

UTHSC Neuroscience Institute Behavioral Core User Agreement Form

Before using the Core, each user and principal investigator must read the usage policies on these pages and the animal care and handling policies in the appendices, then sign and date each page indicating understanding of and agreement with the policies. Once signed, the user must meet with the Core Director personally, bringing the signed forms. **Note that each person using the core must sign a separate User Agreement Form, and no person is allowed into the core without having a signed User Agreement Form on file.**

By signing this document, you agree to the following:

1. The Core may only be used when reserved in advance.

Reservations can only be made through the Core web calendar. Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Repeatedly missing reserved time without cancelling appropriately will result in the loss of user privileges.

Each reservation is for a single room, based on the equipment needed (see Equipment List at <http://cns.uthsc.edu/behavioral-core/index.php>). Some of the rooms have doors and no one should enter any room without a reservation. Do not assume a room is empty just because it is quiet. In this way no one will inadvertently disrupt anyone else's experiments.

2. Only approved users may enter the Core, and only with a reservation.

Everyone who enters the Core must be pre-approved by the Core Director. An approved user may not bring an unapproved person into the Core at any time for any reason. Having one lab member approved does not allow other lab members to enter, with or without the approved member. Visitors must also be approved in advance. However, keep in mind that other users may be conducting experiments in other rooms at any time, and each additional person in the Core is another opportunity for disruption. Thus visitors will only be approved under extra-ordinary circumstances. Children under 16 years of age are not permitted in the Core at any time under any circumstances.

It is important that users without reservations do not enter the Core facilities. Even if it's just to copy or analyze data, a reservation must be made in advance to ensure that users do not encroach on each others' time.

3. Absolute quiet must be practiced at all times.

Most behavioral tests require a quiet test environment for success. Thus it behooves every user to respect the other users and be absolutely quiet when opening and closing doors, removing mice from cages, etc. Speech must only be at a whisper. Mobile phones must be turned off at all times while in the Core. If you've got an emergency or are expecting a call that cannot wait, you must re-schedule your experiments for another day. Noise will not be tolerated in the Core and may result in the loss of user privileges.

4. The User is responsible for all consumables.

The Core does not have a budget at this time, so everything required for an experiment must be provided by the user, including bedding, food pellets, paper towels, cleaning supplies, paint, etc.

5. The User is responsible the quality of the data.

The Core does not have personnel to train users, analyze data, or ensure that data are being collected properly. Although we will make our best efforts to help users when possible, it is the users' responsibility to understand how the equipment works, how the data are collected, what kind(s) of data to expect, and how to analyze them. If it is the first time a user is collecting data with a particular apparatus, especially when generating complex data, it is advisable to run a small pilot study first.

6. The User must leave the equipment in good working order.

The equipment in the core does not belong to the core. Other UTHSC investigators have generously loaned their expensive equipment to the core for the greater good. The condition of the room and equipment are inspected after each core user is finished; thus if anything is not working properly notify the Core Director *before* initiating the behavioral testing session. The principal investigator will be expected to repair or replace any broken equipment. Failure to report broken equipment will result in the loss of user privileges.

7. The User must clean the equipment and room thoroughly after each use.

The User is responsible for cleaning the equipment after use, as well as supplying the cleaning supplies and agents. The Core will be inspected daily to ensure that each user has cleaned up after using the rooms. Failure to clean equipment properly will result in the loss of user privileges; thus if you find the equipment dirty at the beginning of a session, notify the Core Director immediately.

Cleaning behavioral equipment can typically be achieved with a low concentration of ethanol (15-25%). Note that high concentrations of ethanol will cause acrylic to crack so they must not be used. It is good practice to clean an apparatus after every subject, not just at the end of a testing session.

8. All animal care is the responsibility of the User and Principal Investigator.

DAC personnel will treat mice involved in behavioral studies the same as any other mouse. Thus mice on free-feeding schedules will be provided with food and water by DAC personnel, but cages with cage cards indicating dietary restriction are the responsibility of the Core user and Principal Investigator. The Core personnel will not feed mice or change bedding. Because some mice can die after a single day without food, it is essential that **every mouse be fed every day, including weekends and holidays**. If there are any questions concerning appropriate food-restriction regimens for behavioral testing, consult with the Core personnel or DAC personnel.

9. All procedures involving live animals must be pre-approved by the IACUC.

The Core does not have a blanket protocol or any other protocol for any approved procedure. Thus all activity within the Core must be conducted under the Principal Investigator's approved protocols.

User Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

Core Director _____ Date _____