

Biomedical science is highly dependent on animal experimentation. This is essential in order to understand mechanisms of vital processes in order to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The use of laboratory animals in research, teaching, testing, and production is governed by various federal and local laws, regulations, policies and standards [NIH Guide, 2011]. Compliance with these laws, regulations, policies, and standards are aimed at establishing a system of self-regulation and regulatory oversight that binds researchers and institutions using animals. Both researchers and institutions have affirmative duties of humane care and use that are supported by practical, ethical, and scientific principles. This system of self-regulation establishes a rigorous programme of animal care and use, and provides flexibility in fulfilling the responsibility to provide humane care. The specific scope and nature of this responsibility can vary based on the scientific discipline, nature of the animal use and species involved. This responsibility requires that producers, teachers, researchers, and institutions carry out purposeful analyses of proposed uses of laboratory animals.

An animal care and use programme comprises of all activities conducted by and at an institution that have a direct impact on the well-being of animals. These activities include animal and veterinary care, policies and procedures, personnel and programme management and oversight, occupational health and safety, institutional animal care and use committee functions, and animal facility design and management (NIH Guide, 2011).

University of Ibadan believes that the use of laboratory animals in biomedical science must be justified. The potential benefits to humans, animals and/or the environment should outweigh the potential harm to the animal subjects. Hence, the University of Ibadan in order to keep up with global best practices in biomedical research involving the use of animals established the '***Animal Care and Use Research Ethics Committee (ACUREC)***'. The committee is saddled with the responsibility of providing oversight and assistance in ensuring compliance with all laws, regulations and policies governing the care and use of animals for research, teaching and testing. Animal-based research should be appropriate, and the number of animals used for research should be reduced, as encapsulated in the three Rs [Replacement, Refinement and Reduction] (Russell and Burch, 1959).

One of the key mandates of the committee is the training and re-training of all staff, students and members of the public involved in animal use for research, teaching and testing. This training module is designed for ALL investigators who use animals in research works, including producers of laboratory animals. All personnel involved with the care and use of animals must be adequately educated, trained, and/or qualified in basic principles of laboratory animal science to ensure high-quality science and animal well-being.

The ACUREC of the University of Ibadan will:

- Evaluate and approve, or reject written proposals for animal studies submitted for ethical review subject to possible modification(s).
- Monitor, inspect and assess the acquisition, transportation, production, housing, care, use, humane killing and disposal of animals, including breeding stocks.
- Review research facilities' programmes for humane care and use of animals once every two years.

- Develop acceptable standards for the establishment and maintenance of animal facilities for research, teaching and testing.
- Inspect research facilities and experimental animal houses at least once every two years.
- Maintain a register of approved projects and receive reports on their outcome.
- Review concerns and complaints involving the care and use of animals at the institution either for the public or research facility personnel.