

University Committee on Use and Care of Animals

Guidelines for Unit Heads in Assuring Scientific or Instructional Merit Proposals for Animal Use in Research or Teaching

The University of Michigan supports judicious use of animals in research, education, and testing in the interests of human and animal welfare. At the same time, it insists on humane and ethical treatment of those animals.

In compliance with University policy and federal statute, the University's Committee on Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA) provides supervision, coordination, and review of every project proposed to include the use of animals. UCUCA's charge included compliance with "US Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training," Principle II of which states that **"procedures involving animals should be designed and performed with due consideration of their relevance to human or animal health, the advancement of knowledge, or the good of society."** Thus, UCUCA must assure scientific or instructional merit in the projects it approves.

UCUCA considers a funding decision by external peer review to be adequate evidence of scientific merit. However, proposed projects that are not subjected to external peer review (such as internally funded projects, industry contracts or gifts, and instructional use of animals), must provide alternative evidence of scientific or instructional merit. Toward that end, UCUCA requires the chair/director of the home department/unit to assure the scientific or instructional merit of any project to be undertaken prior to external review and approval.

In accord with US Government Principle II, the chair/director is required to assure that the project is meritorious, that is, that it is likely to benefit human or animal health, the advancement of knowledge, or the good of society. The chair/director's signature in the appropriate section of an Application to Use Vertebrate Animals in Research, Testing or Instruction (Form 8225) documents that assurance.

To assist chairs/directors on unit-level committees in evaluating scientific merit in a proposed research project, the UCUCA concludes that, in addition to meeting the criteria in US Government Principle II, at least the following questions should be considered:

1. Has the investigator formulated appropriate long-term scientific goals for the proposed work?
2. Does the proposed work have clearly-defined short term objectives?
3. Is the experimental method appropriate for answering the question?
4. Is there reasonable probability that interpretable data will be obtained?

2.

Additionally, the chair/director may wish to consider the following:

1. Does the proposed work have the potential for publication in a peer-reviewed journal?
2. If not, is it a pilot study that will likely lead to an external peer-reviewed grant application or publication?

To assist chairs/directors or unit-level committees in evaluating instructional merit in a proposed instructional project, the UCUCA suggests that the following questions be considered:

1. Has the instructor formulated appropriate long-term instructional goals for the course?
2. Does the course have clearly-defined specific learning objectives?
3. Is the proposed instructional use of animals appropriate for illustrating the principle or topic being taught?
4. Is there a reasonable probability that the student will be provided with a meaningful learning experience?

Approved by UCUCA 2/19/96