

## **POLICY REGARDING FOOD OR WATER RESTRICTION**

### **PURPOSE:**

This policy serves to outline the use of food or water restrictions in animal research at Liberty University. All variations to the standard provisions of ad-libitum food and water must be thoroughly described in the protocol with adequate scientific justification according to the below policy.

Standard definitions for the purposes of this policy are as follows:

- **Scheduled Access:** “an animal consumes as much as desired at regular intervals”, (*The Guide, p. 30*)
- **Restriction:** “the total volume of food or fluid consumed is strictly monitored and controlled”, (*The Guide, p. 30*)
- **Deprivation:** the total withholding of food and/or water

### **POLICY:**

Per *The Guide*, “the objective when these studies are being planned and executed should be to use the least restriction necessary to achieve the scientific objective while maintaining animal well-being. The committee will take the following into consideration when evaluating such protocols, as outlined in *The Guide (p. 31)*:

- Necessary level of regulation
- Potential adverse consequences of regulation
- Methods for assessing the health and well-being of the animals
- Species, strain, stock, gender, and age of the animal(s)
- Housing, time of feeding, nutritive value, fiber content
- Prior experimental manipulation

Investigators must provide finite physical criteria for removing animals from the study, such as weight loss thresholds or clinical signs of dehydration. If food/water restriction is intended as a motivational tool for conditioned-response research, the use of “a highly preferred food or fluid as positive reinforcement”, (*The Guide, p.31*) should be considered.

Further, appropriate daily health monitoring must be in place, to include the following (*The Guide, p. 32*):

- Body weights shall be recorded at least weekly and more often for animals requiring greater restrictions
- Written records shall be maintained, documenting daily food and fluid consumption, hydration status, and any behavioral or clinical changes

### References:

*Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* – 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (National Research Council, 2011)