

TITLE:	Acclimation of Laboratory Animals
Policy Number:	2014-049
Responsible Department:	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
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Reviewed:	10/11/17; 7/8/2020 (No changes)
Revised:	10/11/17 (Deleted <i>Guide's</i> discussion of quarantine); 7/8/2020 (Included approved vendors bullet & info re: alternative timeline of quarantine & quarantine of other rodent species)

Purpose of Policy: To give research animals time to adapt to their new environment prior to their use and to minimize the risk of introducing pathogens into an established colony.

Policy Information: Animals transported from outside Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) may experience mild to moderate stress due to changes in temperature, noise, the availability of food and water or other physical aspects of shipping. Transportation can also expose animals to potential pathogens or exacerbate a subclinical infection that can negatively affect research results and potentially result in transfer of infectious agents to other groups.

The current edition of the Public Health Service's [*Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*](#) states that "newly received animals should be given a period for physiologic, behavioral and nutritional acclimation before their use" and that "The need for an acclimation period has been demonstrated in mice, rats, guinea pigs, nonhuman primates and goats and time for acclimation is likely important for other species as well". However, the length of time required for acclimation will depend on the species, their mode of transportation and intended use.

Research animals transported from outside WesternU that are to be housed in any vivarium owned or operated by WesternU are governed by the following policies:

- When possible, importation from an approved vendor with veterinary review of colony health data prior to arrival should be used.
- Newly arrived animals must be given a minimum of 48 hours, excluding the day of arrival, to acclimate to their new environment prior to their use in teaching or research. An alternative timeline of quarantine may be necessary based on veterinary review of the source colony

health data. Animals intended for terminal experiments may be used prior to the end of this acclimation period following consultation with and approval of the Attending Veterinarian.

- Animals are not available for use by investigators during the 48 hour acclimation period.
- **Mouse/Rat Quarantine:** Quarantine has proven ineffective in identifying and preventing disease in mice, rats and many other rodent species. Therefore, to reduce the potential of introducing pathogens from an outside source into existing animals colonies, investigators should consider having the animals re-derived by embryo transfer or, if the animals are to be used in terminal experiments, bring them into a short term housing room.

Related Policies: IACUC Policy No. 2014-031; Adopted Standards for Animal Care; IACUC Policy No. 2014-021; Transport & Receipt of Laboratory Animals