Definitions:

Standard Food Intake: Animals should be fed palatable, non-contaminated diets that meet their nutritional and behavioral needs at least daily, or according to their particular requirements.

Standard Water Intake: Animals should have access to potable, uncontaminated drinking water according to their particular requirements.

Food or Water Restriction: Any deviation from the standard food or water intake.

Food Deprivation: Withholding food for longer than 24 hours for simple stomach animals, or longer than 48 hours for ruminants.

Water Deprivation: Withholding water for longer than 12 hours.

PACUC Policy

Food or water restriction/deprivation involving animals used for research, teaching, or testing, other than pre-surgical fasting, may be necessary for some physiological, neuroscience and behavior studies. Because these procedures may cause more than momentary or slight distress to the animals, the Purdue Animal Care and Use Committee established the following policy.

1. Dietary or water restriction/deprivation must be scientifically justified and approved in the PACUC protocol.

2. Alternatives to food or water restriction/deprivation must be considered in the PACUC protocol search for alternatives.

3. The least restriction/deprivation that will achieve the scientific objective should be used.

4. The amount of food and water consumed daily must be recorded.

5. Animals must be weighed prior to food restriction/deprivation. Once restriction/deprivation has begun, animals must be weighed at least weekly as a minimum, or more often for animals requiring greater restriction/deprivation and weights recorded. Body weights must not drop below 80% of normal (taking into account normal anticipated growth for that animal). Note that rodents, especially mice, have a very high metabolism and gastrointestinal transit time and can become dehydrated very quickly.

6. A program for monitoring animals must be described in the PACUC protocol. This should include physiological and behavioral parameters for assessment of pain and/or distress and describe criteria such as degree of weight loss/dehydration indicating a need for temporary or permanent removal of the animals from the experiment.
7. Special attention should be given to ensure that animals consume a balanced diet as food consumption may decrease with fluid restriction.

References

1. The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals 8th Ed.