

# ***Rigor and Reproducibility in Animal Studies***

## **February 24, 2026**

### **Agenda**

*All speakers are confirmed and will present in person unless otherwise noted.*

- 8:00 a.m.      Check-In**
- 9:00 a.m.      Introduction to the Workshop and to the Topic of Rigor and Reproducibility Challenges in Animal Studies**  
Jeff Everitt, DVM, DACVP, FIATP  
Professor (Emeritus) Pathology  
Duke University
- 9:15 a.m.      KEYNOTE: Societal Expectation of Quality, Rigor and Reproducibility in Preclinical Research**  
E. Andrew Balas, MD, PhD  
President, Friends of NLM  
Professor and Lead  
Biomedical Research Innovation Laboratory  
Augusta University
- 10:15 a.m.      Break**
- 10:30 a.m.      Experimental Design of Animal Experiments & How the Experimental Design Assistant Helps Implement Best Practices (*Virtual Presentation*)**  
Esther Pearl, PhD  
Programme Manager - Experimental Design  
The National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs)
- 12:00 p.m.      Lunch**
- 1:30 p.m.      What Influences the Data in Animal Studies – Intrinsic Factors**  
Rani Sellers, DVM, PhD, DACVP  
Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2:30 p.m.      What Influences the Data in Animal Studies – Extrinsic Factors**  
David Kurtz  
Head, Quality Assurance Laboratory  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

- 3:30 p.m. Study Quality and How to Minimize Bias in Animal Studies to Promote Use and Utility**  
Andrew Rooney, PhD  
Acting Chief  
Integrative Health Assessment Branch  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
- 4:15 p.m. Pathology and Biosampling Approaches to Support Animal Study Rigor & Quality**  
Hannah Atkins, DVM, PhD, DACVP  
Research Associate Professor  
Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 5:00 p.m. Wrap-Up and Review of Day 1**
- 5:15 p.m. Adjourn/Networking**

***Rigor and Reproducibility in Animal Studies***  
**February 25, 2026**  
**Working Agenda**

*All speakers are confirmed and will present in person unless otherwise noted.*

- 8:30 a.m. How to Optimally Plan for and Report Animal Studies**  
Jeff Everitt, DVM, DACVP, FIATP  
Professor (Emeritus) Pathology  
Duke University
- 9:30 a.m. Animal Model Quality Assessment and Translational Issues in Animal Research (Part 1)**  
Brian Berridge, DVM, PhD, DACVP  
Principal Consultant  
B2 Pathology Solutions, LLC
- 10:15 a.m. Break**
- 10:30 a.m. Animal Model Quality Assessment and Translational Issues in Animal Research (Part 2)**  
Brian Berridge, DVM, PhD, DACVP  
Principal Consultant  
B2 Pathology Solutions, LLC
- 11:15 a.m. New Technology Approaches for Increased Rigor in Animal Studies**  
Jesse D. Cushman, PhD  
Director

Neurobehavioral Core Laboratory  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

**12:00 p.m.      Lunch**

**1:30 p.m.      Integrated Use of NAMs as Complements to Animal Research**

Stephen S. Ferguson, PhD  
Chemist  
Mechanistic Toxicology Branch  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

**2:15 p.m.      AI-Driven Approaches to Validate NAMs and Reduce Animal Dependency in Biomedical Research *(Virtual Presentation)***

Melissa Haendel, PhD  
Director of the Translational and Integrative Sciences Laboratory  
Sarah Graham Kenan Distinguished Professor,  
Director of Precision Health & Translational Informatics,  
Deputy Director of Computational Science – NC TRACS at  
University of North Carolina Department of Genetics

**3:00 p.m.      Institutional Strategies for Increasing Quality and Value in Animal Modeling**

Craig Fletcher, DVM, PhD  
Professor and Vice Chair of Comparative Medicine  
Associate Vice Chancellor of Research  
Director, Division of Comparative Medicine  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**3:45 p.m.      Break**

**4:00 p.m.      Open Panel Discussion on Topics of Study Integration**

Dondrae Coble, DVM, DACLAM, CertAqV  
Chief, Comparative Medicine Branch  
Attending Veterinarian  
National Institutes of Health

**5:15 p.m.      Adjourn**