

Tips for Creating Applications in ACAP

Planning Your Protocol

- To plan your submission timeline, please see [IACUC Meeting Dates and Submission Deadlines](#).
- Submit your application for review using [ACAP](#) 2-3 months before you plan for the study to be active to buffer against unforeseen delays.
- Review all UNC IACUC Standards relevant to your studies prior to writing your application.
- Contact the Division of Comparative Medicine at 919-962-5335 and ask to consult with a DCM veterinarian about any pain category D or E procedures (surgery, etc.) before writing your application. Note that preemptive analgesia is now recommended. This should be discussed and included.
- Contact the Division of Comparative Medicine at 919-962-5335 to discuss housing arrangements with DCM in advance.
- If you are going to be using DCM vet services, or the services of a UNC collaborator, non-UNC collaborator, or Core facility, please begin work on these arrangements before writing your application. These details will be needed in the appropriate sections of the application.
- If you are unsure about what hazard or IBC forms may be needed, contact EHS at 919-962-5507.
- Do not copy and paste sections directly from your grant, as excessively complex language may need to be rewritten.
- Take time to organize the information within your protocol using clear, concise terms. The reviewers should be able to understand from the descriptions provided what will happen to the animals in order, and over the course of their lifetimes.
- Describe only procedures you plan to perform. Procedures that you *may* choose to perform later should be added to the approved protocol by amendment, when and if the decision is made include these elements in the study.
- Consider that internet outages, power losses, timeouts, and other rare but unforeseen circumstances can occur while entering your application details and may result in data loss. Maintaining a backup document (i.e., Word), particularly for large blocks of text, is recommended.
- If your protocol is particularly large and complex, consider dividing the studies out into logical groupings and submitting the project as more than one application.

Writing Your Application – Content Considerations

- Spell out all abbreviations upon the first use in the application.
- Verify all animal numbers, calculations, and associated justifications are correct prior to completion of the animal numbers section of the protocol form. It is recommended the [Standard on Assignment of Animals into Pain Categories](#) be reviewed as well.
- Please ensure that you identify appropriate humane endpoints. Note that allowing animals to reach a moribund state is not permissible at UNC. See the [Standard on Humane Endpoints in Rodents](#). Consultation with the DCM veterinarians regarding appropriate endpoints for all other species is recommended.
- Review the [Standard on Rat and Mouse Euthanasia](#) and provide both a primary and secondary method of euthanasia. Consult with the DCM veterinarians to determine appropriate methods of euthanasia for all other species. Note that animals should not be permitted to reach a moribund state prior to euthanasia.

- Planned procedures that fall outside of the UNC IACUC Standards require a scientifically justified request for exception to be reviewed at a convened IACUC meeting. Applications that do not include any needed exception requests in Section 8.0 of the protocol form may require review at a subsequent IACUC meeting, delaying approval by a month or more.

Writing Your Application – Completing the Protocol Form

- **List only one species per application.** Studies in mice and rats must be submitted as separate applications. Note that free range wildlife applications can include multiple species of fish, multiple species of birds, etc. If you have questions about this topic, contact the Office of Animal Care and Use at 919-966-5569.
- **Do not open ACAP in more than one browser window at a time.** ACAP cannot reconcile data entered from different browsers in the same session. Doing so will result in data loss or corruption.
- From the Item List page (with the green checks on the left side), select the second item, Addendum Checklist, to add or remove sections such as Breeding, Survival Surgery, etc.
- **Be certain you have saved or accepted your changes before navigating away from pages or closing an open pop-up text box.** If you do select something else on your desktop and a pop-up disappears it has likely just moved behind another open window.
- **Do not upload tables, charts, graphs, etc., directly into the text fields within ACAP.** This corrupts the formatting and can cause data loss. Instead, upload any visual aids to the Attachment section of the protocol form, then reference this attachment in the appropriate section of the application.
- **The personnel section should only list techniques to be performed in this application.** Conversely, all techniques outlined in the application must be assigned to the appropriate personnel in Section 1.0. Contact OACU Education and Oversight at 919-966-5569 for assistance determining what roles and techniques must be listed on your application.
- **All hands-on training and all Online forms and modules must be completed for all personnel prior to application approval.** This includes:
 - Research Profiles
 - Lab Worker forms
 - Animal Handler forms (must be updated annually, required to attend hands-on training)
 - Online IACUC orientation (complete only once)
 - Online DCM orientation (must be updated every 3 years.)
- It is recommended that once you have completed the Personnel section of the application you:
 - Review the hands-on and online training certifications of the individuals listed.
 - Register for any needed training classes or lectures through Event Registration, found [here](#). Registering early provides the best chance to have all training completed before the application is ready for approval.

- **Approved Schedule Forms can be uploaded directly to the Attachments section of the application from the PI Lab Safety Plan.** However, forms associated with individuals other than the PI listed on your application will not be accessible. Those forms must be uploaded from your computer.
- Schedule G forms are reviewed at the IBC meetings once a month, so it is critical that they be submitted prior to the deadline.
- Additional information on IBC Schedule forms can be found [here](#).
- The IBC meeting schedule can be found [here](#).
- Take time to review the application for consistency between sections. There is an option at the bottom of the Item List page to preview the application as a complete PDF document prior to submission.
- **Please ensure that all PIs, Co-PIs, and Cores certify the application as soon as possible.** Email notifications with instructions on how to do complete these certifications are sent when an individual is added to the protocol. An application cannot be approved until all PIs, Co-PIs, and Cores/Collaborators certify they have read the application and agree to the proposed arrangements.

Special Notes for Continuation Applications

Please contact the Office of Animal Care and Use at 919-966-5569 or IACUC@med.unc.edu if you have any questions or require assistance.