

Adoption of Research Animals

Title/Subject: ADOPTION OF RESEARCH ANIMALS

Applies to: ☒ Faculty ☒ Staff ☒ Students ☒ Student Employees ☒ Visitors ☒ Contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: August 1, 2026

Policy Owner: Office of Research Compliance; Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Background

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching discuss the termination of research animals at the conclusion of the research project. However, they, the PHS Policy, and the Animal Welfare Act are silent on the issue of private adoption of research animals for pets after a study has been completed or the animals are no longer required for research.

The 9 CFR recordkeeping regulations and official policies offer institutions the option of developing and implementing an adoption policy. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine are supportive of the adoption of research animals.

Purpose

In some instances, in which animals are used for non-terminal research or when animals cannot be used in the intended research, adoption into a private home shall be allowed by the CMU IACUC. When possible, adoption may provide a mechanism to reduce unnecessary euthanasia of laboratory animals.

Definitions

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC): The institutional body charged by the Animal Welfare Act Regulations, the Health Research Extension act and Public Health Service Policy with overseeing the use of animals in teaching and research at the institution.

Animal: For the purposes of this policy, animals are vertebrate animals.

Attending Veterinarian: The veterinarian responsible for the health and well-being of all laboratory animals used at the institution.

Principal Investigator: The individual responsible for conceiving, running and overseeing a research project.

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW): OLAW is a part of the NIH that provides guidance and interpretation of the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Policy), supports educational programs, and monitors compliance with the Policy by Assured institutions and PHS funding components to ensure the humane care and use of animals in PHS-supported research, testing, and training, thereby contributing to the quality of PHS-supported activities.

American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ACLAM): The organization that certifies laboratory animal veterinarians.

The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals: Along with PHS Policy, the foremost document guiding the oversight of research animal care and use programs.

Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching: The document guiding the oversight of research involving agricultural animals.

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Policy

In some instances, adoption into a private home shall be allowed by the CMU IACUC. Adoption is done in consultation with the Principal Investigator (PI) and is done at the discretion of the Attending Veterinarian (AV).

For a research animal to be eligible for adoption the following conditions must be met:

- The animal must be in good health and of acceptable behavior.
- Animals must be adopted as personal pets only and may not be sold.
- Animals must not be used for food (human or animal consumption).
- The adopter is responsible for any future medical care/support as may be required.

Exclusions:

- The animal must not have been administered any drugs other than FDA-approved human or veterinary drugs or food supplements or pharmaceutically compounded veterinary drugs. If any FDA approved drugs have been administered to the animal the drug should be disclosed to the potential adopter.
- Animals which have been exposed to infectious agents are not eligible for adoption.
- Transgenic or immune-suppressed animals are not eligible for adoption.

Procedure

1. The PI must first indicate that the animal is not needed for research, state that they have no knowledge of any fact that would make the animal inappropriate for adoption, and recommend the animal be offered for adoption. If the PI is aware of any conditions that may have an impact on the animal's suitability as a pet, this must be communicated to the potential adopter.
2. A CMU veterinarian, licensed within the State of MI, will conduct a physical examination of the animal, including blood testing if indicated, provide appropriate vaccinations and order other tests as required to determine whether the animal is a suitable pet. This examination will be paid for by the adopter; and results of the examination will be furnished to the prospective new owner.
3. If an individual indicates an interest in adopting an animal, the AV will meet/talk with that individual and conduct an interview to determine the reasons for the adoption and the person's willingness and ability to provide for the animal's welfare.
 - a. The questionnaire attached as Appendix 1 is suggested to be completed by the AV and adopter.
 - b. Potential adopters will be screened by the AV for their suitability, knowledge of the care of the type of animal, and qualifications.
4. On the day the Animal Adoption Agreement (Appendix 2) is signed, the animal should be transferred from the CMU facilities to the new owner. Once the animal leaves the facility, it is the possession of its new owner; CMU will no longer be responsible for the animal, its care, or any damage it may cause.
5. Completed questionnaires and agreements will be stored by the IACUC office.

References

1. Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources (U.S.). 2011. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
2. National Institutes of Health (U.S.). Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare., United States. Public Health Service. 2015 Public Health Service policy on humane care and use of laboratory animals. Bethesda, MD

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(6705 Rockledge Dr., Bethesda 20892-7982): Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, National Institutes of Health, Dept. of Health and Human Services.

3. Federation of Animal Science Societies. 2010. Guide for the care and use of agricultural animals in research and teaching Champaign, IL: FASS, Federation of Animal Science Societies.
4. United States., United States. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. 2023. Animal Welfare Act and animal welfare regulations. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.
5. American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine. Adoption of Research Animals — ACLAM Position Statement updated October, 2017. <https://www.aclam.org/about/position-statements> accessed February 18, 2018.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines related to this subject.

Related Policies and Laws (Add Number & Name of Significantly Related Policy(ies))	
Appendices (Optional)	
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Appendix 1
CMU Questionnaire for Animal Adoption

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone Number:

Animal to be adopted:

Species:

Sex:

How did you hear about this animal?

Circle the description of the prospective residence:

Single-family home, Apartment, duplex or other multifamily dwelling, Dorm

If the residence is a rental unit or a Dorm, are pets allowed?

Please provide information about other pets in your home, including breed, sex, age, health, and any other pertinent details:

Name of the veterinarian who will provide health care for this animal one adopted:

Recommendation (Approve adoption/Disapprove adoption). Provide reason.

Signature of CMU Veterinarian

Date of Interview

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Appendix 2**CMU Animal Adoption Agreement**

I, _____, am adopting the animal described below from the Central Michigan University (CMU) and agree to be fully responsible for its future care, treatment, actions, and wellbeing.

The animal described below has been examined by CMU veterinarian (Dr. _____) and has been determined to appear to be both clinically healthy and suitable as a companion animal except as noted below. I acknowledge and agree that (just as with any physical examination) this does not guarantee that the animal to be adopted has no health issues, but that none are known based upon that examination.

I have been given a copy of this CMU "Animal Adoption Agreement". Having read this document, I attest that I understand the terms under which I take ownership of this animal and agree to fully comply with all the conditions of adoption. Additionally, I have had an opportunity to ask any health and husbandry-related questions, and each question has been answered to my full satisfaction.

In accepting this animal, I agree to care for it in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations of my and/or the animal's place of residence, including but not limited to having the animal spayed or neutered if applicable, vaccinated against rabies and registering the animal with local animal control officials as required. I further agree not to use this animal as a food source (for humans or other animals) or religious object or for any commercial purpose, including but not limited to breeding and exhibiting. I will not sell this animal or relinquish this animal to a shelter or rescue organization.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I hereby release and indemnify CMU, its trustees, officers, employees and agents from any and all liability and expenses resulting from this adoption. I understand that CMU accepts no liability for the animal's continuing care or veterinary treatment, or for any damages arising from my ownership of the animal once it has been removed from the CMU facility.

Animal information

Species/Breed:

Sex:

Age:

Description:

Identification:

Special health or behavioral notations:

New Owner Name (printed): _____ Address: _____ _____ Signature Date	CMU Veterinarian Name (printed): _____ _____ Signature Date
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