

Policy on Adoption of Research Animals

This document establishes the policy of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) regarding the requirements for adoption of research animals from the University of Kentucky (UK).

BACKGROUND

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*⁽¹⁾ (*Guide*) and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching*⁽³⁾ (*AG Guide*) discuss the termination of research animals at the conclusion of the research project. However, the *Guide*, the *Ag Guide*, the PHS Policy⁽²⁾, and the Animal Welfare Act⁽⁴⁾ are silent on the issue of private adoption of research animals for pets after a study has been completed or the animals are no longer required for research. Title 9 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) recordkeeping regulations and official policies offer institutions the option of developing and implementing an adoption policy. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) is supportive of the concept of adoption.

In certain cases of non-terminal research use of animals, breeding of extra animals or ordering and receipt of animals unable to be used in research, adoption into a private home is encouraged by the University of Kentucky IACUC. Adoption is done in consultation with the principal investigator (PI) and orchestrated through the unit responsible for the care and use of the animal. Adoption is at the discretion of the Attending Veterinarian (AV) and the clinical veterinarian(s) of the unit. For a research animal to be eligible for adoption the following conditions must be met:

- The animal must not have been subjected to a major research surgical procedure, exposed to infectious agents/hazardous chemicals/etc. or be genetically altered or immune-suppressed. Routine veterinary surgeries are exempted.
- The animal must not have been administered any drugs other than FDA-approved human or veterinary drugs or food supplements or pharmaceutically compounded veterinary drugs. If any drugs have been administered to the animal, the drug must be disclosed to the veterinarians and the potential adopter.
- Animals must be adopted as personal or family pets only and may not be sold or used for research.
- Animals must not be used for food (human or animal consumption).
- The animal must be in good health and of acceptable behavior.
- The adopter is responsible for any future medical care/support as may be required.

PROCEDURES

The IACUC requires the following set of procedures:

1. The PI must first indicate that the animal is not needed for research, state that they have no knowledge of any fact that would make the animal inappropriate for adoption, and recommend the animal be offered for adoption. If the PI is aware of any conditions that may have an impact on the animal's suitability as a pet, this must be communicated to the veterinarians and the potential adopter.
2. The animal should first be offered to other principal investigators with an IACUC approved research protocol. If no principal researcher indicates a desire to use the animal, the animal will be considered for the adoption program.
3. If an individual indicates an interest in adopting an animal, the Attending Veterinarian and/or UK clinical veterinarian (or qualified designee) will meet/talk with that individual and conduct an interview to determine the reasons for the adoption and the person's willingness and ability to provide for the animal's welfare. Appendix I is required to be completed by the veterinarian and adopter. Potential adopters will be screened by the veterinarian for their suitability, knowledge of the care of the species, and qualifications.
4. A University of Kentucky state licensed veterinarian will conduct a physical exam, including any tests deemed necessary to determine whether the animal is suitable for adoption. Vaccinations may also be administered as needed. Results of the exam and any test will be furnished to the prospective new owner.
5. A transfer form must be filled out by the PI or designee transferring any dog or cat ownership to the new owner. APHIS form 7006 ("Record of Disposition of Dogs and Cats") should be completed. For other USDA regulated species, form 7020 ("Record of Disposition of Animals other than Dogs and Cats") must be completed. Forms can be found at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-care/animal-welfare-resources#regulatory-forms>.
6. Spaying, neutering, or other common surgical procedures may be performed prior to adoption, at the discretion of the UK veterinarian. If surgical procedures need to be performed solely in connection with the adoption, the UK veterinarian may attempt to ascertain if cost reimbursement is available from an appropriate source, such as from the adopting family or other sources. The individual desiring to adopt the animal must complete and sign an Animal Adoption Agreement (Appendix II). The responsible UK department will retain the original of this agreement and give a copy to the new owner as proof of ownership transfer. give a copy to the new owner as proof of ownership transfer.
7. On the day the Animal Adoption Agreement is signed the animal must be removed from the UK facility. Once the animal is in the possession of its new owner, the University will no longer be responsible for the animal, its care or any damage it may cause.

REFERENCES:

1. **Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources (U.S.).** 2011. [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
2. **National Institutes of Health (U.S.). Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare., United States. Public Health Service.** 2015. [Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#). Bethesda, MD (6705 Rockledge Dr., Bethesda 20892-7982): Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, National Institutes of Health, Dept. of Health and Human Services.
3. **The American Society of Animal Science (ASAS).** 2020. [Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching](#) Champaign, IL: FASS, Federation of Animal Science Societies.
4. **United States., United States. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.** [Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations](#). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Appendix I
Questionnaire for Animal Adoption

Name: _____
Address: _____

E-mail: _____
Phone Number: _____

Check all that describe the prospective residence:

- ☐ Single-family home
- ☐ Apartment, duplex or other multi-family dwelling
- ☐ I own my home
- ☐ I rent my home (does landlord allow pets? _____)
- ☐ Fenced yard
- ☐ Urban location
- ☐ Rural location
- ☐ Zoning restrictions on animals in prospective residence area

How did you hear about this animal? _____

Where will the animal stay while you're at work? _____

Give information about other pets in your home: breed, sex, age, health, and any other pertinent details.

Name the veterinarian who will provide health care for this animal once you have adopted it.

Animal to be adopted: Species: _____ Gender: _____ ID: _____

Signature University of Kentucky Veterinarian

Date of interview

Recommendation:

_____ Approve adoption _____ Disapprove adoption (give reasons below)

Appendix II

University of Kentucky Animal Adoption Agreement

Date: _____

I, _____, am adopting the animal described below from the University of Kentucky and agree to be fully responsible for its future care, treatment, actions, and well-being.

The animal described below has been examined by University of Kentucky veterinarian (Dr. _____) and has been determined to appear to be both clinically healthy and suitable as a companion animal **except as noted below**. I acknowledge and agree that (just as with any physical examination) this does not guarantee that the animal to be adopted has no health issues, but that none are known based upon that examination.

I have been given a copy of this University of Kentucky "Animal Adoption Agreement" and the University of Kentucky policy entitled: Adoption of Research Animals. Having read this document and associated policy, I attest that I understand the terms under which I take ownership of this animal and agree to fully comply with all the conditions of adoption. Additionally, I have had an opportunity to ask any health and husbandry-related questions, and each question has been answered to my full satisfaction.

In accepting this animal as a pet, I agree to care for it in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations of my and/or the animal's municipality-city/county/state or province/federal location of residence, including but not limited to requirements on having the animal spayed or neutered, vaccinated against rabies and registering the animal with local animal control officials, each as and if required or applicable. I further agree not to use this animal as a food source, religious object, for any commercial purpose (including but not limited to breeding and exhibiting) or for research purposes unless the use has been appropriately approved by applicable authorities. I will not sell this animal for any use which is violative of this agreement, the associated policy or any applicable law.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I hereby release and indemnify the University of Kentucky, its trustees, officers, employees and agents from any and all liability and expenses resulting from this adoption. I understand that the University of Kentucky accepts no liability for the animal's continuing care or veterinary treatment, or for any damages arising from my ownership or care of the animal once it has been removed from the UK facility.

Animal Information:

Species/Breed: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____
Description: _____ Identification: _____

Special Health or Behavioral Notations:

New Owner:

University of Kentucky veterinarian:

Name (printed)

Name (printed)

Address

Title

Signature

Signature

Approved and Adopted by the IACUC:
April 18, 2012

Revised:
December 10, 2025