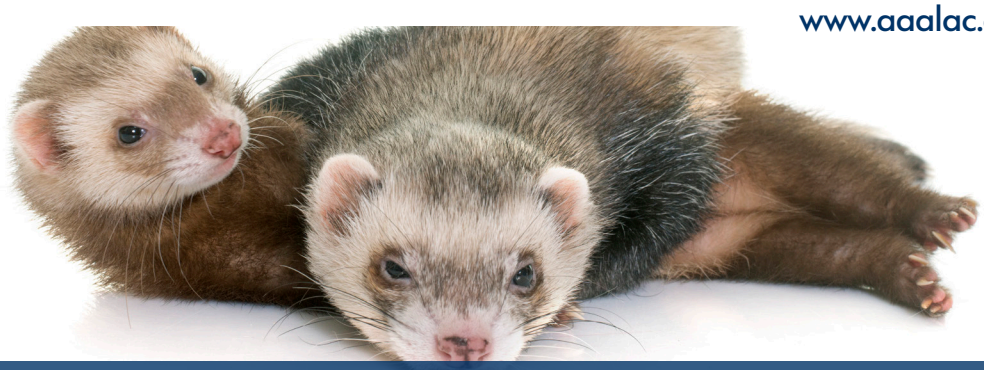


About AAALAC International

Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked general questions about AAALAC International's organization, governance, and accreditation program. For more details, please visit www.aaalac.org.

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What is AAALAC International?

AAALAC is a private, nonprofit organization that improves the welfare of animals in science and education through the accreditation of organizations that meet high standards of humane and responsible animal care and use.

How is AAALAC governed?

AAALAC International is governed by a Board of Directors elected by AAALAC's Member Organization Delegates (MODs). MODs are appointed by AAALAC Member Organizations, a select group of prestigious scientific, professional and educational groups with an interest in advancing animal well-being in science and education.

What is the Council on Accreditation?

AAALAC's Council on Accreditation is comprised of animal care and use professionals and researchers from around the globe. They conduct the site visits and program evaluations that determine which institutions are awarded AAALAC accreditation. The Council includes North American, European and Asia-Pacific sections which evaluate programs in their respective regions.

Who are Ad Hoc Visitors?

AAALAC has over 300 Ad Hoc Visitors worldwide with expertise in traditional and specialized areas (i.e. aquatics, avian, agricultural, etc.). Many also have unique discipline competencies, such as applied neuroscience, behavioral science, toxicology, pharmacology, or physiology. They join Council members on site visits and make recommendations on accreditation. Their skills add depth to the site visit team, and they understand the intricacies of combining research and educational missions with animal wellfare.

Does AAALAC International make its own regulations?

No, AAALAC International is not a regulatory body and does not make or enforce regulations. Instead, AAALAC relies on a collection of standards including AAALAC Position Statements, Guidance Statements, and Reference Resources, along with all applicable local legislation/regulations specific to the program being evaluated. AAALAC also maintains a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" to further clarify administrative processes. More details are available in the "Accreditation Standards" section of the AAALAC website.

How extensive is an AAALAC International evaluation?

AAALAC evaluates every aspect of an animal care and use program including institutional policies, animal husbandry, veterinary care, and facilities/physical plant.

About AAALAC International

What deficiencies are most often noted by AAALAC site visitors?

Deficiencies found during site visits continue to decline—about 98% of participating institutions maintain full accreditation. The three most common areas where issues arise are in the animal environment, occupational health and safety, and Oversight Body (e.g. IACUC) functions.

Does AAALAC International accredit agricultural or wildlife animal programs?

Yes. Programs that use agricultural or wildlife animals in science or education are embracing the AAALAC accreditation program. All animals used in science and education, including laboratory, farm, wildlife, aquatic, and invertebrate species, are included in the evaluation if they are relevant to the institution's mission or protected by local rules. More details are available on the AAALAC website.

Is accreditation available to small animal care and use programs?

Yes. The standards used to evaluate programs are universal and can be applied to programs of any size. As mentioned above, programs using nontraditional research animals, such as fish or birds, are also encouraged to seek accreditation.

Does AAALAC use the same standards to evaluate animal programs outside of the U.S.?

Because each country has its own set of laws and regulations, AAALAC site visitors use a customized approach for evaluating programs in different countries. Evaluators take into account the applicable laws and regulations of the host country, as well as the overall performance of the program in relation to its appropriate animal welfare objectives. They also evaluate the extent to which the program conforms with AAALAC standards: www.aaalac.org/accreditation-standards/accreditation-standards-overview/

Are the results of an AAALAC site visit confidential?

Yes. The entire process and results are confidential between your organization and AAALAC International, even if there are problems. Everyone involved signs confidentiality agreements. AAALAC's purpose is to provide a peer evaluation that yields valuable information, enabling organizations to enhance their programs and achieve new levels of excellence.

How does an institution maintain AAALAC accreditation?

To maintain AAALAC accreditation, institutions must file an annual report every year and be re-evaluated every three years.

How much does accreditation cost?

Institutions pay a one-time application fee, then subsequent annual fees. Both of these fees are based on a sliding scale that generally correlates with the size of the facility. Institutions with very few animals will pay significantly smaller fees than those that maintain large vivariums and support areas. The fees cover the cost of periodic site visits and administrative expenses (see www.aaalac.org/accreditation-program/fees-and-deadlines/).

How many animal care and use programs are accredited by AAALAC International?

More than 1,175+ animal care and use programs in 52 countries are accredited by AAALAC. These programs include universities, companies, government agencies, hospitals, and nonprofits.

