Denver | Anschutz

IACUC
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Subject:	**Death as an Endpoint**
Source	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
Effective Date	10/12/2026
Replaces:	02/12/2024
Applies to:	Personnel involved in Research or Teaching involving animals.
Reference:	Animal Welfare Act; PHS Policy on Humane Care & Use of Laboratory Animals. Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) provides oversight of the institution's animal care and use program, ensuring compliance with federally mandated regulations, ethical standards, and institutional policies governing the humane use of animals in research and teaching at the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz. The IACUC evaluates and reviews all activities related to the care and use of animals and determines if the proposed activities are in accordance with regulations.

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the requirements for conducting animal research in which death is an endpoint.

- The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and Public Health Service (PHS) Policy require that animal pain and distress be minimized in any experiment.
- The use of death as an endpoint in animal experiments at CU Denver | Anschutz is highly discouraged and only approved with strong scientific justification.
    - Investigators are required to justify their endpoints for all experiments that require death as an endpoint within a protocol or agree that they can judge and will perform euthanasia on animals found moribund.
    - Inconvenience or cost are not sufficient justifications.
- Whenever possible, investigators are to euthanize animals prior to the actual death of the animal.
    - Investigators must establish objective criteria to differentiate animals which are found morbid (i.e. affected with disease and illness) and those which are found moribund (i.e. in the state of dying).
    - Investigators must include experimental goals and endpoints in their approved protocol. In addition, humane endpoints, such as professional judgment and methods to assess moribund animals using objective measures based on the specific experience with the animal model, must also be included.
    - Some of the known signs of illness or dying which may be applied can be found in the Guidelines for Animal Study Endpoints. This information will allow the investigator to understand that the combination of signs indicating euthanasia may vary with the experimental endpoint.
- Investigators are expected to monitor experimental animals at a frequency based on the protocol and experimental procedures.
    - It should be understood that experiments with a high incidence of morbidity and potential mortality will require increased observation that may include multiple times per day at critical timepoints.
    - Monitoring activities should be documented and made accessible to veterinary staff, the IACUC, and other relevant representatives.
- The IACUC may require that animals found moribund be euthanized, even when provided scientific justification for death as an endpoint. The Attending Veterinarian or their delegate veterinarian has the authority to ensure the welfare of animals and can require euthanasia of moribund animals.

Compliance and Accountability

In accordance with regulatory requirements, failure to comply with this policy will result in a review by the IACUC. Depending on the severity of the violation, you may be required to complete additional training, and your privileges to conduct animal research at CU Denver | Anschutz may be suspended or completely revoked.

If your research privileges are suspended, your funding agency (e.g., NIH) and relevant regulatory agencies (e.g., USDA) may be informed about your violation of federal and/or local policies regarding the humane use of animals. This notification will have a direct impact on your ongoing funding for animal-related research.