

# 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 Act and Animal Welfare Regulations(1) (AWARs) and Public Health Service Policy(2) (PHS Policy) mandate the following requirements:
  - There must be at least five members on the committee (PHS Policy), one of whom serves as the committee chair (AWARs).
  - There must be no more than three ACUC members from the same administrative unit of the institute (AWARs).
  - There must be at least one veterinarian with direct or delegated program responsibility (AWARs and PHS Policy).
  - There must be at least one nonaffiliated member (AWARs 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 members are appointed by the IC Scientific Director through authority delegated by the NIH Institutional Official(3).
3. ACUC Chairs should be permanent members of the scientific staff (or equivalent) and can be from any NIH IC.
4. 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(4). 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 NIH ACUC, the individual becomes “affiliated” and, therefore, cannot serve concurrently as a nonaffiliated member on another NIH ACUC. 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 ACUC-related training of nonaffiliated members.
5. 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(4).
6. In addition to the requirements of the AWARs and PHS Policy, NIH Policy Manual 3040-2(5) requires the membership of each ACUC to include a Division of Safety Specialist and the ARAC Ombuds. As an *ex officio* member, the ARAC Ombuds is a non-voting member, is not obligated to attend meetings, and is not counted when determining if a quorum is present. Additionally, the Director

of the Office of Animal Care and Use (OACU) designates OACU staff members to serve as non-voting observers to the IC ACUCs.

7. 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.
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.
  - Considering the establishment of membership terms.
  - Providing nonaffiliated members with [extended visitor](#)(6) status which provides them with an NIH badge and allows for easier access to the NIH campus and other NIH buildings.
  - Allowing participation by video or teleconferencing(7).
  - Allowing participation of non-federal employees, such as contract personnel.
  - Allowing the appointment of alternate members(8).

#### **References:**

1. United States Department of Agriculture. USDA Blue Book: Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Regulations USDA2022 [Available from: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/media/document/17164/file>.
2. Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. In: National Institute of Health, Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, editor. 2015.
3. National Institutes of Health, Office of Management. NIH Delegations of Authority 31 2022 [Available from: <https://delegations.nih.gov/DOADetails.aspx?DOA=4795>.
4. Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. NOT-OD-15-109: Guidance on Qualifications of IACUC Nonscientific and Nonaffiliated Members 2015 [Available from: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-15-109.html>.
5. NIH Office of Animal Care and Use. 3040-2 - Animal Care and Use in the Intramural Research Program. In: Office of Management Assessment, editor. NIH Policy Manual2023.
6. NIH Division of Police. Extended Visitor ID Badge Application 2022 [Available from: <https://security.nih.gov/Documents/Extended%20Visitor%20Form.pdf>.
7. Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. NOT-OD-06-052: Guidance on Use of Telecommunications for IACUC Meetings under the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals 2006 [Available from: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-06-052.html>.
8. Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. NOT-OD-11-053: Guidance to Reduce Regulatory Burden for IACUC Administration Regarding Alternate Members and Approval Dates 2011 [Available from: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-11-053.html>.

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