

Guidelines for Animal Care and Use Committee Membership

Background: This Guideline is intended to emphasize and reiterate both the regulatory requirements and the “best practices” that have developed among the NIH Institutes and Centers (IC) regarding Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) membership.

1. The Animal Welfare Regulations¹ (AWRs) and Public Health Service Policy² (PHS Policy) mandate the following requirements:
 - There must be at least five members on the committee (PHS Policy).
 - There may be no more than three ACUC members may be from the same administrative unit of the institute (AWRs).
 - There must be at least one veterinarian with direct or delegated program responsibility (AWRs and PHS Policy).
 - There must be at least one nonaffiliated member (AWRs and PHS Policy).
 - There must be at least one practicing scientist experienced in research involving animals (PHS Policy).
 - There must be at least one member whose primary concerns are in a nonscientific area (PHS Policy).
2. ACUC Chairs should be permanent members of the scientific staff (or equivalent).
3. Nonaffiliated members must represent the general community interests in the proper care and use of animals. The nonaffiliated member cannot be a former or current laboratory animal user, affiliated with the institution, or an immediate family member of an individual affiliated with the institution.³ Regarding service of former employees, there should be no discernible ties or ongoing affiliation with the institution. Real or perceived conflicts of interests must be avoided. Once a nonaffiliated member serves on an ACUC, the individual becomes “affiliated” and, therefore, cannot serve concurrently as a nonaffiliated member on another ACUC within the NIH. Nominal compensation may be provided to the nonaffiliated member for participation on the ACUC, though it cannot be a substantial source of income, or create a conflict of interest. It is acceptable for the institution to pay for IACUC-related training of nonaffiliated members. Consideration should be given to appointing an alternate nonaffiliated member to the ACUC.
4. Nonscientific members must have primary concerns in a nonscientific area and must not have scientific training. When the rationale for categorizing an individual is not apparent based on their occupation or training, the institution should maintain written documentation of the reason for the categorization.³ Consideration should be given to appointing an alternate nonscientific member to the ACUC.
5. In addition to the requirements of the AWRs and PHS Policy, NIH Policy Manual 3040-2⁴ requires the membership of each ACUC to include a Division of Occupational Health and Safety Specialist and the ARAC ombudsman. The ARAC ombudsman is a non-voting

member, is not obligated to attend all meetings, and is not counted in determining if a quorum is present.

6. ACUC members are required to complete the OACU training course, “Animal Care and Use Committee Member Training: Defining the Challenge of ACUC Membership.” Additional training is provided at the IC level.
7. Consideration should be given to establishing terms of membership on the ACUC, including the Chair, who can be renewed with the concurrence of the incumbent. Three-year terms are recommended to provide for acclimation, productivity, and opportunity for holding office on the committee.
8. ACUC committee participation can be enhanced by:
 - Utilizing the NIH awards program to recognize and reward outstanding ACUC members for their efforts in support of the NIH Animal Care and Use program.
 - Providing outside members with ‘extended visitor’ status which provides them with an NIH badge and allows for easier access to the NIH campus and other NIH buildings. The IC ACUC Coordinators are the points-of-contact for completing this process.
 - Allowing participation by video or teleconferencing⁵.

References:

1. United States Department of Agriculture, and Animal Plant Health Inspection Service. USDA Animal Care: [Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations](#)
2. Public Health Service Policy (PHS Policy) - [Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#), revised 2015, or subsequent editions.
3. OLAW Notice Number: [NOT-OD-15-109 – Guidance on Qualification of IACUC Nonscientific and Nonaffiliated Members](#)
4. NIH Policy Manual 3040-2: [Animal Care and Use in the Intramural Research Program](#)
5. OLAW Notice Number: NOT-OD-06-052 – [Guidance on Use of Telecommunications for IACUC Meetings under the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#)

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