Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC)

Animal Adoption Policy

Purpose: Research animals that were used as control animals or were subjects in relatively benign experiments may be adopted by University employees or someone approved by the Principal Investigator, the IACUC, and a UTA veterinarian. This policy will outline the procedures necessary to complete the adoption process.

Responsibilities and Scope: The Attending Veterinarian (or designee) is responsible for examining the animal, reviewing the clinical record, and discussing with the prospective owner any potential health concerns that previous usage may have created. The IACUC is responsible for reviewing the protocol and considering the suitability of the animal for adoption based on prior usage for research purposes. Upon health clearance by the UTA Veterinarian, the IACUC will make the final determination to allow an animal adoption.

Procedures:

1) Initiation of Adoption.
   a) The following parties may request an adoption of a research animal:
      i) Research laboratory. The research laboratory should be the primary group to request that an animal be adopted since they would be most aware of the timeline of the animal's study life.
      ii) Animal facility staff. Because staff may have intimate knowledge of an animal's research history and the ending of a study, animal care technicians, veterinary technicians, administrative staff, etc. may also inquire about an animal being adopted.
      iii) UTA employee. If a UTA employee is notified by the research laboratory or animal facility staff that a particular animal may be adoptable, then he/she may inquire about an adoption.
      iv) IACUC. The IACUC may determine during regular review of animal research that animals are suitable candidates for adoption.
   b) Upon receiving an official request, the veterinarian will initiate a review of the animal’s records and conduct a physical examination and temperament assessment.
   c) Availability of animals for adoption is communicated by “word of mouth.” No written or published advertisements will be authorized. Because of the sensitivity of animal research, no direct inquiries concerning adoption from the general public will be considered.

2) Review of Clinical History and Examination.
   a) The veterinarian will review the research protocol and the animal's clinical record to identify what type of procedure (if any) was performed on the animal(s).
      i) The animal eligible for adoption has not experienced any manipulation that has altered permanently its anatomical, physiological, metabolic, or locomotor functions. In addition, no hazardous agents, including recombinant DNA, hazardous pathogens,
chemicals, or drugs were used in the animal, and it must have no sign of compromised health, either natural or experimentally derived.

ii) Animals that have undergone invasive procedures typically will not be considered suitable for adoption. The IACUC may approve a deviation from this standard if the procedure is considered to be typical among animals kept as pets (i.e. implantation of an identification microchip).

iii) The veterinarian will assess the animal's temperament to determine if it is suitable for adoption, or to make specific recommendations for placement situations (i.e. no children, no other pets, food aggressive, etc.).

b) The veterinarian will report the results of the physical examination and temperament assessment to the IACUC and make a recommendation for the possibility of adoption. Although the good health of an animal is a prerequisite for adoption, UT Arlington will not guarantee the health or temperament of adopted animals.

c) The IACUC will make the final determination if the animal would make a reasonable adoption candidate based on the research history of the animal and on any findings of the physical exam and temperament assessment. In cases where waiting until the next IACUC meeting for a determination would create an immediate apparent hazard for the animal, the decision to permit adoption may be made by the IACUC Chair, in consultation with the Attending Veterinarian.

3) Permanent Record.
   a) The Animal Adoption Agreement must be completed by the Attending Veterinarian, IACUC Chair, and Adopting Owner. This agreement releases UT Arlington of all future obligations to the animal.
   b) Three copies of the Animal Adoption Agreement are completed. One copy of the document will be provided to the IACUC, one to the UT Arlington Animal Care Facility (for the animal's disposition record), and one to the new owner for his or her records.
   c) For USDA animals, two copies of USDA Animal Disposition Form 7020 are completed with information regarding adoption of the animal and the new owner. One copy of 7020 is provided to the new owner, and the other to UT Arlington Animal Care Facility.
   d) The final notation in the animal's permanent clinical record will be that the animal was adopted as a private pet. The Animal Adoption Agreement will be included in the permanent record.
   e) If requested by the new owner, a summary of the animal's clinical record will be provided.

4) Finalization of Adoption.
   a) If the animal adoption is unsuccessful, it is the adopted owner's responsibility to find new and appropriate placement of the animal.
   b) An animal finalized for adoption cannot be returned to the UTA Animal Facilities due to possible introduction of infection or disease to the healthy animals housed within the Facilities.