

Unexpected Adverse Events Procedure

Intent

The University ensures that any event that impacts adversely on animal wellbeing is promptly detected and immediate action taken in accordance with the requirements of the Code, policies and procedures of the IACUC and the conditions of protocol approval.

Adverse event management and associated reporting is integral for the health and wellbeing of research animals. The process begins with project design and continues throughout the course of the project. These procedures define the actions required to respond to adverse events in the use of animals, and give effect to the *Singapore Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and so ensure the wellbeing of animals used for scientific purposes at James Cook University.

Scope

These procedures apply to:

- (a) All persons involved in the use, care and monitoring of animals used for scientific purposes
- (b) The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) in their role of approving and reviewing protocols and assessing the actions taken as a result of an adverse event
- (c) The Animal Welfare Officer or other delegate in their role in monitoring scientific animal use

Definitions

Words and phrases used in these procedures and not otherwise defined in this document have the meanings they have in the *Singapore Guidelines for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* and the *Animal and Birds Act*.

Adverse event means an event or incident that has a negative impact on the wellbeing of an animal.

AWO means the Animal Welfare Officer.

Investigator means any person who uses animals for scientific purposes and is named on the IACUC protocol as an investigator. Includes researchers, teachers, undergraduate and postgraduate students involved in research projects, and people involved in product testing, environmental testing, production of biological products and wildlife surveys.

Protocol means the description of the project as outlined in the application to the IACUC.

Project means an activity or group of activities that form a discrete piece of work that aims to achieve a scientific purpose.

Unexpected adverse event means an adverse event that was not foreshadowed in the approved project or activity.

An unexpected adverse event may result from different causes, including but not limited to:

- death of an animal, or group of animals, that was not expected;
- adverse effects following a procedure or treatment that were not expected;
- adverse effects in a larger number of animals than predicted during the planning of the project or activity, based on the number of animals actually used, not the number approved for the study;
- a greater level of pain or distress than was predicted during the

planning of the project or activity;

- power failures, inclement weather, emergency situations or other factors external to the project or activity that have a negative impact on the welfare of the animals;
- effects that indicate the model or experimental design is not proceeding in a way to give meaningful results and to continue would mean that animals may be wasted.

Wellbeing

means an animal is in a positive mental state and is able to achieve successful biological function, to have positive experiences, to express innate behaviours, and to respond to and cope with potentially adverse conditions. Animal wellbeing may be assessed by physiological and behavioural measures of an animal's physical and psychological health, of the animal's capacity to cope with stressors, and species-specific behaviours in response to social and environmental conditions.

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Introduction

1. Adverse event procedure

The following steps must be followed when an adverse event occurs.

<p>Act</p> <p>Take immediate steps to alleviate pain or distress. The wellbeing of animals comes first, taking priority over research or teaching outcomes. Remove the animals from the situation, seek advice, treat, euthanise, address environmental conditions and secure other animals that might be at risk.</p>
<p>Notify</p> <p>Notify the appropriate staff immediately. This should include the project Principal Investigator, other investigators on the project, facility managers, veterinarians, animal carers and the AWO. The IACUC must be notified within 48 hours.</p>
<p>Investigate</p> <p>Carry out any investigations necessary to find or confirm the cause. This can include carrying out thorough examinations, post-mortems, taking samples for pathology, examining environmental factors or seeking veterinary or expert advice.</p>
<p>Review</p> <p>Review the project or procedures in light of the event looking at: how it could have been prevented, whether it could happen again, whether it is inherent in the project's design and</p>

must be expected and the impact it will have for the future success of the project.

In reviewing the results a determination should be made as to whether the event was related to the project or unrelated.

Report

Reports should be completed on the IACUC 'UAE Report Form' and all questions should be answered. If you are waiting on laboratory or veterinary report or other information an interim report can be submitted with the final completed report submitted once the information is received and reviewed.

One report can be used for multiple animals where the details of the UAE are the same for each animal.

Based on the report the Chair or AWO may decide that there is sufficient justification to suspend the project's approval to protect other animals until the IACUC can review the information.

2. IACUC review and response

Upon notification of an adverse event, the following process will be followed.

The Chair/Animal Welfare Officer will review the report when first received and decide whether it warrants any urgent action, intervention or further information.

The IACUC will then review the report at the next meeting.

In reviewing the report the IACUC will decide whether:

- The actions taken were appropriate
- The investigations were adequate to provide the necessary information
- The conclusions reached following the investigation and review were correct
- Further investigations are required
- A breach of the legislation, Code or protocol approval has occurred
- The project can ethically proceed or should be suspended or modified in light of any new information
- Any changes are required to animal housing, care and husbandry procedures, facility environmental conditions or staffing. In such cases directions will be given to the appropriate investigators
- Whether any further information is required in order for it to make a decision

The IACUC will respond to the investigator with within two weeks following the IACUC meeting at which it was reviewed, unless urgent action requires an immediate response.

A protocol may be suspended or have approval removed if it is considered serious.

A serious adverse event is one that:

- Has the capacity to affect the wellbeing of a significant number of animals remaining on the protocol, the facility or to affect the environment and so requires IACUC action
- Occurs as a result of intentional cruelty, reckless behaviour, persistent negligence

or misconduct

- Involves a breach of legislation
- Has the capacity to affect the reputation of the University or the IACUC

Related policy instruments

Animal and Birds Act

Singapore Guidelines for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes

Schedules/Appendices

Unexpected Adverse Event Report Form

Administration

Approval Details

Policy Sponsor	IACUC Chair
Approval Authority	Head of Singapore Campus
Approval Date	
Version no	2.0
Date for next review	09/02/2025

Revision History

Version	Revision date	Implementation date	Details	Author
1.0	-	27/08/2018	Procedure established	Dean Jerry
2.0	09/02/2022	-	Reviewed procedure Replaced Policy Sponsor 'Dean of Research Singapore' with IACUC Chair Added 'Approval Authority: Head of Singapore Campus'	Denise Dillon

Keywords	Adverse event, IACUC
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