

## **Austin College IACUC Complaint Procedures**

This policy outlines the procedures for handling complaints concerning the mistreatment of animals and noncompliance with applicable policies regarding animal care and use at Austin College. Any person may file a complaint and complaints will be taken seriously and reviewed in accordance with this policy.

### **Reporting a complaint or concern**

Any person who believes that there is a potential violation of IACUC policy or that animals are being mistreated is responsible for reporting allegations of misconduct to the IACUC. A complaint may be reported orally, in writing, or through the website to any member of the IACUC. The Chair should be notified immediately. If the IACUC Chair is unavailable or has a conflict of interest, then the nonscientist member of the IACUC will complete the investigation. The IACUC Chair will inform the person who is the subject of the complaint in writing that a complaint has been filed. To the extent possible the complainant is expected to cooperate with the investigation and may be asked to provide additional information or appear before the IACUC. Investigation of the complaint will be documented in writing and maintained in the IACUC files and communicated to the IO.

Every reported or identified violation of IACUC policies and procedures by a principle investigator (PI) will result in a committee review of the evidence for the violation by the committee, led by the chair. Significant or major violations will be classified into several categories

1. Deficiency or negligence in husbandry care of animals
2. Placing animals under undue stress or harmful situations unrelated to husbandry.
3. Placing humans (caretakers, faculty, students, or staff) in situations of unnecessary risk.
4. Placing humans AND animals in situations of unnecessary risk or danger.

Following an investigation, the IACUC will report in writing that either

1. no violation or evidence of mistreatment of animals or policy noncompliance was identified and no further action is needed; or
2. a minor violation that is limited to one instance of policy noncompliance without inhumane treatment of animals or endangering personnel was identified; or
3. a major violation including two or more instances of policy noncompliance or inhumane treatment of animals or endangering personnel was identified.

If it is determined that a policy violation has occurred, then the IACUC select an appropriate plan of action based on the type and severity of the violation and the offense history of PI. The IACUC chair will provide written notice of the violation to the PI following recommendation, consultation and approval by the Institutional Official (IO). The written notice of program deficiency will identify the procedures for correction, procedures for further remediation, timeline for completion, and disciplinary actions by the IACUC. The IACUC chair has discretion with respect to reporting further information to the complainant. The subject of the complaint has the right to meet with the IACUC and respond to the complaint.

Listed below are generally accepted actions that can be taken by the IO, following a determination by the IACUC of significant policy violation, based on the history of the PI.

First offense: A first offense will focus on training and education.

- The PI will receive a written reprimand.
- The PI may be required to complete additional training or education and provide documentation to the IACUC.
- The PI may be placed on probation for a minimum of 1 year and for a period up to 5 years based on the severity of the offense.
- A suspension of the protocol for a stated period of time or the PI may be required to submit new protocol proposals or amendments.
- Additional remediation procedures may be required based on the severity of the offense.

Subsequent offenses: The actions recommended by the IACUC will depend on the frequency of violations, if it is a repeat or new offense, or if the PI is on probationary status. Failure to adequately address a first offense as specified by the IACUC will be considered a subsequent offense. Issues of continued noncompliance may be treated as subsequent offenses by the IACUC.

- The PI will receive a written reprimand.
- The PI will be required to complete additional training or education and provide documentation to the IACUC.
- The PI will be placed on probation for a minimum of 3 years and for a period up to 10 years based on the severity of the offense.
- Additional actions may range from a suspension of the protocol for a stated period of time to immediate revocation of the protocol approval.
- Protocol suspensions may include temporary suspensions of the privilege to access animal facilities and/or animals.
- Protocol revocations may include permanently revoking access to animal facilities on campus by the PI.

The IACUC Chair and IO are responsible for verifying that the remediations are completed within the established timeframe. Additionally false reports, as identified by the IACUC, may be reported to the IO for action as appropriate.