Worksheet for Applications Involving Animals

This worksheet describes the information that must be included in applications submitted to NIH for activities involving the care and use of animals. It provides an overview of the requirements, a checklist for applicants and reviewers, detailed instructions, responsibilities of applicants, reviewers and NIH staff, and an example of an acceptable application.

Applicability

If the proposed work involves live vertebrate animals, federal policy requires applicants to address the criteria noted below. This includes work involving animals obtained or euthanized for tissue harvest and generation of custom antibodies.

If the applicant institution is not the site where animal work will be performed or if the work will be performed at several sites, these performance sites (institutions) must be identified. The proposed work involving live vertebrate animals should be described for every performance site.

Requirements

Applications involving live vertebrate animals must address the following criteria:

1. Description of Procedures (Vertebrate Animals Section)
   Provide a concise description of the proposed procedures to be used that involve live vertebrate animals in the work outlined in the Research Strategy section. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and total number of animals by species to be used in the proposed work. If dogs or cats are proposed, provide the source of the animals.
2. Justifications (Vertebrate Animals Section)
   Provide justification that the species are appropriate for the proposed research.

Instructions

Vertebrate Animals Section (VAS)
Typically, all of the required elements for the VAS can be addressed within 1 to 2 pages. The VAS must not be used to circumvent page limits.

- Any additional (e.g., non-pharmaceutical) means to avoid discomfort, distress, pain or injury, including palliative care.
- Manner, circumstances, and duration of all post-surgical provisions and care
- Special housing following surgery or manipulations, if necessary.
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Resources

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Grant Application VAS Worksheet (PDF) – a tool for grant application review
- Contract Proposal VAS Worksheet (PDF) – a tool for contract proposal review
- VAS Factsheet (PDF)
- What Investigators Need to Know About the Use of Animals (PDF)
- NOT-OD-16-006: Simplification of the Vertebrate Animals Section of NIH Grant Applications and Contract Proposals

References

The guidance in this worksheet is based on Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Policy) and federal requirements. The PHS Policy incorporates standards in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and the U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research and Training, and requires that euthanasia be conducted according to the AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals. Additional background information and references are available on the OLAW website (http://olaw.nih.gov).

- PHS Policy
  http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/phspol.htm
- U.S. Government Principles
  http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/references/phspol.htm#USGovPrinciples
- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
  http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12910
- AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals
  https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf

Example

(This application has been modified from the original. It addresses all required criteria for applications with