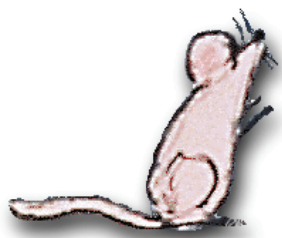


# Preparing the Vertebrate Animal Section (VAS)



## What is the VAS?

The VAS is the section of grant applications, contract proposals, and cooperative agreements where you describe the use of animals in your work. There are 5 points you must address.

## Which studies require a VAS?

You must provide a VAS if your work involves the use of live vertebrate animals, including generating custom antibodies and obtaining tissue from live vertebrate animals.

## What if there is more than one performance site?

You need to complete all 5 points of the VAS for each performance site.

## What information should be provided in the VAS?

### • POINT 1

#### Description of animals and how they will be used

In detail, describe the proposed use of animals for the study. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and number of animals.

#### Have you included?

- ◇ Concise description of the proposed work using animals
- ◇ Procedures (e.g., injections, blood collection)
- ◇ Surgical procedures, including anesthetic regimes, monitoring, and recovery
- ◇ Species, strains, ages, sex
- ◇ Number of animals

### • POINT 2

#### Justifications for use of animals

Justify the use of animals, the choice of species, and the numbers of animals. Provide rationale for use of animals in short supply, that are costly, or in large numbers.

#### Have you justified?

- ◇ Use of animals and why alternatives cannot be used
- ◇ Choice of species
- ◇ Number of animals and how determined

### • POINT 3

#### Veterinary care

Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals.

#### Have you provided?

- ◇ Brief account of veterinary staff and their availability for routine and emergency care
- ◇ How often animals are observed or monitored
- ◇ Any additional monitoring or support that may be required (e.g., post-procedural, post-surgical care)
- ◇ Indicators for veterinary intervention to alleviate discomfort, distress, or pain (e.g., body scoring, weighing)

### • POINT 4

#### Provisions to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury

Describe the procedures to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research. Describe use of analgesics, anesthetics, tranquilizing drugs, and comfortable restraining devices/methods, where appropriate, to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury.

#### Have you described?

- ◇ Circumstances when animals may experience discomfort, distress, pain or injury
- ◇ Procedures to alleviate discomfort, distress, pain or injury
- ◇ Use of tranquilizers, analgesics and anesthetics (identify drugs by name/class)
- ◇ Provisions for special care or housing
- ◇ Plans for post-surgical care, if applicable
- ◇ Humane experimental endpoints, if relevant
- ◇ Use of restraint devices/methods, if relevant

### • POINT 5

#### Euthanasia

Describe any method of euthanasia and the reason(s) for selecting it. State if the method(s) is consistent with the recommendations of the *AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia* (PDF). If not, include a scientific justification for not following the recommendations.

#### Have you indicated?

- ◇ Method(s) of euthanasia and reason(s) for selection
- ◇ If the method(s) of euthanasia is consistent with the recommendations of the *AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia*
- ◇ Scientific justification for the method(s) of euthanasia that is not consistent with the recommendations of the *AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia*

For more information, download the worksheet at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/VASchecklist.pdf>

OFFICE OF LABORATORY ANIMAL WELFARE  
OFFICE OF EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

January 18, 2012