

ANIMAL ADOPTION

Date of Policy Adoption by ACUC: February 2005

Revised: March 2011, March 2014, October 2016, October 2019, May 2022

Background

Animals may finish a research or teaching project in good health, but are not suitable or needed for any other studies at the institution. The principal investigator (PI) is encouraged to retire and adopt out animals in such circumstances. It is understood that an adoption program not only provides a good quality of life for healthy research animals that are no longer needed by MU, but also can decrease stress and raise morale for both research and animal care personnel. The University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) believes that responsible and compassionate researchers and teachers utilize animals only when necessary. Therefore, it follows that we should do our best to ensure good lives for those animals whose use is not required by science.

Policy

The Office of Animal Resources (OAR) will facilitate the adoption of retired research animals. For dogs, MU has partnered with Homes for Animal Heroes (HAH) to administer the adoption program. For all other species, OAR will administer the adoption program.

The following conditions must be met in order for an animal to be eligible for adoption:

1. Animals should be of good temperament thereby reducing the risk of damage to the property of or harm to the new owner(s).
2. An animal may be eligible for adoption only if in good physical condition as ascertained by the MU Attending Veterinarian (AV) (or his/her designate) and the PI. An animal must not be from genetically modified line or have experienced any manipulation that, in the opinion of the PI and AV, detrimentally altered its anatomical, physiological, metabolic, or locomotor function. The animal must be free of clinical signs of infectious disease or abnormality that could threaten animal or public health. Any exceptions will be considered by the AV or designee on a case-by-case basis.
3. Dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets and swine must be neutered or spayed. Dogs, cats, and ferrets must be current on core vaccines (rabies, canine distemper virus, canine parvovirus, canine adenovirus-2, and canine parainfluenza virus for dogs, rabies, feline panleukopenia, feline viral rhinotracheitis, and feline calicivirus for cats, and rabies and distemper virus for ferrets) prior to release. Spaying/neutering and vaccination requirements will be defined for other species on a case-by-case basis. Any exceptions to the spay/neuter and vaccine requirements listed above must be approved by the AV or designee on a case-by-case basis.
4. Dogs and cats must be permanently identified by microchip or tattoo prior to adoption.
5. No animal donated or previously client-owned may be adopted out by MU unless designated for potential adoption by the original donor or client.

The following steps must be taken for HAH dog adoptions:

1. The PI must indicate on the Animal Care and Use Protocol Application form that adoption is a possible method of animal disposition upon completion of the proposed research or teaching project.
2. In addition to the spay/neuter and vaccine requirements described above, dogs adopted through HAH must also be vaccinated for Bordetella, and dogs over 1 year of age must be tested for heartworms.
3. Animals must be examined by the MU AV (or his/her designate) before being transferred to HAH for adoption. The MU AV must document on the [HAH Transfer of Ownership](#) form that the animal

is approved for release to HAH, the dog is current on rabies, distemper/parvo and Bordetella vaccines, and that the dog has not bitten or snapped at any person. Signed approval by the MU AV and the HAH representative is required for all transfers. The completed [HAH Transfer of Ownership](#) form will be maintained by the OAR for a period of 3 years from the date of signature by both parties.

4. A USDA-APHIS Record of Disposition of Dogs and Cats must be completed for all dogs transferred to HAH and signed by an HAH representative. A copy of the signed form will be maintained by the OAR for a period of 3 years from the date of signature by HAH.
5. HAH shall assume all responsibility and liability for the transferred dog, and will provide all necessary care until the dog is placed in a permanent home. HAH is responsible for identifying potential adopters, performing background checks and home inspections, and transferring ownership of the dog to the adopter.

The following steps must be taken for non-HAH adoptions:

1. The PI must indicate on the Animal Care and Use Protocol Application form that adoption is a possible method of animal disposition upon completion of the proposed research or teaching project.
2. An [MU Animal Release/Adoption Record must be completed for each animal \(USDA covered species\) or group of animals \(non-USDA covered species\) adopted](#). Research procedures that have been performed on the animal(s) must be described fully in section II. Also, the form must be signed by the PI and the Department Head/Director. By signing the [MU Animal Release/Adoption Record](#) form, the PI is providing assurance that the adoption procedure is compliant with official MU ACUC policy and that the animal appears to be suitable for adoption as a pet.
3. Animals must be examined by the MU AV (or his/her designate) before being released for adoption. The MU AV (or his/her designate) must document on the [MU Animal Release/Adoption Record](#) form that the animal appears free of detectable diseases and appears to have a temperament suitable for adoption. Signed approval by the MU AV (or his/her designate) is required for all adoptions. The completed [MU Animal Release/Adoption Record](#) form will be maintained by the OAR for a period of 3 years from the date of signature by the MU AV (or his/her designate).
4. The individual adopting an animal must sign an [Acceptance of Ownership](#) form which states that MU is not liable for any injury or damage to persons or property by the adopted animal; furthermore there are no warranties or guarantees that can be made with regard to the adopted animal's physical condition or temperament. The form also states that the adopted animal is to be a pet and is not to be sold or used for any breeding or research purpose once the animal leaves the University. A copy of the signed form will be maintained by the OAR for a period of 3 years from the date of signature by the new owner.
5. For USDA covered species, a USDA-APHIS Record of Disposition form must be completed. A complete name, address, driver's license number, and a signature of the adopting individual are required. A copy of the signed form will be maintained by the OAR for a period of 3 years from the date of signature by the new owner.
6. The individual adopting an animal shall assume all financial responsibility for its housing, care, and medication at the time of transfer of ownership. The new owner must assume all further responsibilities associated with responsible companion animal ownership.
7. Only individuals 18 years of age or older are eligible to adopt animals.

For additional information:

[https://ars.research.missouri.edu/files/sop/3-21 SOP for Animal Adoption.pdf](https://ars.research.missouri.edu/files/sop/3-21_SOP_for_Animal_Adoption.pdf)

[https://ars.research.missouri.edu/files/sop/3-22 SOP for Animal Adoption through HAH.pdf](https://ars.research.missouri.edu/files/sop/3-22_SOP_for_Animal_Adoption_through_HAH.pdf)