

## **Policy on Weight Loss and Body Condition Score**

This document establishes the policy of the IACUC regarding the upper limit of acceptable weight loss and body condition scoring for animals at the University of Kentucky. Specific research requirements that deviate from this document must receive IACUC approval prior to initiating.

### **Policy**

The upper limit of acceptable weight loss in mature, traditional laboratory animals on experimental regimens shall generally be 20%. Limits on weight loss as it pertains to agricultural animals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis with considerations given to species, life stage, and protocol driven activities. As it relates to some animal models, body condition scoring may be another important parameter to monitor in addition to or in lieu of monitoring weight loss. Regarding immature animals, the maximum weight loss is a deviation of 20% from recognized growth curves or age-matched control animals. Written scientific justification must be provided to the IACUC for approval for a greater than 20% weight loss.

The animal use protocol must address the remedial measures in consultation with the veterinary staff to be taken if weight loss exceeds the proposed limits or body condition score deteriorates (such as removal from the study, euthanasia, remedial measures to address weight loss such as the provision of highly palatable food and/or supplements, and the like). Veterinary staff may intervene when such remedial measures prove ineffective. Additional recommendations for monitoring may be made during the protocol review process.

For studies where weight loss is expected, the animal use protocol must address the method and frequency of animal assessment, and records of these assessments must be readily available for review by the veterinary staff and the IACUC, if requested.

Approved and Adopted by the  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
March 19, 2025