

# Animal Care Community Responsibilities:

## *Mutual Commitments for Staff and Researchers*

### INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the shared responsibilities and expectations for both vivarium staff and researchers working within our animal research facilities. Our goal is to cultivate a supportive, respectful, and ethically responsible community. We are aligned in our commitment to animal welfare, scientific integrity, and mutual respect for all individuals who contribute to the care and use of animals in research.

### 1. CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Respect for Animals:** Ensure humane care and ethical use of all animals.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** Promote clear, respectful communication between staff and researchers.
- **Integrity and Accountability:** Uphold ethical standards and take responsibility for actions.
- **Education and Support:** Encourage continuous learning, feedback, and mutual support.

### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS

- Comply with all institutional and regulatory protocols related to animal care and use.
- Follow all procedures to maintain safety and security within animal care spaces.
- Clean up after yourself when using vivarium space and equipment.
- Maintain accurate records and provide clear instructions for animal procedures.
- Communicate promptly and proactively with staff regarding animal needs or changes.
- Participate in required training and continuing education.
- Treat all staff with respect and professionalism.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF VIVARIUM STAFF

- Provide consistent, high-quality care for all animals.
- Keep researchers informed about animal health or environmental issues.
- Maintain a clean and safe working environment.
- Offer timely support and guidance to researchers in navigating vivarium procedures.
- Treat all researchers with respect and professionalism.

#### 4. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

- Report and resolve concerns related to animal welfare promptly.
- Notify staff or supervisor of equipment malfunction, supply shortages, or safety and security concerns.
- Foster a culture of respect, kindness, and accountability.
- Support open dialogue to prevent misunderstandings or conflicts.
- Collaborate to ensure the best possible outcomes for animals and research goals.

#### 5. ADDRESSING MISSTEPS

- Each situation will be evaluated individually, with the aim of resolution and learning rather than punishment. The goal is to maintain a safe, respectful, and high-functioning community.
- Missteps connected to impacts on animal welfare, human safety, facility security, or procedural compliance typically will also involve the Animal Care Committee (ACC) through the “Notable Event” process.
- Addressing missteps will normally follow a predictable path of escalation, with the goal of resolving missteps with early intervention, respecting all relevant University policies, employment contracts and collective agreements:
  1. Verbal Communication – An initial, informal discussion to clarify expectations and correct minor issues.
  2. Written Warning – Formal documentation of the concern, including the supervisor, with clear steps for improvement.
  3. Mandatory Retraining – Required completion of training or coaching to ensure understanding and compliance.
  4. Temporary/Limited Suspension of Access – Limited access to certain areas or activities while concerns are resolved.
  5. Full Suspension of Access – Complete loss of access to the vivarium pending review by the ACC or other oversight body.

#### CONCLUSION

By promoting mutual respect and shared responsibilities, we create a vivarium environment where both animals and people can thrive. We invite all staff and researchers to be active participants in upholding these values.