



Institutional Review Board

GUIDELINE #4: RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTIONS

I. PURPOSE

This guideline is to ensure that research conducted at Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the humane and ethical treatment of human subjects and vertebrate animals used in research, teaching and testing; and complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, policies and guidelines. This includes interdisciplinary research on Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAIs), such as Animal-Assisted Therapies (AAT), which purposefully include an animal for therapeutic gains in humans across the lifespan. Studies involving animals in AAIs, therapeutic interventions and rehabilitation for individuals with intellectual, developmental, physical and mental health-related disabilities (e.g., equine-assisted therapy) may also require IACUC and IRB oversight. Likewise, research on the use of service animals by individuals with special needs (e.g., children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)) also, requires IACUC oversight. If human welfare or human interaction are studied IRB approval will be required. Research on the use of animals in a variety of service settings (e.g., schools, hospitals, nursing homes) for a variety of Human-Animal Interaction activities ranging from companion animal visitation programs to targeted therapeutic interventions by certified therapy animals and their handlers (e.g., therapy dog visits to child oncology inpatient units), also require the oversight of IACUC. Use of standardized data collection methods such as surveys and interviews with the participants and owners require IRB approval.

II. STATEMENT

All human subjects research, irrespective of the source of funding, conducted by A&M- SA faculty, staff and students must be submitted and reviewed in accordance with the Federal research regulations, Texas A&M System Guidelines, A&M-SA IRB policies and local consideration.

III. SCOPE

This guideline applies to all research conducted where the A&M- SA IRB serves as the Reviewing IRB.

IV. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Research, teaching, testing and production using live vertebrate animals requires approval of the IACUC per System Regulation [15.99.07](#) and A&M-San Antonio Rule [15.99.07.01](#).

IRB approval will be required if experiences of participants and owners are collected for research, training, testing, or demonstration purposes per system regulation [15.99.01](#) and A&M-San Antonio rule [15.99.01.01](#) and [15.99.01.00.01](#).

Contact Office of Research Compliance to schedule a preliminary meeting to get more guidance regarding your interdisciplinary study.

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- *Institutional Review Board (IRB)*: Blanca Cuellar blanca.cuellar@tamusa.edu

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