



Title: Laboratory Animal Acclimation/Stabilization

Policy Number: 008

Policy Intent: 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)
Dogs and Cats*	5 days (not including date of acquisition and animals must be physically examined by the veterinary staff before research can begin)
Other USDA Covered species	2 – 7 days depending on species and at veterinary discretion
Production Livestock Species	48 hours unless otherwise approved



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* The holding period for dogs and cats may coincide with the acclimation period

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 separately from existing animals to prevent their contact with animals' already on study or in the colony/herd. 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

- United States Department of Agriculture, 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, and 3.
- PHS Policy on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, OPRR, 1996.
- OLAW Web Site: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/>
- AAALAC Accreditation Guidelines: <http://www.aaalac.org>
- 8th Edition: The Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals
- Obernier, J.A. and Baldwin, R.L. 2007. Establishing an Appropriate Period of Acclimation Following Transportation of Laboratory Animals. ILAR Journal 47(4).
- Fox, J.G., L.C. Anderson, F.M. Loew, F.W. Quimby. 2002. Laboratory Animal Medicine. 2nd Edition.
- 4th Edition. Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching. 2020.