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SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY FOR RESEARCH USING ANIMAL SUBJECTS

1. Introduction

The Animal Care Subcommittee at Southwest Minnesota State University is an ad hoc subcommittee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of the Animal Care Subcommittee is to ensure that animal research is conducted in an ethical manner. The members of the Animal Care Subcommittee are responsible for protecting the welfare of animal research subjects. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a standing committee of the university that is composed of one (non-voting) dean; three SMSUFA members that include one science faculty; and one MAPE, AFSCME, or MSUAASF member. The Animal Care Subcommittee is composed of the IRB science faculty member and two additional IRB members. These members will review proposals for research and determine if the animal subjects will be adequately protected from harm. The members of the Animal Care Subcommittee will report the findings of the Animal Care Subcommittee to the Chair of the IRB.

Before conducting any research, an investigator should submit an application with the summary of the proposed research to the IRB chair. The “Application to Conduct Research Using Animal Subjects” contains a set of questions, which will be used to determine the level of review that is appropriate. Copies of the application forms are provided on the IRB website.

Additional information about humane care and use of laboratory animals can be found at the website for the Office of Animal Laboratory Welfare at the National Institutes of Health, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/phspol.htm>.

Researchers can contact the IRB Chair for additional information. Contact information is posted on the IRB website.

2. Animal Subjects

It is recognized that free inquiry and investigation are among the most fundamental of scholarly values, yet it is also expected that researchers affiliated with the university comply with an appropriate review process. It is further understood that researchers will adhere to appropriate ethical standards in their own fields.

According to the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (1996) and the *Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* as administered by the

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW), research involving live vertebrate animals must have a review process in accordance with a prescribed set of ethical guidelines.

For the purposes of the review board, “research” is defined as a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. This includes both publishable and non-publishable scholarly endeavors. Any activity that meets this definition and involves captive vertebrates must pass through the institutional review process.

All non-exempt research is subject to continuing review at least annually.

2.1. Exempt

Research that involves no interaction with live vertebrate subjects is considered exempt from review. This category includes the following types of research:

- 1) Observations of animals in natural settings.
- 2) Research involving animals NOT in the Subphylum Vertebrata (such as insects).
- 3) Research involving dead vertebrates (dissections or preserved specimens).

2.2. Overview of the IRB Approval Process

Researchers seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board should follow these steps:

- 1) Obtain a copy of this policy statement and the “Application to Conduct Research Using Animal Subjects” at the IRB website.
- 2) Be familiar with the policy statement and other ethical guidelines appropriate in the relevant field of research.
- 3) Fill out the “Application to Conduct Research Using Animal Subjects” completely.
- 4) Submit a copy of the completed application via the instructions on the IRB website.
- 5) Wait for review to be completed at regularly scheduled meetings. Research should not begin until written approval is received. The IRB may approve, deny with explanation, or approve with conditions.
- 6) Begin research or resubmit the proposal with any changes requested by the IRB.