



Subject:	Maximum Allowable Weight Loss
Source	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
Effective Date	08/10/2026
Replaces:	09/11/2023
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

Introduction

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 provides information on the requirements for maximum allowable weight loss.

- The maximum allowable weight loss for any animal involved in research or teaching protocols is 15% of the pre-procedure body weight in the typically healthy, non-obese animal unless scientifically justified in the approved IACUC protocol. Above 15%, or the approved limit in the approved IACUC protocol, animals must be euthanized or immediate veterinarian consultation must be obtained.
 - Adult animals: the maximum weight loss would be a decrease from the weight recorded on Day 0 of the specific experimental manipulation.
 - Immature animals: the maximum weight loss is a deviation of 15% from recognized growth curves or age matched control animals. Growth curves can be sourced from the vendor (e.g., Jackson Labs) or determined via concurrent, free-fed, age-matched control animals.
 - Caloric restriction and other studies resulting in an expected more severe growth restriction are allowable but must be justified and evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the IACUC and include appropriate monitoring and interventions listed in the protocol.
- An anticipated weight loss of greater than 15% requires a **Category "E"** protocol designation for USDA-covered species. A scientific justification for excessive weight loss will also be required.
- Records of weight monitoring as approved in the IACUC protocol shall be readily available to the IACUC and veterinary staff. The IACUC will routinely review these records during semiannual inspections and/or Post Approval Monitoring (PAM) sessions

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 will 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) will 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.