterinary care, including after normal work hours, on weekends, and holidays, is in place for all animal facilities. This care may be provided by UK clinical veterinarians or non-UK employed veterinarians (e.g., veterinarians in private practice) upon approval by the AV.
- The provision of veterinary care should be documented in medical records that are accessible to the AV.
- The AV may designate responsibility and oversight to UK veterinarian(s) responsible for providing clinical veterinary care for the animal unit. In cases where veterinary care is not provided by a UK-employed veterinarian, the UK faculty member in charge of the animal unit may be designated the responsibility to ensure that appropriate veterinary care is available and that medical records are made available upon request by the AV as well as the IACUC.

The specific mechanism whereby the AV oversees the UK program of veterinary care is through the establishment of "Letters of Agreement" (LOAs) between the AV and designee. These LOAs are reviewed, and where necessary updated, on an annual basis. Forms for: [Veterinarian](#) & [Unit Director](#)

The LOA addresses the following:

- Requirement of and mechanism for direct communication between the AV and the designee. The mechanism must ensure that timely and accurate information is conveyed to the AV relative to problems associated with animal health and well-being.
- Requirement for submission of a monthly summary of medical/health concerns to the AV or communicated to the AV during monthly meetings unless another mechanism has been established to convey this information.
- Requirement for emergent issues necessitating immediate action (e.g., circumstances presenting imminent danger to animals) to be communicated to the AV as soon as possible.
- Requirement and responsibility for providing medical records upon request by the AV or designee as well as the IACUC.

Approved and Adopted by the IACUC  
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