

**Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP)
Ethics Guide on Research Involving Animals**

Short title: HKSTP Ethics Guide for Animal Research (“Ethics Guide”)

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Chapter I - Background

1. Innovative technology impacts human and animal healthcare. Companies in this industry often face a range of complex ethical choices during product research and development (R&D) that are part of their business decision-making. Since research ethics governs the standards of conduct for scientific researchers,¹ demonstrating ethical practices in research reflects the **research integrity** of a company and can enhance its **reputation** in the industry.

Compliance to research ethics can often smooth the path to regulatory approval and market adoption for a product. Moreover, it can be an enabling factor for the company when considering to working with other (especially larger) corporations and investors in the future.

2. It is **in the best interest of companies** to take proactive measures in all stages of R&D to ensure that high standards of research ethics are maintained. It is the **responsibility of companies** to comply with research ethics standards and guidelines, including, without limitation the following:

- a)   International Guiding Principles for Biomedical Research Involving Animals (2012)
https://olaw.nih.gov/sites/default/files/Guiding_Principles_2012.pdf
- b)  HK Code of Practice for Care & Use of Animals for Experimental Purposes (2004)
https://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/aboutus/abt_adv/files/Code_of_Practice_Care_and_Use_of_Animals_for_Experimental_Purposes_English.pdf
- c)  EU Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:EN:PDF>

For reference, please also refer to [Annex 1](#) for additional requirements related to animal research that companies must comply if applicable.

¹ Ensuring Ethical Standards and Procedures for Research with Human Beings. <https://www.who.int/ethics/research/en>

Chapter II – Requirements for Conducting Animal Research on HKSTP Premises

Part A – Intension to Conduct Animal Research Activities

3. A company **must provide the following information and/or documentation** to HKSTP during tenancy/program application/ prior to its moving into its HKSTP premises and progress update/review.²
 - a) state whether its tentative, planned or on-going R&D activities during its tenancy/program period **involve animal research or not** on HKSTP premises.
 - b) If any part of an animal research study, as defined in Chapter II - Part B, will be conducted on HKSTP premises, it is **mandatory** to obtain ethics clearance from HKSTP IACUC.
 - c) If deemed necessary by HKSTP, a company shall provide further proof of ethical appropriateness of its R&D activities.

*Note: If the tenant/ company intends to hold animals at his facilities for a period exceeding 12 hours, his facilities must be recognized by HKSTP FM and HKSTP SHE team as an approved location for animal holding. Depending on the animal species and the procedures involved in the research, the facilities must be equipped with appropriate equipment to ensure safety. (For example, ducted exhaust and active scavenging system is required for procedures involving the use of aesthetic gas) The tenant/company shall be responsible to liaise with HKSTP Facilities Management Office for animal delivery and transport routing in buildings.

Part B – Ethics Review and Clearance

4. **All animal research procedures conducted on HKSTP premises must obtain research ethics review and clearance from HKSTP Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC)**
5. Research activities involving the use of **animals**, as defined below, is required to obtain ethics review and clearance before commencement of any animal procedures.

Animals, refer to –

 - i. live non-human vertebrates, including
 - their independently feeding larval forms³; and
 - fetal forms of mammals as from the last third of their normal development,
 - ii. live cephalopods³
6. An ethics clearance is normally in the form of **an ethics approval or exemption** that is provided/acknowledged by HKSTP IACUC after the relevant committee has carried out **ethics review** of the research study.
7. **How to seek ethics review and clearance from HKSTP IACUC:**

Ethics review and clearance may be obtained through the following channels:

- a) Submit a new application to HKSTP IACUC.
- b) If a company collaborates with a researcher in an organization that has an AEC/IACUC, such as those listed in [Annex 2](#), normally that external researcher will act as the study's Principal Investigator (PI) there and will apply for ethics review for the study. Such ethics review and approval may be extended to cover the part of the study that is conducted in HKSTP premises. Research projects may be applicable for site extension applications if document(s) can be presented to indicate that the specific location(s) of the use of animals in HKSTP premises is covered in the ethics approval.

² Application -- such as that for new tenancy applicants or existing tenants with expansion/reduction requests (using the online form, "Business Information & Suitability Assessment" (BISA)).

Progress update/review -- such as that for existing tenants (using the online form, "Annual Business Update" (ABU) which is accessible any time of the year at the "HKSTP Partners Connect" online system).

³ Scope of animals that shall be protected. (Source: EU Directive 2010/63/EU – see Clauses 3 & 4 at Article 1, Chapter 1)

Please refer to HKSTP IACUC webpage for details. (<https://www.hkstp.org/what-we-offer/institute-for-translational-research/hkstp-independent-ethics-committee-iec/hkstp-institutional-animal-care-and-use-committee-iacuc/>)

8. Compliance:

- a) Obtain all necessary ethics clearance.
- b) All procedures performed by the company shall be in accordance with the protocols approved by the AEC/IACUC.
- c) If any approval from AEC/IACUC is suspended or withdrawn, the company must cease all relevant animal research activities.
- d) To facilitate a company's ethics and regulatory compliance, the company is required to acknowledge and agree that representatives from an AEC/IACUC and/or the relevant government department(s) have a right by prior appointment to conduct periodic inspection/monitoring visits at the company's animal housing and laboratory areas and the company shall provide all assistance in relation to such visits, including allowing access of the relevant areas to such representatives and provide relevant information as may be requested.









Chapter III - Dispute Resolution

9. If any matters arising from this Ethics Guide cannot be resolved between the company and HKSTP, HKSTP reserves the right to seek advice from relevant external experts.

Annex 1: Additional requirements related to animal research

Besides ethics compliance, companies and researchers also need to comply with local requirements where the animal research takes place and must obtain relevant licenses accordingly.

For reference, companies and its researchers in Hong Kong shall comply with the following ordinances and their regulations as applicable, but are not limited to:

- a)  Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (HKSARG Cap. 169)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap169>
 - b)  Animals (Control of Experiments) Ordinance (HKSARG Cap. 340)
(for experimentation or teaching or attaining manual skills that involve the use of animals)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap340>
→ To apply for relevant permits for animal experimentations:
https://www.dh.gov.hk/english/useful/useful_alo/useful_alo.html
 - c)  Public Health (Animals and Birds) Ordinance (HKSARG Cap. 139)
(for research involving the import or export of animals)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap139>
→ To apply for relevant permit:
https://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/quarantine/qua_ie/qua_ie.html
 - d)  Rabies Ordinance (HKSARG Cap. 421)
(for research involving the import of animal carcasses and animal products (eg. plasma, skin))
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap421>
→ To apply for relevant permit:
https://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/quarantine/qua_ie/qua_ie_ipab/qua_ie_ipab_iap/qua_ie_ipab_iap.html
 - e)  Import and Export Ordinance (HKSARG Cap. 60)
(for research involving the import or export of pharmaceutical products/medicines and dangerous drugs)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap60>
→ To apply for relevant approval:
https://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/pharmaceutical_trade/guidelines_forms/useful_guidelines_forms.html
 - f)  Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (HKSARG Cap. 599A)
(for research involving the import or transshipment of biological materials)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap599A>
→ To apply for relevant permit:
https://www.dh.gov.hk/english/useful/useful_forms/files/dh2465.pdf
 - g)  Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (HKSARG Cap.138)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap138>
→ To apply for relevant certificates & licenses:
https://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/pharmaceutical_trade/guidelines_forms/useful_guidelines_forms.html
- and
- h)  Genetically Modified Organisms (Control of Release) Ordinance (HKSARG Cap. 607)
(for R&D involving genetically modified animals)
<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap607>
→ To apply for relevant permit / exemption:
https://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/conservation/con_gmo/gmo_control/gmo_control.html

Annex 2: Local organizations which have established AEC/IACUC for animal research

HKSTP IACUC only performs ethics review for animal research applications submitted by HKSTP partner companies and its ethics approval is only applicable to venues on HKSTP premises.

Local organizations that have established animal research AEC/IACUC to provide ethical oversight for research studies that are carried out by their staff / students (for universities) or at their locations include the following. Companies shall discuss with them directly for any research collaboration opportunities and specifics of their research studies.

Universities:

- Chinese University of Hong Kong
- City University of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Baptist University
- Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- The Open University of Hong Kong
- The University of Hong Kong

Other organizations:

- Hong Kong Jockey Club
- Ocean Park Hong Kong