

## **IACUC Policy 122**

### **Youths Working with Animals**

Original Policy Approved on: 10/12/2016

Updated on: 11/09/2016; 07/08/2020; 12/13/2023

#### **I. Performance Standard**

OUHSC will provide a legal, defined, and safe working environment for all youths who may be involved in animal use activities while working and/or volunteering at the University.

#### **II. Background**

Youths may have justifiable reasons for working with animals at OUHSC, including education as a prospective scientist or collaborative activities with educational or other organizations. This policy is necessary to address potential concerns related to the exposure to physical, chemical, radioactive, and biological hazards that may occur in animal facilities or research laboratories.

OUHSC also has a webpage devoted to guidance for Youth Protection, including specific forms for youth ages 16-17 volunteering in labs, which is maintained by the University's Office of Enterprise Risk Management: <https://risk.ouhsc.edu/Youth-Protection>.

#### **III. Policy**

- A. A youth is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Unless enrolled as an OUHSC student, youths are not allowed to conduct animal research, observe animal use in OUHSC research laboratories, or visit animal activity areas except as identified specifically below, and in accordance with applicable University policies regarding youths.
- C. Youths are prohibited from entering laboratories or animal activity areas designated as BSL-3 or ABSL-3 for recombinant or infectious organisms.
- D. Youths are prohibited from working with the following materials in animals:
  - 1. Radioactive materials or radiation (e.g., x-rays).
  - 2. Class III or IV lasers.
  - 3. Acute toxins.
- E. Youths who have not reached their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday are not permitted in OUHSC laboratories or animal activity areas when laboratory animals are present.
- F. Youths, with the restrictions listed above (items A – E), may visit animal activity areas, observe or conduct research in laboratories under the following conditions:

1. This policy has been modified for volunteers working with animals, given the age and level of education of these youths, to incorporate the applicable provision of the Youth Protection Policy.
2. The responsible faculty member/researcher has provided their signed memorandum accepting responsibility for oversight of the youth while on campus. The Division of Comparative Medicine (DCM) Director may also provide a signed memorandum when youth visitation is not associated with a specific faculty member/researcher. For youths who plan to volunteer in a laboratory or animal activity area, the responsible faculty member/researcher will provide a signed Volunteer-Mentor Research Experience Form.
3. The youth's parent or legal guardian has reviewed and signed the Release and Confidentiality Agreement.
4. The youth has completed hazard specific safety training approved by OUHSC Environmental Health and Safety and provided by the faculty member/researcher or DCM Director. Such training will include safety-related practices and procedures as required for the laboratory, including evacuation procedures and use of protective clothing or equipment.
5. The youth has completed IACUC defined training requirements if there will be laboratory animals in the laboratory or facility during the visit by the youth. Except when approved as a protocol participant on an IACUC-approved protocol, the youth shall not have direct physical contact with live laboratory animals or dead laboratory animal tissues.

The faculty member/researcher responsible for the activities shall affirm the completion of IACUC training requirements, and is obligated to assure the youth's safety during exposure to animals and animal tissues.

6. The youth must wear prescribed Personal Protective Equipment specific to the hazard (e.g., research laboratory hazard, animal allergen hazard, etc.).
  7. The youth is directly supervised by the faculty member/researcher or designated supervisor at all times while in the laboratory or animal facility.
  8. The laboratory is in full compliance with all applicable OUHSC safety programs and regulations.
- G. Youths who accompany OUHSC employees to the OUHSC workplace for reasons other than participation in OUHSC research-type activities are not permitted in OUHSC research laboratories or animal facilities when animals are present.
- H. The faculty member/researcher, laboratory manager, or designated supervisor may place additional restrictions on the presence of youths in their specific activity areas.