



Vivarium Visitor Policy

Objective:	To provide guidance to Vivarium guests on appropriate conduct inside the facility to reduce/eliminate potential harm to guests and housed animals.
Author:	Attending Veterinarian, Laboratory Animal Resources
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I. Overview

The UNC Charlotte Vivarium is the primary holding facility for research animals on campus. This area is guarded (i.e., it has limited access, has site specific environmental parameters, as well as biohazard and environmental health and safety requirements.) This is for the wellbeing of staff, animals, and visitors.

Individuals may enter the vivarium for a number of reasons. Researchers and staff work there. Facilities Management (FM) and Building Environmental Services (BES) members may need intermittent access to perform tasks related to their work. Additionally, visitors may wish to tour the vivarium with researchers or staff.

Individuals hosting visitors must contact the Laboratory Animal Resources Manager in advance of escorting the visitor(s) throughout the vivarium.

II. Requirements & Guidelines for Visitors

To enter the vivarium, visitors will:

- a. In advance, review the applicable Policies and SOPs including information regarding Biosafety, Allergens, and Zoonoses.
 - o Policy: Occupational Health Surveillance & attached Zoonoses Acknowledgement
 - o Policy: Camera, Video and Audio Recording of research under IACUC Oversight
 - o SOP: Reporting Adverse Events, Abnormal Behaviors/Conditions & Other Incidents
- b. Prior to entry, sign the **Visitor Log (both upon arrival and leaving)**
- c. Prior to entry, sign and date the **Vivarium Visitor Authorization Form: A Memorandum of Understanding**
- d. One-time visitors and suppliers will have no direct animal contact and will follow safe distancing practices.
- e. If repeating visits to the vivarium: when appropriate, the individual will, in advance, enroll in the Occupational Health Program or sign any Declination Forms regarding occupational health and immunizations.
- f. Visitors will be supervised at all times while in the Vivarium.
- g. Visitors will wear proper PPE.
- h. Visitors will abide by all signage and requirements.

III. Applicable Policies

1. Biosafety, Personal Danger, and PPE

(Contact the Laboratory Animal Resources Manager at: vivarium@charlotte.edu or 704-687-5017)

When entering the vivarium (visiting or working), individuals can be exposed to a variety of natural or man-made hazards. Conversely, research animals in the vivarium may be exposed to hazards brought in, even unintentionally and unknowingly, by visitors (e.g., viruses, fungi, or bacteria) that can infect the University's isolated colonies rendering them unusable.

Allergens (dander, bedding, saliva, urine, etc.) are the most common reason an individual may have an allergic reaction (e.g., itching, trouble breathing, etc.) when entering vivarium.

Some research groups work with contagious diseases that may or may not be attenuated or rendered non-infectious. This can lead to the potential for zoonotic disease transmission.

To prevent disease transmission, in either direction, proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is used when visiting the vivarium. Slips, trips or falls can occur, especially on damp surfaces. Splashes and spills are also possible. There are procedures in place to minimize these occurrences and respond if someone is injured or has an adverse reaction while in the vivarium.

2. [POLICY - Occupational Health Surveillance for Personnel with Animal Exposure and/or Entering the Vivarium and attached Zoonoses Acknowledgement](#)

The Animal Care and Use Program recognizes the inherent risks associated with working with animals or animal tissues in the vivarium, the laboratory, or in the field. To that end, education regarding allergens and zoonotic diseases, occupational health surveillance, and immunizations are offered depending on exposure and risk level of an individual. This is defined in the Occupational Health Surveillance Policy where steps are defined to mitigate the risk to these individuals.

- For one-time visitors, occupational health program enrollment is not required. However, individuals need to be educated regarding the inherent risks.
- If visiting the vivarium repeatedly, occupational health program enrollment is required.

3. POLICY - Declination of the Occupational Health Program and Immunizations

(Contact the IACUC Office at: unc-iacuc@charlotte.edu or 704-687-1872)

In certain circumstances, individuals may decline enrollment in the Occupational Health Program and/or decline to receive offered immunizations. This needs to be discussed with the Occupational Health Professional and a member of the Office of Research Protections and Integrity staff prior to signing a declination form. Declination may be revoked, and the individual can enroll in the Occupational Health Program at any time with written notice to the IACUC office (ORPI).

4. [POLICY – Camera, Video and Audio Recording of Research under IACUC Oversight](#)

Photographs, video, and/or audio recordings must be pre-approved by the AV, the Director, Laboratory Animal Resources, or their designee. Live streaming is not allowed. Specific requirements within the Camera, Video, and Audio Recording policy protect the animals, the proprietary information, and the researchers. These requirements are also necessary to maintain and reflect the University's highest standards.

5. [SOP: Reporting Adverse Events, Abnormal Behaviors/Conditions, and Other Incidents](#)

UNC Charlotte implements the highest of standards and the best practices involving animal research and teaching. However, individuals may have concerns regarding researchers or animal research. The IACUC is required by law to address all animal welfare concerns regarding animals in research and teaching. There are mechanisms in place to report concerns and they are defined in the Reporting Adverse Events SOP. Reports can be made anonymously through several routes. UNC Charlotte takes these concerns very seriously and each is handled on a case-by-case basis.

IV. **Questions regarding these policies or visiting the vivarium should be directed to:**

The Laboratory Animal Resources Manager: 704-687-5017; vivarium@charlotte.edu

The Attending Veterinarian via the IACUC Office: 704-687-1872; uncc-iacuc@charlotte.edu

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS): 704-687-1111; ehsoffice@uncc.edu

V. **UNC Charlotte's Commitment to the Animal Research Program**

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is committed to a program of animal care which ensures that all animals involved in research and teaching are used in ways judged to be scientifically, technically, and humanely appropriate.

The University is further committed to assisting faculty and students in fulfilling their obligation to plan and conduct animal experiments in accord with the highest scientific, humane, and ethical principles, and in accord with the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and the Animal Welfare Act.

In support of these commitments, the University has established the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) that, together with the University Attending Veterinarian and the Director of Laboratory Animal Resources (DLAR), administers policies and procedures related to the University's program of animal care. Final responsibility for the program rests with the Institutional Official.

Revision History

Approved August 27, 2012

Re-approved May 18, 2015

Revised April 23, 2018

Re-approved February 22, 2021

Administrative changes October 1, 2022

Revised July 29, 2024



Vivarium Visitor Authorization Form: *A Memorandum of Understanding*

Name of Visitor:		Purpose of Visit:	
Date of Visit:		Vivarium Sponsor:	

Visitor Statements of Assurance

The University’s commitment to ensure all aspects of a sound program of animal care extends to visitors to the animal housing facility. To this end, we require that, as a visitor to our facility, you provide certain assurances to the University that your presence in the facility could in no way bring harm to you or the animals housed in the facility.

I acknowledge the following covenants are required before I will be authorized to visit the UNC Charlotte vivarium (animal housing facility):

1. **Campus Security Involvement:** Campus security may be informed of my visit request. They may perform a background check after consulting and garnering my specific and separate approval. Subsequent authorization or refusal to visit the animal care facility may be determined based on this information.
2. **Biosecurity:** I have not been in a rodent facility nor been in contact with any pet rodents within the last 48 hours.
3. **Personal Risk and Indemnification of UNC Charlotte:** I acknowledge that there are certain inherent risks (e.g., allergic reaction, asthma attack, etc.) in visiting animal facilities and, to this end, indemnify and hold harmless the University from any harm, howsoever caused, that may occur to me while visiting the animal housing facility. I understand the [Policy: Occupational Health Surveillance and the attached Zoonoses Acknowledgement](#).
4. **Confidentiality:** I recognize that I may come into contact with proprietary information of the University or third-party sponsors and that I am bound to maintain this information in confidence in perpetuity unless granted authority to release the information by the University, the UNC Charlotte IACUC, or third-party sponsor as otherwise may be required by a court of competent jurisdiction.
5. **Physical Security of Facilities and Animals:** I understand the [Policy: Camera, Video and Audio Recording of Research under IACUC Oversight](#). I will not take any pictures, video, or audio of the animals or animal facilities while visiting the facility.
6. **Reporting Concerns:** If I observe any practices or circumstances that I believe represent less than the highest standard of ethical care and treatment of animals I may report such to the UNC Charlotte IACUC. The IACUC will consider the concerns and may call upon me to present additional details in writing or in person to the IACUC. The IACUC is not obligated to report

back to me the outcome of deliberations. I understand the [SOP: Reporting Adverse Events, Abnormal Behaviors/Condition, and Other Incidents](#).

By signing below, I have read and understand the covenants above and recognize my responsibilities and obligations in visiting the UNC Charlotte animal housing facility.

Visitor's Signature	
_____	_____
Visitor's Signature	Date

Visitor's Name (Please Print)	

Reviewed & approved by:	
_____	_____
Facility Manager / Vivarium Sponsor (Please Print)	Date