




IACUC Policy 08: Laboratory Animal Acclimation/Stabilization

Policy Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to describe the period required for stabilization of newly received laboratory animals at TTU.

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1. Background

- a. The “Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition”, states: “...newly received animals should be given a period for physiologic, psychological, and nutritional acclimation before their use.” Transportation and ‘new surroundings’ have been documented to affect normal physiology and function of animals. Acclimation/stabilization are important components of animal welfare, animal wellbeing, and stable research outcomes. Acclimation/stabilization decreases animal distress and enhances physiologic stability and animal well-being. Acclimation/stabilization may extend from days to weeks.

2. Definition

- a. Acclimation occurs in a short period of time (days to weeks), and as well as within the organism's lifetime.
- b. Is a reversible physiological or morphological change an organism experiences in response to changing environmental conditions. Such physiological changes enable the organism to tolerate (or acclimatize to) the new environmental conditions.

3. Acclimation Period

Species	Minimum
Non-mammalian Vertebrates (i.e.-birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians)	48 hours
Rodents	72 hours (3 days)
USDA covered species (i.e.-wild caught mammals, guinea pigs, rabbits, ferrets, dogs, cats, livestock used in biomedical research)	5-7 days (not including date of acquisition and animals must be physically examined by the veterinary staff before research can begin)

4. Roles & applicability

- a. Research and TTU staff will abide by the policy statements below, unless prior IACUC approval of an exception to this policy is documented within the protocol or an approved standard operating procedure (SOP).
- b. Medical concerns or emergencies, as determined by the TTU veterinary staff, may exempt an animal from the acclimation period.



5. Policy

- a. All newly received animals (transported into a TTU-managed or operated facility) require a species specific acclimation period before experimental use.
- b. Transportation between TTU-managed or operated facilities may also contribute stressors to the animal(s). Researchers should consider the impact of intra-campus transport upon research outcomes.
- c. Newly received animals under acclimation / stabilization should be housed in micro-isolator cages or physically separated from existing cages to prevent their contact with animals already on study. Bio-containment / bio-exclusion (Quarantine) shall be exercised as appropriate for the protection of the animals in acclimation / stabilization, for other colony animals, or for persons working with those animals.
- d. Exceptions to the acclimation / stabilization period require a justification included in the IACUC-approved protocol.
- e. The completion of the acclimation period is not a replacement for the quarantine period, although the acclimation and quarantine periods may run concurrently. Quarantine periods and conditions are defined by the TTU Animal Care Services.

6. References

- a. United States Department of Agriculture, 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, and 3.
- b. PHS Policy on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, OPRR, 1996.
- c. OLAW Web Site: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/>
- d. AAALAC Accreditation Guidelines: <http://www.aaalac.org>
- e. 8th Edition: The Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals
- f. Obernier, J.A. and Baldwin, R.L. 2007. Establishing an Appropriate Period of Acclimation Following Transportation of Laboratory Animals. *ILAR Journal* 47(4).
- g. Fox, J.G., L.C. Anderson, F.M. Loew, F.W. Quimby. 2002. *Laboratory Animal Medicine*. 2nd Edition.