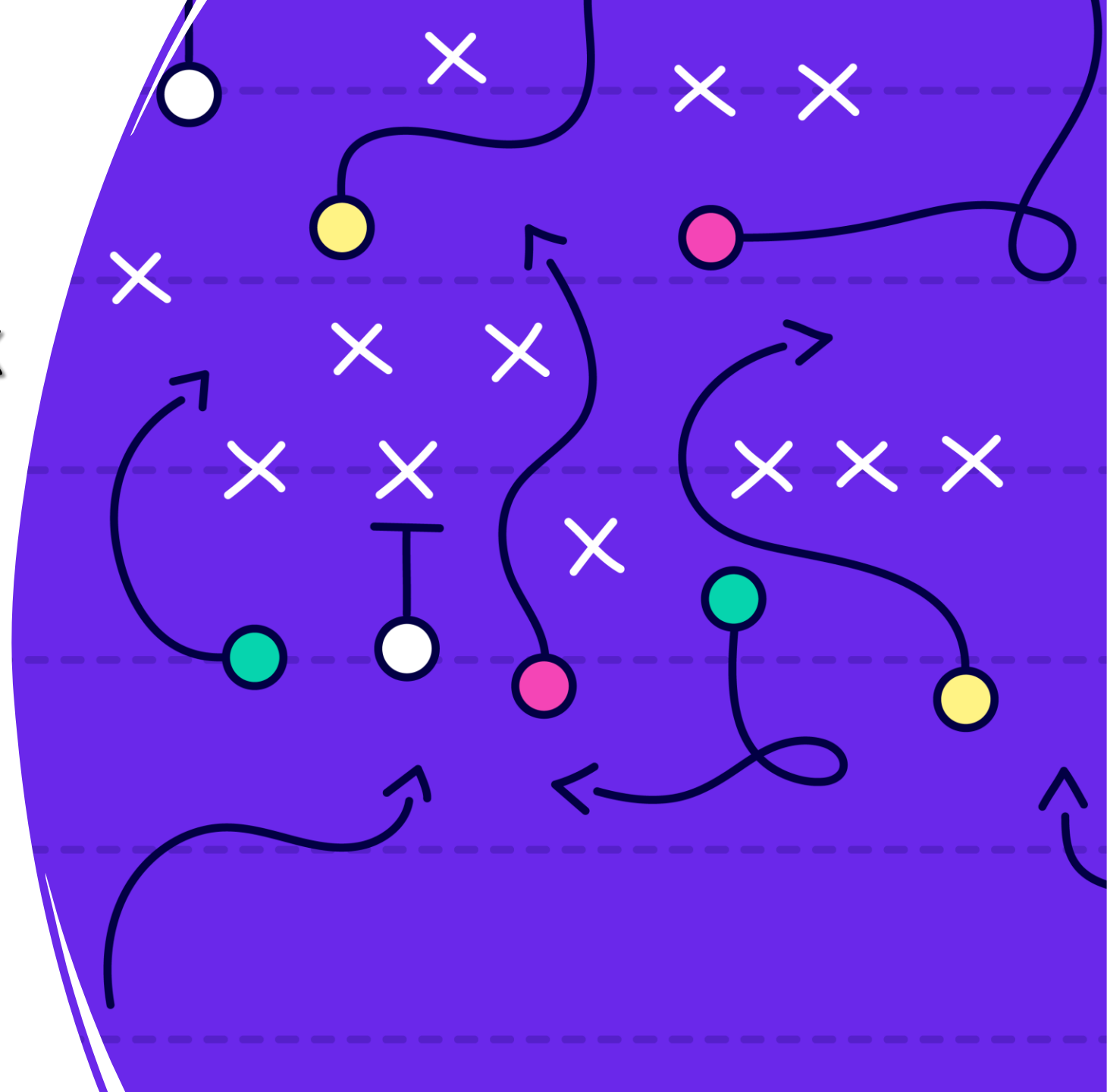


# Putting the Performance Standard Playbook to Work in Your Program

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Susan B. Harper, DVM, MS,  
DACLAM, DACVPM, RBP (ABSA)



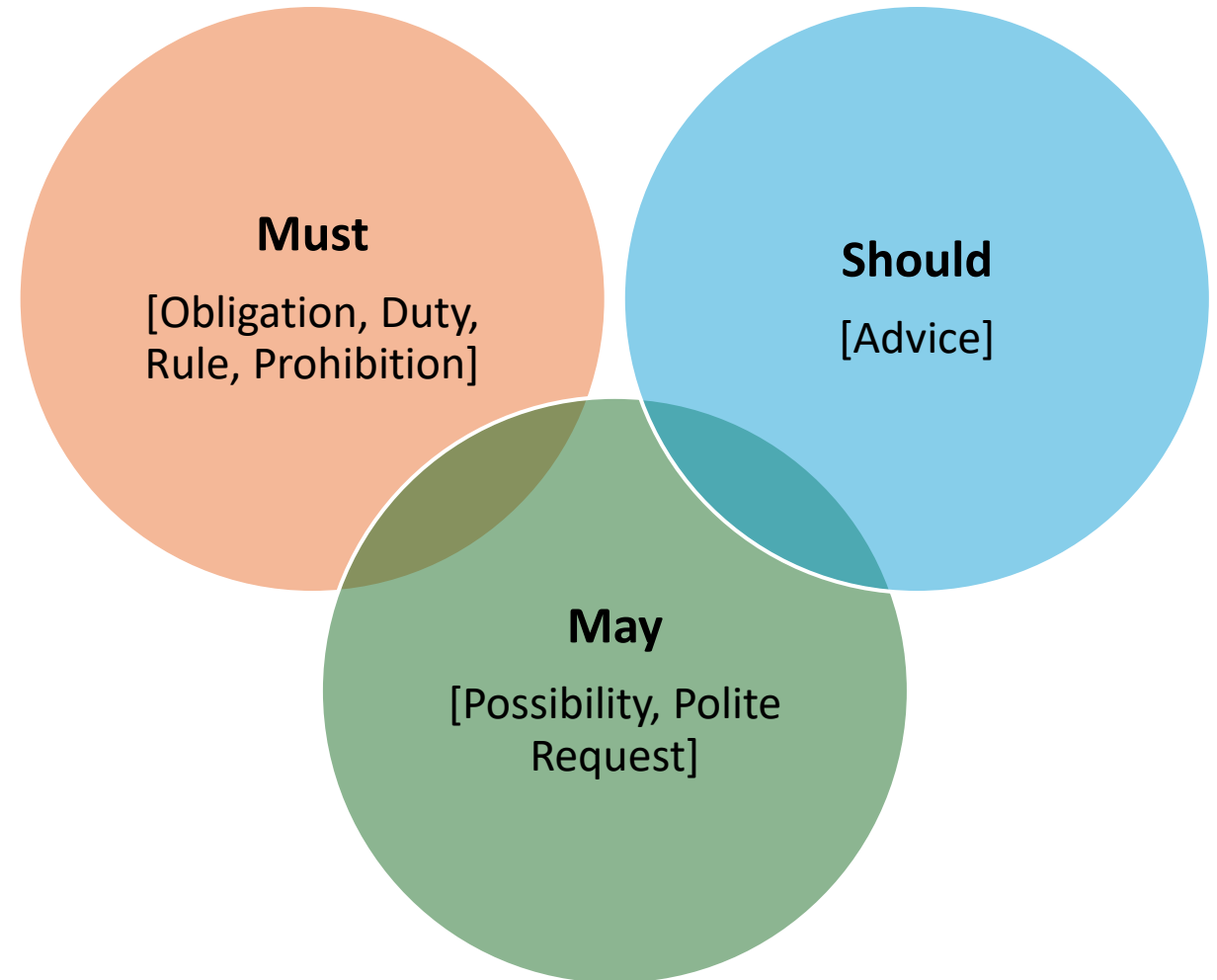
# ‘Must’ vs ‘Should’ vs ‘May’ Statements

**Must:** actions considered as “imperative and mandatory duty or requirement for providing humane animal care and use”

**Should:** strong recommendation for achieving a goal, although “individual circumstances might justify an alternative strategy”

**May:** a suggestion to be considered.

[Guide, page 8]

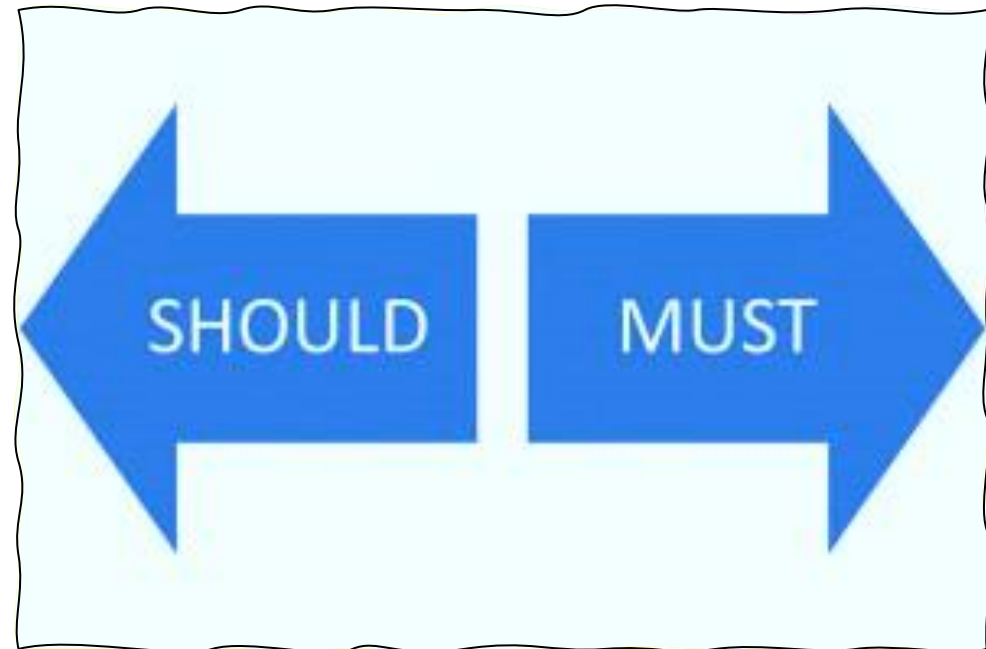


# 'Must' and 'Should' in the *Guide*

Expectations that programs will follow 'must' and 'should' statements unless:

- *Guide*-specific **exception**
- IACUC-approved **departure** based on a scientific, veterinary, or animal welfare justification
- IACUC-approved **performance standard**

[*Guide*, page 8; [NIH OLAW FAQ G.10](#); [AAALAC FAQ A.2](#)]

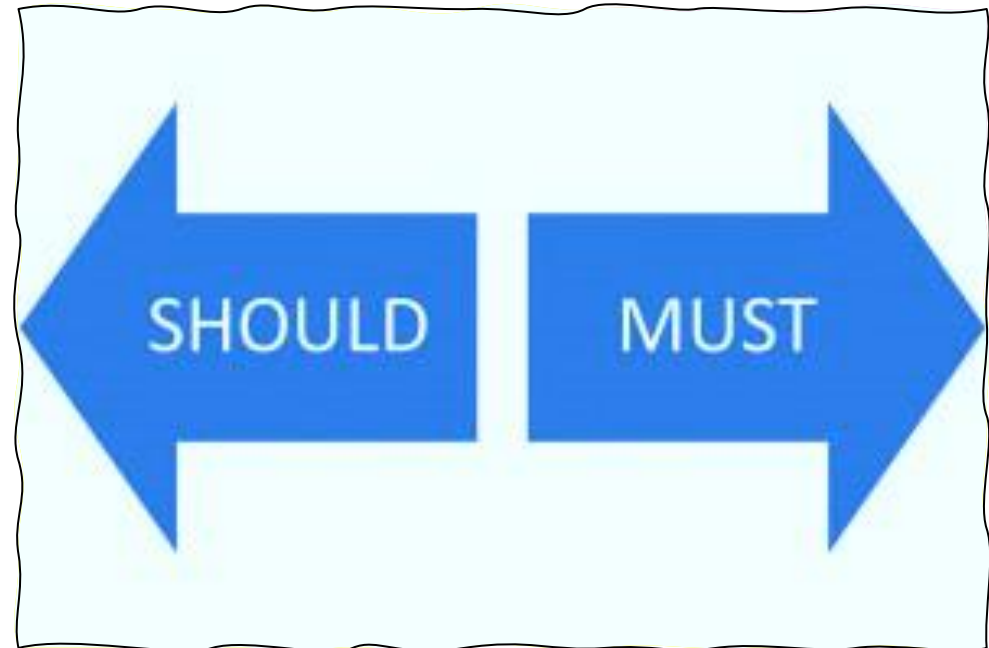


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# What is a standard?

- A benchmark of achievement, which is based on the desired level of excellence . . . the model to be initiated and may serve, in turn, as basis of comparison [The Oxford Dictionary, 1964]
- A document or set of criteria that establishes requirements, specifications, guidelines, or characteristics to ensure materials, products, processes, and services are fit for their intended purposes [International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST)]
- Essential tools that guide industries and disciplines toward consistent quality, safety, and efficiency
- Parameters that reflect common societal values - and promote trust and reliability in various domains.



# What is an engineering standard?

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- A standard or guideline that specifies in detail a method, technology, or technique for achieving a desired outcome
- Does not provide for modification in the event that acceptable alternative methods are available or unusual circumstances arise
- Is prescriptive and provides limited flexibility for implementation
- Can be useful for establishing a baseline
- Relatively easy to use in evaluating compliance

[Guide, page 6]

# What is a performance standard?

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- *A standard or guideline that, while describing a desired outcome, provides flexibility in achieving this outcome by granting discretion to those responsible for managing the animal care and use program, the researcher, and the IACUC*
- *Requires professional input, sound judgment, and a team approach to achieve specific goals*
- *Essential that the desired outcomes and/or goals be clearly defined and appropriate performance measures regularly monitored in order to verify the success of the process*
- *Advantageous because they accommodate the consideration of many variables (e.g., species, prior experience, facilities, staff expertise, and research goals) so implementation can be best tailored to meet recommendations in the Guide*



[Guide, page 6]

# What is a practice standard?

- *Application of professional judgment by qualified, experienced individuals to a task or process over time, an approach that has been demonstrated to benefit or enhance animal care and use*
- *Professional judgment comes from information in peer-reviewed scientific literature and textbooks and, as in many other disciplines, from time-proven experiences in the field*
- *In the absence of published scientific literature or other definitive sources, where experience has demonstrated a particular practice improves animal care and use, practice standards have been used in determining appropriate recommendations in the Guide.*
- *In most situations, the Guide is intended to provide flexibility so institutions can modify practices and procedures with changing conditions and new information.*

*[Guide, page 7]*



# Performance Standards . . .

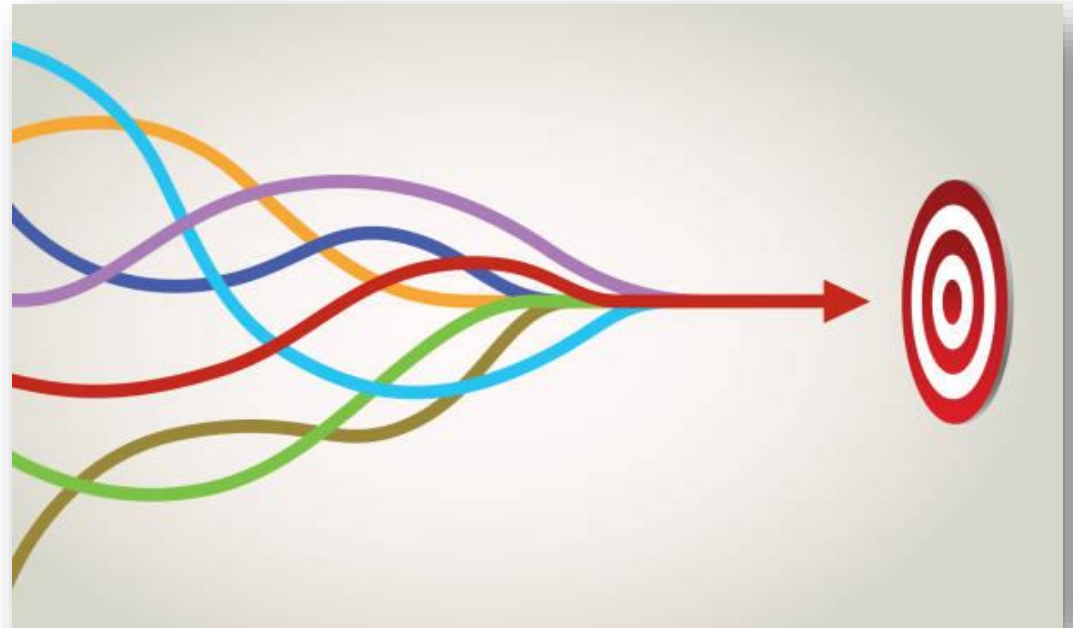
- *Not a new concept*
- *Introduced in the 1985 Guide*
- *Defined and emphasized more extensively in the 1996 Guide*
- *Emphasis expanded in the 2011 Guide, promoting flexibility and professional judgment*
- *Can be implemented at the institutional or program or individual protocol level*



# Why use performance standards?

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- *Provides significant flexibility for institutions to modify and update practices and procedures as new information becomes available and as program needs change (**responsiveness**)*
- *Permits program-specific changes within the legal framework, without the need to revise legislation (**timeliness**)*
- *Promotes changes that advance animal health and welfare, without hindering scientific progress (**effectiveness**)*



# Performance standards:

*Support scientific objectives*

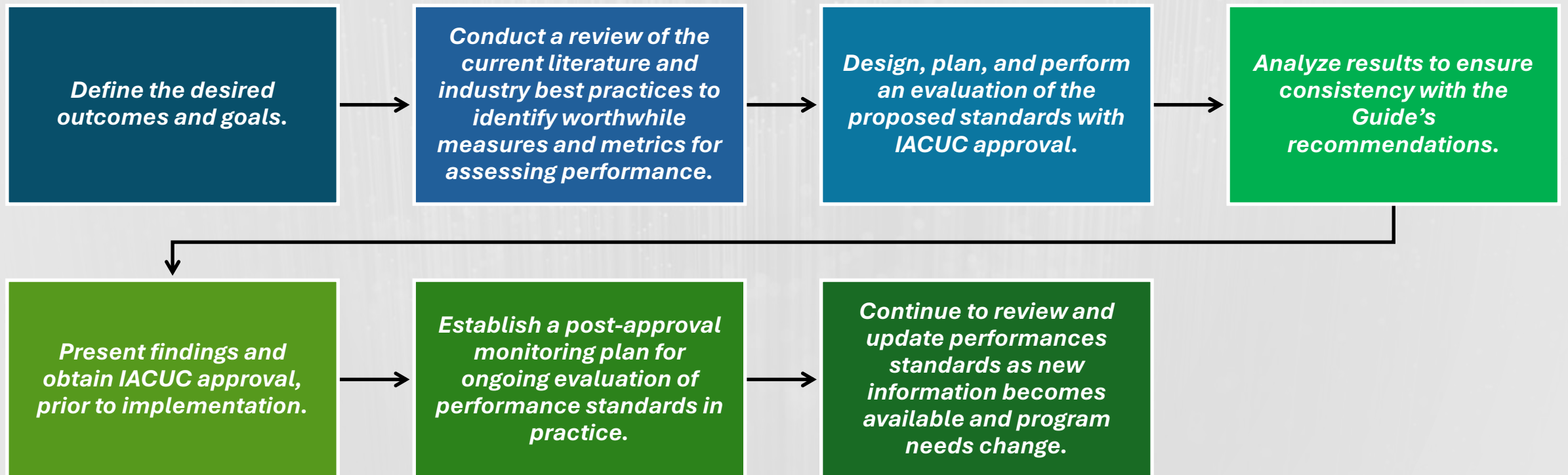
*Support the health and welfare of the animal*

*Include a justified performance index*

*Have associated outcome criteria*

*Are approved and regularly re-evaluated by the IACUC*

# Developing performance standards:



# Example 1

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*“Extending cage-changing intervals for rodents” [Guide page 70]*

- *Define outcomes. What are the objectives?*
- *How will the objectives be achieved?*
- *How will success be measured?*



# Example 2

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***“Increasing housing density for rodents”***  
*[Guide pages 56-58]*

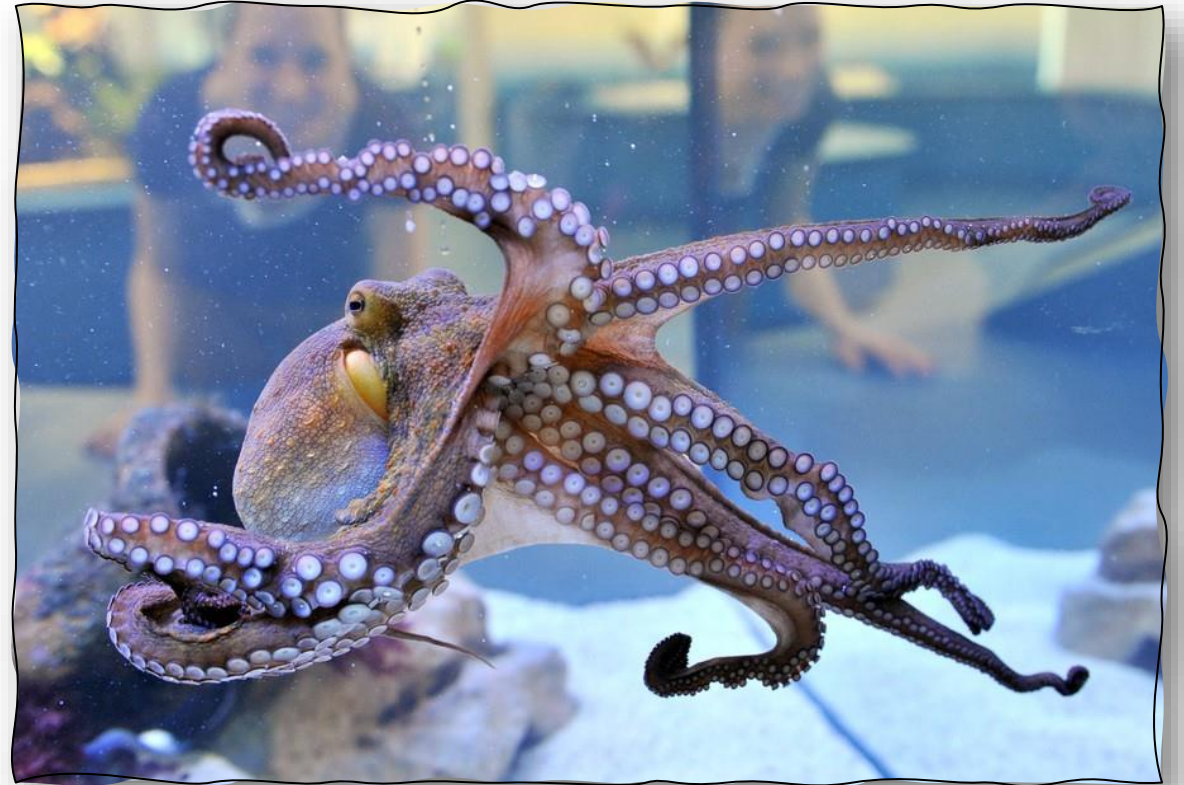
- *Define outcomes. What are the objectives?*
- *How will the objectives be achieved?*
- *How will success be measured?*

# Example 3

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*“Housing a new species not included in the Guide’s recommendations”*

- *Define outcomes. What are the objectives?*
- *How will the objectives be achieved?*
- *How will success be measured?*



# Example 4

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***“Storing animal diets where temperature and humidity cannot be maintained within the Guide’s recommended ranges” [Guide page 66]***

- *Define outcomes. What are the objectives?*
- *How will the objectives be achieved?*
- *How will success be measured?*



# Example 5

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***“Using a non-pharmaceutical grade compound in lieu of the commercial product” [Guide page 31]***

- *Define outcomes. What are the objectives?*
- *How will the objectives be achieved?*
- *How will success be measured?*



# Example 6

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*“Housing different species within the same housing area” [Guide page 111]*

- *Define outcomes. What are the objectives?*
- *How will the objectives be achieved?*
- *How will success be measured?*



**ANY  
THOUGHTS  
OR  
QUESTIONS?**

