

## **GUIDELINES REGARDING THE USE OF HUMANE ENDPOINTS**

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this document is to establish general expectations for the development and use of humane endpoints in studies involving animals in research and teaching at Liberty University.

### **GUIDELINES:**

#### **PI Expectations**

Per the Guide, the PI should “identify, explain, and include in the animal use protocol a study endpoint that is both humane and scientifically sound” (The Guide, p. 27).

#### **IACUC Expectations**

The IACUC is expected to review each study on a case-by-case basis with regard to the use of humane endpoints. Each review should be study-specific as to species, methodology, and other necessary considerations, as applicable.

Per *the Guide*, the following criteria should be considered for each study, as applicable:

Information that is critical to the IACUC’s assessment of appropriate endpoint consideration in a protocol includes precise definition of the humane endpoint (including assessment criteria), the frequency of animal observation, training of personnel responsible for assessment and recognition of the humane endpoint, and the response required upon reaching the humane endpoint. An understanding of preemptive euthanasia (Toth 2000), behavioral or physiologic definitions of the moribund state (*ibid.*), and the use of study-specific animal assessment records (Morton 2000; Paster et al. 2009) can aid the PI and IACUC when considering or developing proposed endpoints. (The Guide, pp. 27-28).

According to *the Guide*, the IACUC should adhere to the following regarding pilot studies:

When novel studies are proposed or information for an alternative endpoint is lacking, the use of pilot studies is an effective method for identifying and defining humane endpoints and reaching consensus among the PI, IACUC, and veterinarian. A system for communication with the IACUC should be in place both during and after such studies. (The Guide, p. 28).

If a pilot study is warranted, the PI must remain in direct contact with the IACUC Office and veterinarian via email, and if warranted, by phone. Records of any communications should be maintained by the IACUC office.