Standard Operating Procedure
Determining Animal Numbers Used

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**Note** – Monitoring the number of animals used in research or teaching is a key component of the University’s program of animal care and use, as stipulated by the Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service “Policy,” and the “Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.”

**Assumptions** –

1) The numbers of animals used in research and teaching must be accurately tracked.
2) Animals will be counted as “used” only once per protocol.
3) Animal may be used on more than one protocol, but not simultaneously.
4) If transferred between protocols, naïve animals will be subtracted from the total used of the “source” protocol.

**Procedure**

1) In *Breeding Protocols* (those protocols that exist to provide animals to other protocols, or those protocols that contain a component of animal production), animals will be scored as “used” when:
   a) They arrive from outside the protocol (i.e., purchased or transferred in)
   b) They are weaned within the protocol
   c) They are used for experimental purposes prior to weaning
   d) They are transferred to another protocol prior to weaning
   e) Breeding records, as maintained by the researcher or the Vivarium, will be the basis of determining numbers of animals used in breeding protocols

2) In *Standard Protocols* (those protocols in which there is no breeding), animals would be counted as “used” when:
   a) They arrive, following purchase.
   b) They arrive, following receipt from another academic institution
   c) They are transferred in, regardless of whether they had been “used” in the donating protocol
   d) They are born on site (when the intended purpose of the protocol is the use of pre-weanling young).
      i) This would include young born of animals purchased pregnant
      ii) Remaining young would be “used” when weaned, as in a breeding protocol

3) In *Hybrid Protocols* (those in which animals are both bred and used experimentally), animals will be counted as “used” when:
a) They arrive, following purchase
b) They arrive, following transfer from another institution
c) They are transferred into the protocol, regardless of whether they had been “used” previously
d) They are weaned within the protocol, unless used experimentally earlier
e) Breeding records, as maintained by the researcher or the Vivarium, will be the basis of determining numbers of animals “used” in the breeding portion of such protocols

4) In Field Studies (those conducted on free-living wild animals in their natural habitat which does not involve an invasive procedure and which does not harm or materially alter the behavior of the animals being studied), animals will be counted as “used” when:
   a) The intended manipulation, capture, labeling or measurement has taken place
   b) A pre-determined – by the Principal Investigator, the IACUC and the Attending Veterinarian at the time of protocol review by the IACUC – stage of the experimental process has been reached for each individual animal or cohort
   c) Note – As these projects take place outside UNC Charlotte facilities, it will be the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to report, to the IACUC and Vivarium staff, the numbers used, as well as any veterinarian concerns, or issues of animal well-being. It will be the responsibility of the Vivarium staff to compile numbers used, by means of the Vivarium Database (see 6), below).

5) Upon Termination of a Protocol (when a new protocol continues previous research, for instance after three years), animals will be counted as “used” when they are transferred into the new protocol.
   a) Note that they will also have been “used” in the previous protocol
   b) If naïve (e.g., purchased under the old protocol, but transferred – prior to any experimental or breeding use – to the new protocol) they may be subtracted from the total “used” in the old protocol.

6) As animals are used, the Vivarium Database will be updated
   a) Maintenance of the Vivarium Database is the responsibility of the Vivarium staff
   b) The Database is the source of information for investigators reporting on animal usage to the IACUC
   c) The Database is located at http://www.research.uncc.edu/vivarium/
   d) Access to the Database can only be granted by the pertinent administrator
   e) Please refer to the SOP entitled “Use of the Vivarium Database”

7) Cooperation and communication are key to accurate tracking of animal usage
   a) Input from principal investigators and research staff will be critical to accurately documenting numbers of animals
   b) At all times, an atmosphere of courtesy and professionalism will be maintained during discussions regarding animal usage

8) Questions regarding animal usage should be directed to the Director, LAR.

**Personnel/Training/Responsibilities**
- Vivarium employees with access to the Vivarium database will be responsible for updating weekly breeding information
• All Vivarium employees will be responsible for recording births and checking wean dates and separating genders and for the accuracy of receiving records and animal transfer forms

Required Materials
• Access to the Vivarium and research database
• Hardcopy breeder charts from each breeding protocol
• Animal transfer forms
• Copies of research protocols

Guidelines
• "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" (2011)

Quality Control Checks and Acceptance Criteria
• Animal usage will be subject to audit by the Office of Compliance Management