香港中文大學 The Chinese University of Hong Kong **Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee** **SOP: Review of CUHK Animal Facilities and Laboratories**		
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	Users:	All users and animal facility staff

1. Objectives & Scope

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the procedures for the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee (AEEC) to review and inspect CUHK animal facilities and laboratories. The purpose of this process is to ensure that all locations where animal experiments are conducted comply with ethical and regulatory standards, as stipulated in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

All CUHK animal facilities, including husbandry spaces, transport vehicles, surgical suites, and supporting areas, are subject to annual inspection. Prior to commencing any experimentation of animal procedures, the proposed locations of the animal facilities must be assessed and approved by the AEEC as part of the protocol review process.

The objective of this policy is to safeguard animal health, welfare, and research integrity at the Chinese University

2. Abbreviations and Definitions

AEEC	Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee
AV	Attending Veterinarian
Facility Manager	Manager/Technician responsible for overall management and operation of the facility or laboratory
PI	Principal Investigator
User	Person who performs scientific activities involving live animals in the CUHK animal facilities

3. Tasks & Assignment of Responsibilities

Task	Staff Responsible
Training on this SOP	AEEC Secretariat
Conduct facility visit	All AEEC members, AEEC Secretariat, University Safety Office Staff, Attending Veterinarian or delegate.
Record Keeping of each facility visit	AEEC Secretariat
Adherence to this SOP practice	All users and facility staff

4. Procedures

4.1. Registration of animal facilities and laboratories

Locations where live animals are housed or used for experimental procedures (e.g., injections, surgery, imaging, behavioral tests, euthanasia) must be reviewed by the AEEC and listed on the approved protocol.

Each room with a separate entrance must be registered individually. Facility Managers and PIs should assign a delegate to complete the registration for all relevant areas under their oversight or access control.

Minimal Setting

- Ventilation: Adequate ventilation, with temperature and humidity control
- Access control: Restricted access and permission for facility or veterinary visits
- Safety: Animal Signage and PPE availability
- Working Area: Rodent escape prevention and uncluttered space for sanitation

All registered animal facilities and study areas, including short-term holding areas such as PI laboratories, will undergo scheduled inspections to ensure compliance with AEEC standards and animal welfare protocols.

4.2. Schedule of Visit

The AEEC Secretariat is responsible for coordinating the inspections and will provide written notification to the facility manager, PI, or their appointed delegate at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled visit. This advance notice allows sufficient time for preparation and ensures that relevant personnel are available during the inspection.

Inspections will be conducted annually, and may include follow-up visits if corrective actions are required. The schedule will be developed in consultation with the AEEC Chairperson and may be adjusted based on operational needs or emerging concerns.

4.3. Composition of inspection team

The inspection team shall comprise a minimum of two AEEC members, including at least one veterinarian, and shall be accompanied by an AEEC Secretary. Where appropriate, the AEEC Chairperson may invite external experts to participate in the inspection, including veterinarians, safety officers, and estate maintenance officers.

To avoid potential conflicts of interest and ensure impartiality, the AV and the AEEC members shall not participate in the inspection of areas or activities under his or her direct supervision.

4.4. Inspection Review Process

A. Animal Facilities (Animal Housing & Support Areas)

All registered animal facilities will undergo annual inspections to ensure compliance with AEEC standards. The facility manager, PI, or their delegate should be present during the inspection to provide access and respond to inquiries. The AEEC secretary will introduce the inspection process, verify the registration and protocol details, and ensure that all items on the facility checklist (Attachment 01A) are thoroughly addressed.

B. PI Laboratories / Specialised Areas (Short-Term Animal Holding)

PI laboratories or other specialised areas where animals are housed for less than 24 hours are also subjected to AEEC inspections. These areas are typically used for short-term procedures and will be assessed with the inspection checklist 1B.

The inspection may assess the following aspects:

- **Cleanliness and Sanitation:** Checking of the pest control facilities and cleaning logs.
- **Safety:** checking of proper signage, equipment maintenance, and implementation of safety protocols.
- **Animal holding conditions:** Examination of a minimum of 25% of animals in the area for health and welfare.
- **Protocol Compliance:** Verification of adherence to AEEC-approved protocols.
- **Training and Competency:** Confirmation of the personnel training records involved in animal care and procedures.
- **Pharmaceutical Storage:** Checking of proper storage and labelling of drugs and controlled substances.

Surgical Procedures: If any surgeries are performed, records of anaesthesia and post-operative care will be reviewed. Anaesthetic vaporisers must be certified and maintained.

The veterinarian may provide veterinary expertise and recommend corrective actions where relevant.

Any deficiencies observed during the visit will be communicated to on-site personnel, and follow-up actions may be required.

Exemptions
If no animals have been held in the laboratory in the past 12 months, the PI may request an exemption from inspection, subject to AEEC approval.

4.5. Follow-up actions

Within two weeks of the inspection, the AEEC Secretariat will issue a formal report to the registered facility manager. This report will summarise the inspection findings and highlight any deficiencies identified by the inspection team.

Deficiencies will be categorized as follows:

- ***Minor Deficiency:*** *A deviation from established guidelines that does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of animals or personnel.*
- ***Significant Deficiency****: A condition that could potentially harm the health or safety of animals or personnel.*

Following the identification of deficiencies, the inspection team will formulate a corrective action plan, complete with a timeline for implementation with the facility manager. If a significant deficiency is identified that poses a serious animal welfare or safety concern, the immediate suspension of the use of the affected laboratory and/or specific animal activities may be imposed. The facility manager is then required to provide written documentation confirming that the deficiency has been addressed. The AEEC Inspection Team will then determine whether a re-inspection is necessary.

The AEEC Secretariat will track the status of all follow-up actions and maintain communication with the facility to ensure timely resolution.

5. Reporting

The AEEC Secretariat will compile the inspection findings and any corrective action plans into a formal report. This report will be presented by the AEEC Secretariat at the next AEEC meeting for review and discussion.

During the meeting, the AEEC will:

- review inspection outcomes;
- evaluate the adequacy of corrective actions;
- mandate further actions if necessary; and
- ensure compliance with AEEC standards.

The AV or designee may also report relevant veterinary findings and provide input on animal welfare concerns raised during the inspection.

6. Record Keeping

The AEEC Secretariat is responsible for maintaining comprehensive records related to all facility visits and laboratory inspections, which include:

- Inspection report, including Attendance records, Documentation of identified deficiencies and corresponding corrective actions, and Status updates on follow-up actions.
- A list of all approved animal holding and procedure locations.

7. Training and Review of this SOP

All AEEC members will receive training during their induction.

Members are encouraged to participate in scheduled refresher training sessions to stay updated on inspection procedures and responsibilities.

This SOP will be reviewed annually by the AEEC to ensure its current effectiveness.

8. References

US National Research Council. (2011). *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (8th ed.). US National Academies Press.

Attachments

1. Attachment 01A: Inspection Checklist – Animal Housing and Support Areas
2. Attachment 01B: Inspection Checklist - Procedure Areas and Laboratories
3. Attachment 02: Inspection Report Template

ATTACHMENT 01A Inspection Checklist –Animal Housing and Support Areas

Facility Inspection Checklist

Animal Housing and Support Areas
Date:

Location:

	A*	M	S	C	NA
• **Location:**					
○ animal areas separate from personnel areas (*Guide*, p 134)					
○ separation of species (*Guide*, p 111)					
○ separation by disease status (*Guide*, p 111)					
○ security and access control (*Guide*, p 151)					
• **Construction:**					
○ corridors (*Guide*, p 136)					
○ animal room doors (*Guide*, p 137)					
○ exterior windows (*Guide*, p 137)					
○ floors (*Guide*, p 137)					
○ drainage (*Guide*, p 138)					
○ walls and ceilings (*Guide*, p 138)					
○ heating ventilation and air conditioning (*Guide*, p 139)					
○ power and lighting (*Guide*, p 141)					
○ noise control (*Guide*, p 142)					
○ vibration control (*Guide*, p 142)					
○ environmental monitoring (*Guide*, p 143)					
• **Room/Cage:**					
○ temperature and humidity (*Guide*, p 43)					
○ ventilation and air quality (*Guide*, p 45)					
○ illumination (*Guide*, p 47)					
○ noise and vibration (*Guide*, p 49)					
• **Primary Enclosure:**					
○ space meets physiologic, behavioral [i], and social[ii] needs (*Guide*, pp 51, 55-63)					
○ secure environment provided (*Guide*, p 51)					
○ durable, nontoxic materials in good repair and no risk of injury (*Guide*, p 51)					
○ flooring is safe and appropriate for species (*Guide*, p 51)					

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ATTACHMENT 01B Inspection Checklist –Animal Procedure Areas and laboratories

Facility Inspection Checklist

Procedure Areas, Non-survival Surgeries, Laboratories, Rodent Surgeries, Imaging, Whole Body Irradiation, Hazardous Agent Containment, Behavioral Studies

Date:

Location:

	A*	M	S	C	NA
1. General Considerations:					
a. labs used to house animals only when scientifically required and limited to minimum period necessary (*Guide*, p 134)					
b. drug storage, control, and expiration dates (*Guide*, pp 115, 122)					
c. sharps disposal (*Guide*, p 74)					
d. anesthetic monitoring (*Guide*, p 120)					
e. scavenging of anesthetic gases (*Guide*, p 21)					
f. safety features (e.g., SOPs, safety signs, eyewash stations, secure gas cylinders) are in place (*Guide*, p 19)					
g. carcass disposal (*Guide*, pp 73-74)					
2. Additional Concerns for Survival Surgery: (rodent and minor procedures only)					
a. rodent survival surgery clean and uncluttered, not used for anything else during surgery (*Guide*, p 144)					
b. records of peri-operative care (*Guide*, p 120)					
c. aseptic procedures (*Guide*, pp 118-119)					
d. autoclave monitoring procedures (*Guide*, pp 119, 145)					
e. storage of autoclaved materials (*Guide*, p 145)					
f. cold sterilization procedures are appropriate (*Guide*, p 119)					
3. Imaging/Whole Body Irradiation:					
a. location of resource limits contamination risk (*Guide*, p 147)					
b. appropriate transportation methods are in place (*Guide*, p 147)					
c. gas anesthesia provision, scavenging and monitoring are appropriate (*Guide*, p 147)					
d. appropriate sensors and ventilation are provided for cryogen gases (*Guide*, p 147) [must]					
e. imaging console is located away from radiation source (*Guide*, p 147)					
4. Hazardous Agent Containment:					
a. facility adheres to University Safety regulations and local laws including security measures (*Guide*, p 148) [must]					
5. Behavioral Studies:					
a. facility minimizes airborne transmission of noise and ground-borne transmission of vibration (*Guide*, p 149)					
b. floor coverings reduce sound transmission (*Guide*, p 149)					
c. testing equipment allows for surface disinfection (*Guide*, p 150)					
d. components that cannot be cleaned are not in ready contact with animals and kept covered when not in use (*Guide*, p 150)					
e. housing areas are contiguous with testing areas when appropriate (*Guide*, p 150)					

*A = acceptable

M = minor deficiency

S = significant deficiency (is or may be a threat to animal health or safety)

C = change in program (include in report to IO and in annual report to Accreditation Body)

NA = not applicable

Notes:

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ATTACHMENT03 Inspection report template

FACILITY INSPECTION REPORT

DATE:
LOCATION:
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Deficient Category*	✓	Location	Deficiency and Plan for Correction	Responsible Party	Correction Schedule and Interim Status	Date Complete

A = Acceptable
M = Minor Deficiency
S = Significant Deficiency (is or may be a threat to animal health or safety)
C = Change in Program (include in annual report to IO)
N/A = Not Applicable
✓ Check if repeat deficiency

Notes

Reviewed by