Australian Phenomics Facility
Client Services Charter

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Client Services Charter

Background and Purpose

This Client Services Charter communicates to our clients what they can expect of our services and set clear goals for our staff.

This Client Services Charter forms part of the facility's Quality Manual that outlines the responsibilities of staff who deliver our key requirements. Supporting these policies and standards will be Standard Operating Procedures that define how individual procedures and activities should be undertaken.

As a package, these documents will be available to all staff at the Australian Phenomics Facility (APF) and clients to ensure they are aware of the full parcel of services and goals of the facility. If you would like to review the facility's quality documents please contact us.

Regular review of these documents will occur to ensure they are in line with the APF's objectives and clients requirements.

We seek and welcome your feedback on our service delivery.

Mission

The Australian Phenomics Facility supports open access large-scale phenotyping of humans and mice to uncover the biological drivers in human disease.

Quality Policy Statement

To provide a quality, best practice, science capability to support Australian biomedical research.

To go the extra distance in delivering efficient services to our researchers, clients, and industry collaborators.

To contribute to managing and sharing information and at the same time protecting privacy and client confidentiality.

Support excellence through training, continual improvement and a dynamic work environment.

Who we are

The APF specialises in creating, characterising and archiving mouse models of human disease. We have an experienced genomics and bioinformatics capability focused on the identification of single nucleotide variants and phenotyping capability to make biological associations with probable human disease traits.

The facility was established in 2004 and receives funding from the Australian Government's NCRIS Super Science and CRIS programmes through the Australian Phenomics Network and contributions from the Australian National University.

We have an open access policy and support academic and corporate research programmes in Australia and internationally.

The facility is equipped with up to date technology ensuring the highest quality in all aspects of our work.

Our aim is to service research in a time efficient manner with quality performance targets through:

- Timed services
- Highly skilled technical staff
- Training and Development
- Consultation and planning

All services will be compliant with relevant legislation including those governed by the Office of the Gene Technology Registrar (OGTR), Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee (AEEC), Department of Agriculture and other relevant legislative authorities.

Communication

We understand that when using our services you may have a range of different enquiries, which can involve coordination of multiple service areas.

To facilitate requests in an efficient and timely manner we provide key contacts for all service areas.

Area	Contact email address
Level 3 ENU/Production	animal.ops.apf@anu.edu.au
Level 2 Experimental	animal.ops.apf@anu.edu.au
Containment and Behavioural Suites	animal.ops.apf@anu.edu.au
Genomics	genotyping.support@anu.edu.au
Imports/Exports	animal.shipments@anu.edu.au
Phenome Bank (cryopreservation and IVF included)	phenbank@anu.edu.au
Scientific Programs	apf.scientific.programs@anu.edu.au
General Enquiries	administration.heb@anu.edu.au
IT Services (Databases and Musterer)	it.apf@anu.edu.au
Training	training.apf@anu.edu.au

Although communication by telephone is sometimes necessary, it is our general policy to communicate with our clients in writing, via email whenever possible. This lowers the interruption factor and allows increased staff efficiency. It also provides you with an electronic record of the enquiry and response. Where relevant, APF staff will confirm phone conversations by email confirmation.

Technical staff check their emails at least twice daily. However, if you have an urgent enquiry please contact the area coordinator who will be able to direct your query appropriately.

For the majority of enquiries you can expect an initial response within 48 hours.

Managers also attend regular committee meetings including the JCSMR Animal Users Committee and ANU Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee. We also hold specific area meetings to deal with day-to-day operational aspects of the facility. We welcome you to provide agenda items to the facility run meetings for discussion at the appropriate forum.

For projects that you have engaged the APF for, we aim to provide written progress reports at key milestones throughout the project.

At the APF, we welcome constructive criticism and feedback about services delivered as well as appreciation and suggestions on how we might improve them. If you have any feedback or complaints about any of our services please contact us administration.heb@anu.edu.au

Service Commitments

Animal Services

The APF recognises that time delays in providing services can have significant impact on research and cost implications and will therefore strive to meet the following targets for particular services. Where the facility is unable to meet these goals, the APF will aim to notify researchers in advance and give an expected revised timeframe.

Service	Delivery Timeframe
Breeder Set Up *	Within 10 days of request
Culling (not managed) *	Within 1 week of request
Sample Collection (organs etc)	Within 1 week of request
DNA collection (continual maintenance)	By 28 days of age
DNA collection (special request)	Within 1 week of task request submission
Phenotyping (special request)	Within 1 week of task request submission
Supply of clean cages and associated goods	Within 3 days of request
Processing of accounts (email out)	Within 10 days of end of (ANU financial) period
Importation and rederivation of strain *	10 months from date of import
Assigning of schedule for IVF requests	Within 2 weeks of request
Cryopreservation of mice	Next available session – typically within 4 weeks
Export of sperm or live mice	Typically within 3 months subject to MTA and other required approvals

*Contact us for more information on detailed timeframes.

Genomic Services

A comprehensive service relating to genotyping, genomic DNA isolation from a number of tissues in human and mouse including blood, saliva and paraffin fixed samples, as well as whole genome/exome next generation sequencing capabilities and a corresponding bioinformatics service for the analysis of genomic data is offered.

Service Request	Delivery Timeframe (from receipt of sample)
Genotyping (existing assay)	1-2 weeks
CRISPR Sanger Sequencing and new assay design and optimisation	5-6 weeks
New assay (design, order, optimisation)	2-4 weeks
DNA preparation (plate- crude)	2-3 days
DNA preparation (tube – purified)	1-2 weeks
Sanger resequencing	4-6 weeks
Whole exome sequencing	6-12 weeks
Whole genome sequencing	6-12 weeks
Amplifluor SNV validation	2-4 weeks
Sanger SNV validation	2-4 weeks

Scientific Programs

We comprise a diverse but complementary skill-base combining project management as well as laboratory-based expertise. We coordinate all research collaborations with the external research community, managing the production of gene variant mice, coordinating phenotyping services and providing data management and analysis capabilities.

Service	Delivery Timeframe
Phenotyping data*	7 days from collection of data
Period reports to clients	Within one week of charging

*Contact us for more information

Screening assays currently offered include:

- Haematology analysis
- Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISA)
- Red blood cell flow cytometry
- White blood cell flow cytometry
- Biochemistry analysis
- Multi-plex biomarker detection (Mesoscale)

Training

We have extensive expertise in the area of mouse breeding and research, mouse handling and various specialised techniques.

The APF provides training in a number of skills including basic mouse handling, use of the Musterer database, advanced mouse and rat techniques and anaesthesia.

For comprehensive training services please contact us at training.apf@anu.edu.au

Service Definitions

Clients should be familiar with a variety of terms that the facility uses. Below is a list of common definitions used by technicians and managers:

Definitions

Managed Culling – the process by which whole cages or individual animals are nominated for culling by the researcher (Swift Cull) in managed strains. Mice once nominated move to the swift cull list for culling within one week. Mice can be saved from culling if selected before 5pm Friday.

APF Managed Strain – the researcher requests that the APF takes responsibility for breeding and maintaining the strain based on projections and the stated requirements of the research group. Researchers must provide a maximum cage number they are willing to hold the strain at and decisions can be made in consultation with the research group.

Continual Maintenance – for the purpose of maintaining the genotyping requirements applied to the strain at each generation. i.e a strain on continual maintenance will have all stock punched for genotyping purposes.

Projections – strain and number of animals likely to be needed by a research group, this is requested quarterly to ensure future orders can be fulfilled. Projections allow the APF to manage the number of breeders required etc but do not mean animals are set aside for orders.

Standing Orders – a regular ongoing order for animals on a regular basis both in house and externally. A standing order will mean that as soon as animals are available (often as early as weaning age) they will be assigned to orders, ensuring best availability.

Multiple User Strain – APF owned strain used by multiple research groups i.e. C57BL/6. The APF covers the holding cost of these animals but the animals are charged for as an individual animal purchase price. To classify as a Multiple User Strain the following criteria must be me:

- at least 30% of its use must be shared by more than one user and preferably 3 or more users;
- multiple users must have a requirement for the strain beyond 6 months of usage and;
- there must be more than 10 animals ordered per month.

Single User Strain – strain charges maintained by an individual or group. Permission and approval required for use by all others. Breeding of single user strains may be managed either by the researcher (User Managed) or by the APF Breeding Coordinator (APF Managed).

> Where a strain is held under the APF Breeding Protocol (A2015/08 Bowditch or relevant replacement) the breeding must be overseen by and approved by the Protocol Holder – Katrina Bowditch. It is preferable that the breeding for these strains is APF Managed to ensure the breeding practices in place are in line with the protocol approved by the ANU Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee.

Where a researcher monitors the breeding and numbers of animals bred on their own protocol, they must take responsibility for the breeding oversight of the strain or provide clear, written guidelines to the Breeding Coordinator and APF management on their breeding requirements. This must be by the completion of the APF Strain Information Form including any changes to requests for strain management.

An individual who holds and pays for the maintenance of a single user strain may elect to share the strain with collaborators at the ANU or external. The APF will facilitate transfer of animals once the holder of the strain has given written approval. Any cost reimbursement is the responsibility of the holder of the strain and will not be managed by the APF.

Short Notice Request – requests made outside APF specified delivery timeframes.

Ordering and Availability

Multi User Strains

Multiple user strains are kept at the lowest colony size to ensure minimal wastage of animals according to ethical guidelines. Orders for multiple user strains should be placed well in advance and where possible, standing orders should be placed to ensure availability of mice. Larger orders (10 mice or more) may require more than six weeks' notice for some strains that are high demand.

Late Cancellation (less than 48 hours notice) of standing orders will be charged at 50% of the cost.

Mice will not be kept past six weeks of age to minimise wastage and ensure efficient colony management. Any animals required beyond this age will be supplied at six weeks and the researcher will incur the cage per week cost from that point. Animals can be held in the Hugh Ennor Building until age required.

Externally Sourced Animals

Orders of animals from external suppliers will be charged at cost to the researcher. Importation of animals to any animal facility must be processed by the rederivation and import team via animal.shipments@anu.edu.au

Rederivation requests can also be placed to this address.

Service Inclusions

Cage Holding Services

Husbandry

- Cage husbandry including cage changing performed as required relevant to the caging type, number of animals per cage and health of the animals.
- Cage changing with enriched corncob bedding (includes nesting material only).
- Provision of standard irradiated rodent breeding chow, automatic watering (or bottled water where requested and indicated by the experimental program) and nectar where indicated.
- Daily husbandry and basic welfare check of animals – specific phenotyping or requests for additional checks may incur a charge as Category B service provision.

Breeding

- Breeder set up as requested by researchers via Musterer Database.
- The APF can, where requested, manage breeding to within specifications provided to the facility by a research group.
- Researchers are ultimately responsible for monitoring for poor breeders unless the strain is an "APF Managed Strain" in which case the APF Breeding Coordinator will oversee these requirements.

Punching

- Ear punching as per Client Services Charter expectations (28 days). Animals that require ear punch at less than this age will incur an additional charge as Category B service provision.

Genotyping

- Genotyping of animals with no fixed genotype is included in the cage price for standard PCR or amplifluor/KASP assays. Additional charges will be incurred for:
    - animals that are being screened for three or more genetic observables will be charged at $1 per additional observable per animal and;
    - animals of a fixed genotype where the researcher requests continual maintenance punching will be charged at $5 per animal.

Veterinary care

- Veterinary care and monitoring of unwell animals including investigations of unexpected events.
- Routine health monitoring is performed on the majority of animals within the colony. Health reports are available on the website and by contacting the facility. Requests for additional health screening will be charged at cost.

Animal Delivery

- Delivery of animals to other APF managed facilities or the JCSMR Holding Room as requested via the standard request systems.
- Animals that require picking up at the HEB must be collected within 10 minutes of the arranged pick up time. Animals that have been removed from the Hugh Ennor Facility will not be able to be returned and will be euthanased if pick up does not occur in a timely fashion.

Timed Mating

- For mice that are provided before 14 days gestation – plug guarantee only. Plug indicates a mating has occurred but cannot guarantee pregnancy.
- For mice that are issued post 14 days gestation – we expect a 90% pregnancy rate. Some mice may show signs of abortion.

Cage Supply

- Cages will be supplied with enriched bedding.
- Additional reasonable requests for food and sterilised water can be made without additional charge.
- Cages must be changed by the research group (unless otherwise negotiated) and changed within ethical timeframes and cages must be rotated for washing with each cage change.

Importation, Quarantine and Rederivation

- Importation of animals is charged for as per shipment fees detailed in this document.
- Importation will not take place until the client completes the required documentation including strain information, quotes or other relevant forms.
- The APF will assist with the appropriate document requirements, including Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs), and the institutions required to be involved based on the information provided. The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) must approve changes to MTAs. Delays in this process are not the responsibility of APF staff.
- The standard charge rate applies for cages held in quarantine areas, including Quarantine Approved Arrangement Sites (International Quarantine as approved by Department of Agriculture) areas.
- The client will pay for the cost of health screening for release of animals from quarantine or post rederivation.
- The client will pay the cost of courier fees and shipping boxes.
- Rederivation of strains to the top hierarchy of the facility is provided without additional charge on the expectation that:
    - the core breeding cages are held in this hierarchy within the Hugh Ennor Building for a minimum of 12 months and;
    - the researcher will take responsibility for ensuring the strain is archived appropriately by sperm cryopreservation at the researcher's cost.

All service inclusions are subject to the timeframes and notice periods outlined in the Client Services Charter. Additional requests at short notice may be charged for as Category B services for the time taken to arrange and deliver the requested service.

Record Keeping

The APF uses an in house database known as Musterer to monitor, track and organise all animal information. This database provides significant information to researchers and APF staff in the management of strains and invoicing details. The Musterer interface is completely web based and can be accessed remotely when required.

The APF utilise a task request system to provide an efficient interface for researchers within the ANU to request animal and genomics services. This system can be found at: https://databases.apf.edu.au/TaskRequest/

The APF has a policy on the retention of data produced by the facility. The APF retains all scientific raw and analysed data in laboratory notebooks and/or electronically by the APF for a minimum of five years from the completion of the task/project with the exception of raw data generated from next generation sequencing services.

The APF has a barcoding and storage system for tracking samples collected and processed by the facility. All crude DNA samples prepared in 96-well plates for standard genotyping are stored for three months following processing. All other DNA samples are stored at -80°C until completion of the project.

Quality

We have a commitment to quality through continuous improvement. As such, we have committed ourselves to the following:

- regular audit of our internal processes;
- training and development for our employees;
- review of staff technique to prevent “drift” from the procedure and to maintain quality;
- measurable quality objectives which reflect our service aims;
- management reviews of audit results, customer feedback and complaints and;
- efficient and courteous service.

The facility currently has NATA accreditation for ISO/IEC 17025 (2005) and AS/ISO 15189(2012) interpreted for research using CITAC Guide CG2 Quality Assurance for Research and Development and Non-Routine Analysis to support our quality service standards, for more information on this please contact us.

Subcontracting

Work may occasionally be subcontracted to other parties including:

- projects that require technical expertise or processes not available at the APF;
- large projects that extend beyond the APF's capacity;
- during periods of peak workload and;
- due to unforeseen circumstances.

In the event that the APF subcontracts any work the client will be notified prior to commencement of the subcontracted work. The APF takes due steps to ensure that subcontractors are competent and of a high quality by reviewing the company's certificates of accreditation and/or registration, check of sample results or audits where appropriate.

Typical work that may be subcontracted includes:

- Sequencing
- Oligonucleotide preparation
- Courier services
- Health screening of animals

If a client selects a particular subcontractor, the APF will not bear responsibility for the results.

Privacy

At the APF, we are committed to protecting your privacy.

We have put in place appropriate physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and help prevent unauthorised access, maintain data security and ensure the correct use of service information.

Revision History

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Description
4.1	23/05/2016	HOAS – S.Fowler	Updated Genomics timeframes and added reference to ISO 15189
5.0	DRAFT	HoAS – S.Fowler	Updated definition of multi-user strains and single user strains, added APB timeframes and communication re projects Improved grammar and incorporated price list descriptions from 2016