

**University of California, Merced  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Policy**

**Version No. 2**

**Policy No. 106**

**Responsibility of Principal Investigators for Monitoring Laboratory Animals**

**I. Purpose:**

This policy describes the responsibility of investigators for monitoring their laboratory animals and differentiates between routine animal welfare observations and study related or post procedural monitoring and treatment.

**II. Definition:**

**Routine animal welfare observation:** Each animal housed at the Department of Animal Research Services (DARS) is inspected daily by animal care personnel. When these animals are checked, an objective and subjective observation is made.

Observations:

1. The animal should be bright, alert, responsive and hydrated. In addition, it should be eating, drinking, urinating and defecating at a frequency and consistency considered normal for the species.
2. Behavior should be normal for the species, and individual animal.
3. The animals should also be of average body condition, free of lesions, alopecia (hair loss/hairless areas), swelling or masses.
4. The animals should be breathing normally and have no discharge from the mouth, nose, eyes or other orifices.
5. The animals should not be bleeding or have open lesions.
6. They should be moving with a smooth gait and not favoring any limb.
7. The animal's teeth should be of the proper length and spacing for the species.
8. The animal should not have bandages, sutures, or staples without a postoperative record, **and/or** treatment card, both of which will indicate the animal is being observed daily for postoperative complications.

**Study related or post procedural monitoring and treatment:** Research activities may have undesired and/or unanticipated adverse effects on research animals. All animals subjected to study related procedures and/or activities must be monitored for a time appropriate to the research activity.

**III. Policy:**

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states, "Animals should be cared for by qualified personnel every day, including weekends and holidays, both to safeguard their well-being and to satisfy research requirements" [1]. The IACUC requires investigators to ensure daily monitoring of their animals by an individual qualified to identify signs of pain, distress, or morbidity specific to that protocol. Animals on experiment must be monitored by the Principal Investigator and/or their laboratory staff, unless other arrangements have been made and approved in the animal care and use protocol.

**IV. Responsibility:**

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DARS staff will provide daily observation of animal environment and wellbeing.

Post procedural monitoring, treatment and study related observations are the responsibility of investigators and their research staff. This may include: providing analgesic or antibiotic treatment to animals that have recently undergone surgery; treating animal health cases as directed by the Attending Veterinarian; observing tumor-bearing animals; maintaining indwelling catheters and other chronic implants; weaning litters of pups or separating overcrowded cages; and euthanizing animals as required by any IACUC policy or as requested by the Attending Veterinarian.

**V. Related Policies:**

- Research and Instruction Using Animal Subjects (Policy 100)

**VI. References:**

- [\*The Animal Welfare Act\*](#) (Public Law 89-544, amended by Public Law 91-579, Public Law 94-279, and Public Law 99-198)
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Guidebook (OLAW 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)
- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (8<sup>th</sup> Edition)
- PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals

[1] National Research Council Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, page 46.