

# Standard Score Sheet for the assessment of wellbeing in mice

[Animal facility or facilities:]

Project title:			
Animal Ethics #		Name of contact person:	
Chief investigator:		Contact number:	
Research Group:		After hours number:	

Scoring of wellbeing will be performed relative to the following assessment criteria:

Criteria	Score			
	0	1 (mild)	2 (moderate)	3 (severe)
Activity and responsiveness	Normal	Mild/slight reduction in activity relative to normal or previous observations	Isolated from cage-mates or obvious reduction in activity and responsiveness relative to normal or previous observations; alternatively, there is increased response to stimulus (e.g. appears agitated, twitching, easily started, or photophobic)	Stationary while awake for prolonged periods (>15min); when nudged, does not move, or makes poor attempts to move; collapsed and unable to right itself; persistent and prolonged fitting/trembling (>1 min)
Facial grimace (see image 1)	Not present	Facial grimace is subtle or inconsistent (i.e. only 1 to 2 of the "indicators" demonstrated in image 1 are moderately present)	Facial grimace is moderate (i.e. at least 3 of the 5 "indicators" are "moderately present")	Facial grimace is obvious (i.e. at least 3 of the 5 "indicators" are "obviously present") however, there must also be indication of other generalised symptoms (e.g. hunching, reduced activity)
Coat condition (see image 2)	Normal	Coat does not appear entirely smooth, clean and silky (i.e. the coat appears slightly 'rough')	Some indication of piloerection is present (i.e. 'rough' coat), but it is not obvious over the mouse's entire surface area	Generalised piloerection, i.e. obvious, very rough coat over majority of the body's surface area (as demonstrated in image 2)
Body position/posture (see image 3)	Normal	Mild hunching (see image 3)	Moderate hunching	Severe hunching: or arching and writhing (despite analgesia having been provided)
Respiratory function	Normal	-	Increased respiratory effort (mild increases in respiratory rate, increased abdominal movement)	Increased respiratory effort compromising normal behaviours (i.e. the animal is lethargic, isolated and inappropriately responsive); or has slowed respiratory rate and gasping; or is open mouth breathing; or has blue mucous membranes or extremities; or noisy breathing (e.g. respiratory "clicking")
Body weight loss*	<5%	5-9% (relative to body weight recorded at the start of the experiment i.e. day 0)	10-14%	≥15%

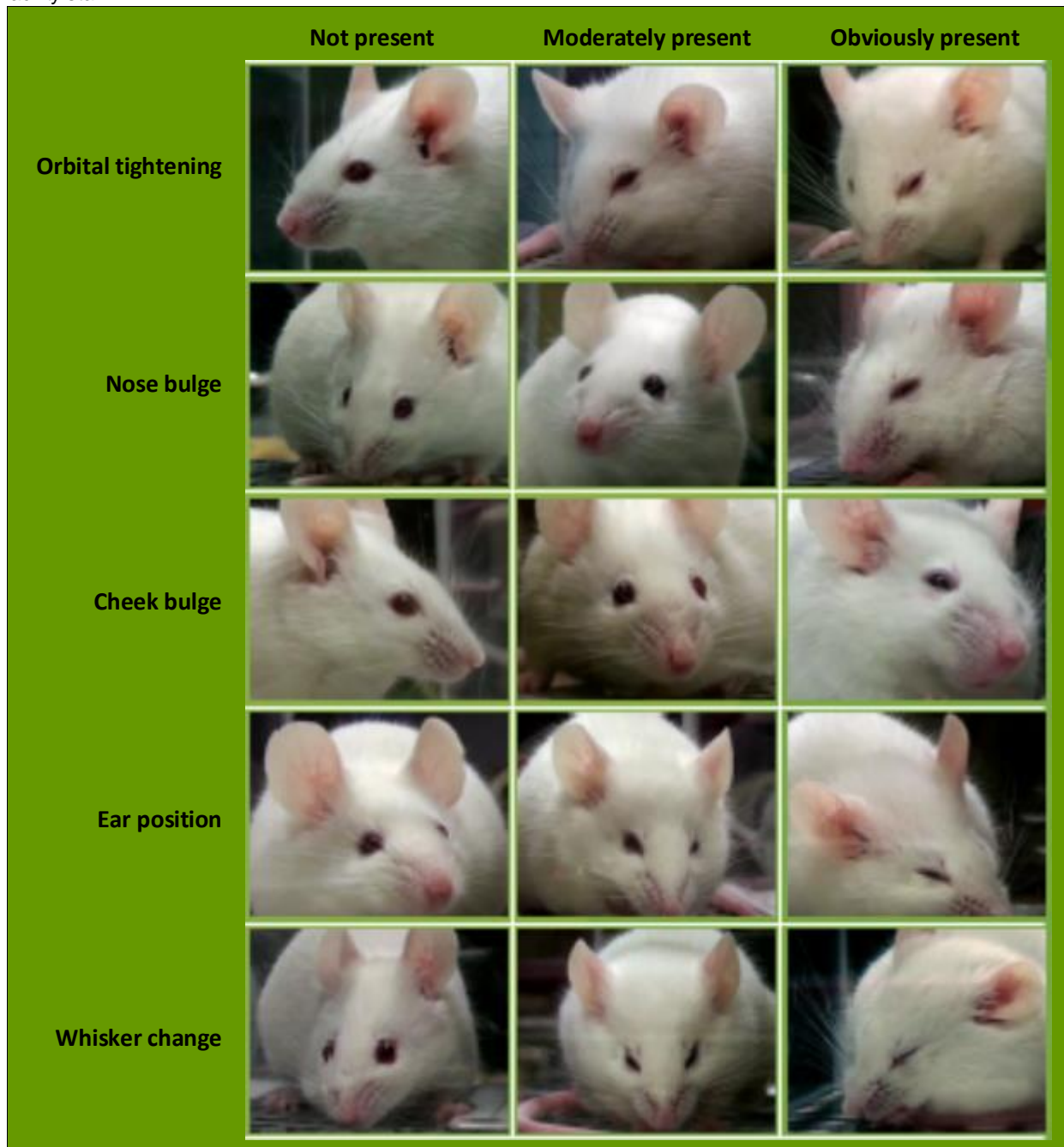
\*please note: body weight may not need to be measured at each monitoring point, particularly if monitoring is occurring frequently (as the procedure can be stressful for mice). A common-sense approach must be taken e.g. if the mouse is gradually developing symptoms and is subsequently being monitored daily or twice daily, it may be appropriate to weigh the mouse twice a week and at all other monitoring points record a body condition score instead (see image 4) – but using the most recent body weight loss score to calculate the cumulative score. In experimental mice that are asymptomatic, there is rarely reason to measure body weight more frequently than once a week.

Cumulative Score:	Action, relative to cumulative score:
0	= no action (in addition to routine care and monitoring)
1 to 4	= symptoms observed, monitor at least daily (including all animals of similar treatment groups), if symptoms are unexpected seek veterinary advice
5 to 11	= monitor at least twice daily, provide food/water supplementation (e.g. wet mash or gel pack on the cage floor), if symptoms are unexpected seek veterinary advice
> 11	= euthanasia is required (unless otherwise advised by a facility veterinarian)

\*\*\* A score of 3 in any one category = euthanasia is required (unless otherwise advised by a facility veterinarian) \*\*

Comments:

**Image 1. The 5 “indicators” of facial grimace, as per Mouse Grimace Scale:** <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/grimacescales>  
 Please note: facial grimace can be subtle and requires experience to be able to assess accurately. If you are not comfortable assessing this parameter, you must seek training and support for this purpose – contact your Chief Investigator and the relevant animal facility staff.


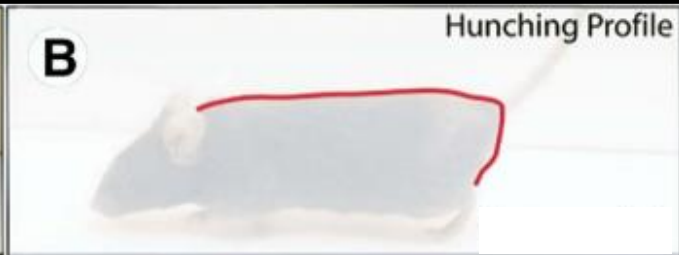










**Image 2. Score 3 (severe) for the criteria: “coat condition”.** This mouse has diffuse piloerection, image source: <https://www.humane-endpoints.info/en>



**Image 3. Hunching, scored from normal (score 0) to severe (score 3), modified from:** [Sevcik MA, Jonas BM, Lindsay TH, et al. Endogenous opioids inhibit early-stage pancreatic pain in a mouse model of pancreatic cancer. \*Gastroenterology\*. 2006;131\(3\):900–910.](#)

Please note: ear tag-identifiers (as displayed in this image) are generally not considered appropriate for use in mice, as there are other, more refined methods of individual identification.

<b>A</b> Degree of Hunching 	<b>B</b> Hunching Profile 	Normal (score 0)
<b>C</b> 	<b>D</b> 	Mild hunching (score 1)
<b>E</b> 	<b>F</b> 	Moderate hunching (score 2)
<b>G</b> 	<b>H</b> 	Severe hunching (score 3)
<b>I</b> 	<b>J</b> 	Severe hunching (score 3)

#### Image 4: Mouse, Body Condition Score reference.

“Body Condition Scoring (BC) is a quick, easy and reliable method for assessing mouse health. It utilizes a scoring system of 1 to 5 with 3 being the optimal condition, 1 being emaciated and 5 being obese.” Source: [Burkholder T, Foltz C, Karlsson E, Linton CG, Smith JM. Health Evaluation of Experimental Laboratory Mice. \*Curr Protoc Mouse Biol.\* 2012;2:145–165.](#) [Body condition scores should be used with this score sheet “Standard Score Sheet for the assessment of wellbeing in mice” to avoid excessive handling (through repeated weighing) when performing frequent monitoring. Body condition scores complement body weight measurements; however, their use does not contribute to the score sheet’s “cumulative score”]

