

## University of Washington Policy Regarding Health Screenings for Personnel in Animal Care and Use Environments

### General Policy Information

University of Washington (UW) personnel who work in an animal care and use environment must complete an initial animal use health screening. The policy applies to all UW personnel, including faculty, veterinary staff, animal husbandry staff, facilities and maintenance staff, students, and other University personnel who enter animal care and use environments.

The Environmental Health & Safety Department (EH&S) is responsible for administering and implementing this University policy, which aligns with requirements from the National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare ([OLAW](#)). The UW Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) clears UW personnel to work on animal research protocols after they complete their animal use health screening and are cleared by an EH&S occupational health nurse.

Occupational health nurses in the EH&S Employee Health Center conduct the health screening. The purpose of the screening is to evaluate and address potential personal health risks that may be associated with working in an animal care and use environment, such as laboratory animal allergies. After an initial health screening, personnel may choose to decline the recommended subsequent periodic health screenings.

The frequency of subsequent health screenings varies based on occupational and individual factors. EH&S nurses offer the health screening annually to animal husbandry staff, veterinarians, and vet techs because close contact with animals and their housing and bedding poses increased occupational health risk. For researchers, EH&S offers the screening online every three years; however, if the occupational health nurse determines that an individual's occupational risk factors or personal health factors align with recommendations for more frequent screenings, the nurse shortens the screening "recall date" (i.e., when they will be rescreened).

UW personnel who do not have direct contact with animals or who work rarely or intermittently in an animal care and use facility – such as custodians, maintenance staff, UW police officers, and some students – complete an abbreviated online health screening, which is reviewed by EH&S nurses who provide clearance to work in the animal areas.

Visiting scholars present an animal use occupational health clearance document from their home institution. If their home institution does not have an animal use health screening program, they complete the EH&S online health screening and are cleared by an EH&S nurse.

Outside contractors who enter UW animal care and use areas do not complete a health screening. Instead, the UW department they are visiting/servicing gives them the EH&S [lab animal allergy focus sheet](#) and advises them to discuss any animal-related occupational health concerns with their employer and/or their personal health care provider.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Below is a summary of the program's primary stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities.

UW Environmental Health & Safety Department – EH&S oversees the animal use medical screening program. They maintain this policy document, facilitate communication among stakeholders, communicate with advisors and executive leadership, and ensure the program is compliant with relevant rules, regulations, and laws.

Employee Health Center (EHC) – EHC is the part of EH&S that manages and administers the animal use medical screening program. They maintain program documents and forms, notify employees to complete screenings, conduct in-person screenings, collect online animal use medical screening information, contact employees who need follow up, answer questions that employees or their employing departments may have, enter information into an employee health database, provide employing departments with compliance reports, provide clearance for employees to work in animal areas, and, as needed, communicate program information with other EH&S programs that ensure safety and health in the animal care and use environment.

The employing department – Each employing department (such as Comparative Medicine and the Washington National Primate Research Center) communicates requirements to their staff, allows access to a computer to complete online animal use medical screening, provides compensated work time to participate in in-person screening, receives compliance reports and encourages staff to participate, manages employment consequences of staff who are not cleared by EH&S, and collaborates with EH&S to ensure smooth implementation of the program.

UW personnel – Those who must be cleared in order to work in an animal use and care environment are responsible for completing at least one animal use medical screening, responding to periodic requests for subsequent program participation, and communicating with their supervisor, department leader, and/or EHC regarding any questions or concerns they may have.

UW Office of Animal Welfare (OAW) – OAW ensures that all federal and state rules are followed regarding health and safety in UW animal care and use environments. They ensure all personnel on an animal research protocol are cleared by EHC to work in those environments prior to approving the research protocol. They collaborate with EH&S through regular communication.

## Questions

If there are questions about this policy, please contact the EH&S Employee Health Center at [emphlth@uw.edu](mailto:emphlth@uw.edu) or 206.685.1026. This EH&S [webpage](#) has information about the animal use health screening, access to the online forms, and other related information. Technical problems with the online screening forms should be directed to [AUMShelp@uw.edu](mailto:AUMShelp@uw.edu).