

WVU IACUC Policy: Reporting Animal Welfare Concerns and Whistleblower Protections

Policy

Employees of West Virginia University (WVU) reporting animal welfare concerns are protected by the State of West Virginia Whistleblower Law¹ against discharge, discrimination, or retaliation when they, in good faith, report any instances of waste or wrongdoing. Wrongdoing is defined as violations of any statute, regulation, ordinance, or code of ethics designed to protect the public interest.

The IACUC will employ methods to protect the anonymity of persons reporting concerns.

Procedures

1. At WVU there are multiple methods for individuals to report their concerns regarding animal research to the IACUC while maintaining anonymity.
 - a. The IACUC Chair, the Attending Veterinarian, clinical veterinarians, and the Institutional Official (IO) can be contacted directly via email, phone, or in person. Alternatively, reports can be placed through the [EthicsPoint](#) website. In addition, the Director of the Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) as well as any IACUC member that is affiliated with WVU can take a report.
 - b. Contact information for the Chair, IO and Attending Veterinarian and the EthicsPoint website address will be posted throughout the animal care facilities as well as other areas of prominent animal use. Information on reporting concerns is also posted on the WVU Office of Animal Welfare website.
2. The name and contact information of the person voicing the concern should only be documented if it is volunteered.
 - a. EthicsPoint allows for anonymous reporting.
 - b. If individuals volunteer identifying information to individuals taking reports, that information should be held securely and not included in subsequent notifications to the IACUC.
 - i. As per the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*², volunteered contact information will be used to communicate findings to the concerned person(s).
3. The IACUC will investigate all reported animal welfare concerns per established procedures.

References

1. <https://www.whistleblowerprotectionact.com/west-virginia-whistleblower-protections/>
2. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/Guide-for-the-Care-and-Use-of-Laboratory-Animals.pdf>