

# IACUC Townhall 3<sup>rd</sup> session

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

# Agenda

- 3:00pm: Welcome and Introduction by Prof Sanjay Khanna (IACUC Chair)
- 3:10pm: Review of Feedback received from previous Townhall session, by Dr Leslie Retnam (Senior Associate Director, IACUC Office)
- 3:30pm: Responses to Feedback received through on-line survey before 3<sup>rd</sup> January, by Dr Leslie Retnam
- 4:00pm: Comments from Dr Lois Zitzow (Attending Veterinarian and Director, CM)
- 4:15pm: Q&A
- 4:25pm: Closing Remarks by Prof Sanjay Khanna
- 4:30pm: End of Townhall



# Welcome and introduction by Prof Khanna

## IACUC Chair

# **Review of Feedback received from previous Townhall session (August 2023)**

**Dr Leslie Retnam  
Senior Associate Director  
IACUC Office**

**HAPPY**  
*New Year*  
**2024**



From all of us at the IACUC Office



# IACUC Office

- Regulatory and compliance
- Liaises with AVS, MOH for rHBRA, NACLAR, AAALAC, OLAW
- Administers the animal use protocol process
- Receives anonymous animal welfare concerns

# Feedback from August Townhall

- 1. My suggestion for everyone's time to be used optimally is to spend the entire time to address queries and common issues related to protocol approvals. One way is to solicit questions in advance using Qualtrics or other such means, and use the common time for discussion. "Townhalls" are primarily meant for Q/A.
- 2. Species specific discussion session (because if I talk about fish related work for a room full of rodent workers, it is a waste of time for them!)
- 3. IACUC's preference for protocols, that help avoid common mistakes and delays in protocol approval.
- 4. Common pain points for the vets and researchers.

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# IACUC's preference for protocols, that help avoid common mistakes and delays in protocol approval

What is the ideal protocol?

- A reasonable length
- Clear
- Concise
- Reference to IACUC policies and CM SOPs

# IACUC's preference for protocols, that help avoid common mistakes and delays in protocol approval

- Allow ample time for review
- Avoid last minute changes
- Provide all documents and certs
- Answer all questions



IACUC's preference for protocols, that help avoid common mistakes and delays in protocol approval

## IACUC Application Checklist

- All sections of the forms are completed i.e. no section of the form left blank, no checkboxes and radio buttons left unselected. **iRIMS – IACUC (Animal Oversight) will help!**
- Renewals: all “renewal questions” to be answered
- Provide English translations for any document not in English

IACUC's preference for protocols, that help avoid common mistakes and delays in protocol approval

## IACUC Application Checklist

- Grant/funds must have been approved – iRIMS IACUC (Animal Oversight) will help!
- Ensure that all personnel listed in Profile page are also accounted for in personnel section of Main form – iRIMS will help!
- Who can be PI, Co-PI, PI Designate / Emergency Contact? Refer to IACUC Policy P202



IACUC's preference for protocols, that help avoid common mistakes and delays in protocol approval

## **IACUC Application Checklist**

- For RO techniques or physical method of euthanasia without anaesthesia, please describe your experience and proficiency
- For change in PI, please obtain approvals from HOD and funding entity
- To use NPGs, please include justifications why PGs cannot be used - **IACUC Policy P215**

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# Q&A during August Townhall

## Question:

- It is about the review process. You guys taking any steps to make the review process more transparent like having face to face with the reviewers. The reason I am bringing this up is because it takes an average of 6 months to get it approval these days.
- Dr Retnam: Thanks for your question. The average is not six months, maybe for you it is, but not for all. We are taking steps to improve it. If you find that its more than 2 or 3 iterations with the reviewers, you may request for a face to face with the reviewer. Raise that suggestion to the IACUC Officer and we will liaise with the reviewer, and we will take it from there.
- AV: As the AV I am happy to meet with anyone who has protocol questions regarding the veterinary aspect even if I am not the reviewer for the protocol, to try and help sort through.

# Q&A during August Townhall

## Question:

- For training of new research staff who has joined the lab, does PI need to add new staff first in a new, or ongoing, protocol?
- Dr Retnam: It does not matter if it is new or ongoing protocol. You just need to add the new staff into the protocol. Make sure the new staff is approved on the protocol, before doing any work on animals.



# Q&A during August Townhall

## Question:

- Will there be an option to allow current separate breeding and research protocol to be combined into the new system?
- Marcus: No. If your protocol is in iORC, then you cannot do that unless you close the protocol in iORC and submit a combined protocol via iRIMS system.

# Q&A during August Townhall

## Question:

- NUS PI has grant and is performing animal study with Singapore General Hospital. Co-PI is not from NUS. Should PI submit IACUC through SGH, or both NUS and SGH?
- Dr Retnam: this is not an uncommon quandary for PI about collaborations with different collaborators and doing work in different places. If you are doing all the work in SGH, then it goes to SGH for approval. If shared between two places, it depends on where the majority of work is being done and the severity of it. If it is done with institution where we have an MOU (NTU, SingHealth, A\*STAR), you only need to submit one protocol to the IACUC where most of the procedures are done. This is a simple scenario. There are many other scenarios, and we will have to work case-by-case. Collaborations are encouraged but work with the IACUC Officers as to where to submit.

# **Responses to Feedback received through on-line survey before 3rd January**

**Dr Leslie Retnam  
Senior Associate Director  
IACUC Office**

# Feedback #1 – January 2024

- “Why is the IACUC Office not pre-screening protocols for form errors, missing forms/info or incomplete sections etc. before it gets logged in for review?”
- Answer:

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- “Why is the IACUC Office not pre-screening protocols for form errors, missing forms/info or incomplete sections etc. before it gets logged in for review?”
- Answer: The IACUC Office has been pre-screening, and will continue to pre-screen, submissions. Those which meet the checklist requirements will be sent to JOM.

# IACUC protocol submission and review process

## Meeting Schedule

The IACUC schedules regular meetings to deliberate on proposals submitted for the use of animals for scientific purposes. These meetings are convened only when a quorum of at least 50% of the IACUC members is present, with at least one representative from either the non-scientist or the non-affiliate category. Decision making is by the vote of a majority of the quorum. The IACUC schedules to meet every 3rd Monday of the month except when it falls on a public holiday when it will then be scheduled on the next working day.

The IACUC will only accept proposals after they have been preliminarily reviewed. Submission deadlines for preliminary review are listed below. Submissions received after the deadline are automatically scheduled for the following month's IACUC meeting e.g proposal received through iORC after 17th January 2022 will be scheduled for March IACUC meeting.

## Next IACUC Meeting

|                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Next IACUC Meeting Date</b> | <b>Protocol Submission Deadline</b> |
| Monday, 15 Jan 2024            | Monday, 11 Dec 2023                 |

# IACUC protocol submission and review process

## Schedule of IACUC meetings for 2023-2024

IACUC Meeting Date (Every 3rd Monday of the month unless the Monday is a Public Holiday)

Protocol Submission Deadline for Preliminary Review

15 Jan 2024

\*\*11 Dec 2023 (brought forward due to holidays last week of Dec)

19 Feb 2024

15 Jan 2024

March and/or April – proposed Annual IACUC inspections for Vivaria or Procedure Rooms

18 Mar 2024



19 Feb 2024

15 Apr 2024

18 Mar 2024

20 May 2024

15 Apr 2024

##Tuesday 18 Jun 2024  
(Monday 17 Jun 2024 is public holiday)

20 May 2024

Weeks of 17 and 24 Jun - a date to be identified for Program Review

15 Jul 2024

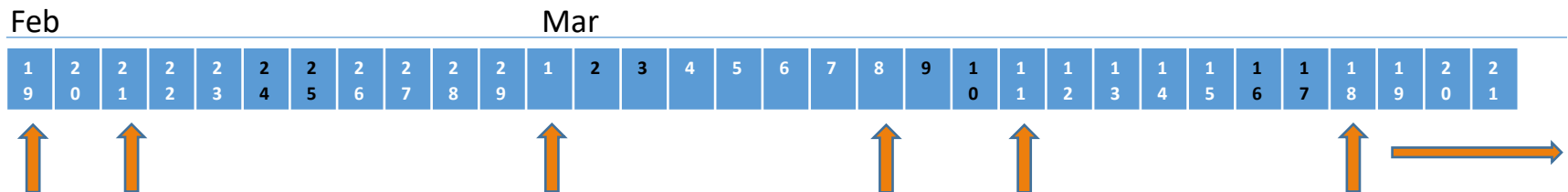
17 Jun 2024

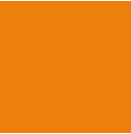
19 Aug 2024

15 Jul 2024

# IACUC protocol submission and review process

- Mon 19 Feb : Protocol submission deadline
- Up to 21-23 Feb : Pre-screening
- Wed 21-Fri 23 Feb: Protocols shared with CM
- Fri 1 Mar : JOM at 1pm
- Fri 8 Mar : Deadline for PIs' responses to JOM
- Mon 11 Mar : Updated protocols assigned to IACUC
- Mon 18 Mar : IACUC meeting
- Thereafter : Post-meeting questions to PIs





# IACUC protocol submission and review process

Reasons for delays and how to avoid them:

- just missed protocol submission deadline
- time taken to obtain 'regulatory requirements'
  - new lab, RCULA, IRB, BMT, IIA, Occ Health etc.

IACUC initiatives:

- White paper on 'IACUC review of protocols and amendments' - June 2021
- PI feedback survey – Feb 2022
- new education sessions for PIs and team - 2024



# IACUC protocol submission and review process

Reasons for delays and how to avoid them:

- confusing terminology, length of protocol, unanswered questions

Recommendation:

- Prior to making submissions, meet with IACUC Officers

# Reasons for delay – resubmissions required by IACUC

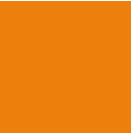
- Discrepancy on use of similar strains e.g. NOG and NSG.
- Separate the Research work from the Service work offered, and re-submit the Research work as a new protocol.
- Several intermediary strains produced during breeding of knockout lines. Not exactly clear which strains were to be bred, and which to be used for the Research protocols.

# Reasons for delay – resubmissions required by IACUC

- Strain names were inconsistent and the numbers in different sections did not tally.
- The protocol was too big. IACUC requested PI to split protocol into smaller parts and resubmit.
- The protocol's objective was incoherent. PI directed to split protocol and resubmit.

# Reasons for delay – resubmissions required by IACUC

- The number of breeders required for the different genotypes was not clear and consistent at various sections.
- Researcher did not agree with vet recommendation on some issues. IACUC requested AV and vet reviewer to meet with PI to resolve the issues. Protocol to be re-reviewed after the meeting.



# Feedback #2 – January 2024

- “Why are Reviewers keep going on leave while the protocol or urgent reviewing pending at their pleasures? Can’t they hand over to staffs who are not on leave?”
- Answer:

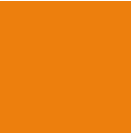


# Feedback #2 – January 2024

- “Why are Reviewers keep going on leave while the protocol or urgent reviewing pending at their pleasures? Can’t they hand over to staffs who are not on leave?”
- Answer: Reviewers may request colleagues to take over if they are unable to reply within the recommended timeline.

# Comments from Dr Lois Zitzow

## Attending Veterinarian and Director, CM



# Feedback via Qualtrics

[https://nus.sydney1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6sWtCGBWVG9YvJQ](https://nus.sydney1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6sWtCGBWVG9YvJQ)



# Thank you



slido

Join at  
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