

# UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

## ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

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#### 1.0 Preamble

The Animal Care Committee (ACC) at the University of Waterloo is a constituted committee of the Senate Graduate and Research Council, and reports directly to the Vice President, Research and International, as the senior administrator for the animal care program as required by the Canadian Council for Animal Care (CCAC). The ACC operates to fulfil the University's legal and ethical responsibilities concerning the use of live, non-human vertebrate animals (hereafter referred to as animals) in research and teaching/training. The ACC is also empowered to ensure that the quality and operation of the University of Waterloo's animal housing facilities, and the care and use of animals in research and teaching/training in accordance with international, national, provincial, and institutional guidelines and regulations. The guidelines are those established by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and by the University of Waterloo; the regulations are those under the Province of Ontario Animals for Research Act as enforced by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Agribusiness (OMAFRA). Other professional and ethical codes and guidelines are consulted as needed.

The jurisdiction of the ACC extends to all teaching/training and research activities involving animals conducted on or off-campus by University of Waterloo faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students and staff.

#### 2.0 Membership of the Animal Care Committee (ACC)

The ACC shall consist of the following members:

- A minimum of four faculty members with diverse expertise and experience in different animal care species and use, including at least one field researcher using animals and one with expertise in statistical methodologies. Members may have more than one area of expertise.
- An institutional staff or faculty member whose normal activities, past or present, do not depend on or involve animal use for research or teaching/training
- Two persons who represent the interests and concerns of the community and have no affiliation with the institution (i.e., community members)
- A Veterinarian experienced in experimental animal care and use and experienced in laboratory animal medicine (ex-officio)
- Two graduate students who have current or prior animal research experience and/or experience as a teaching assistant in animal laboratories
- Animal facility technician(s) or manager(s) (ex-officio)
- Director, Office of Research Ethics (ex-officio)
- Manager (or designate), Safety Office (ex-officio)
- Manager, Research Ethics (ex-officio)

Research using animals conducted on Indigenous lands including First Nations reserves, Métis settlements, and Inuit people of Nunavik will also be reviewed by the Manager, Indigenous Research Ethics. The Manager, Indigenous Research Ethics will attend the ACC meeting when these protocols are reviewed.

The ACC must reflect gender diversity and therefore, will seek a membership including a mix of at minimum both men and women, and where possible other gender minorities. The ACC will always strive for the membership to represent diverse perspectives that go beyond gender including but not limited to race, cultural backgrounds, disability, lived experiences, and different

ways of knowing and being. The ACC upholds the Ontario Human Rights Code prohibiting actions that discriminates against a person becoming an ACC member based on a protected ground in a protected social Area.

\*The ACC may seek the confidential opinion or advice of an ad hoc advisor/reviewer from among University of Waterloo faculty or a confidential external consultant on a particular field research application to ensure it has the necessary background information and knowledge to review the ethical acceptability of the application.

### **3.0 Terms of Office of the Animal Care Committee**

- 3.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed by the Vice-President, Research and International, in consultation with the Director, Office of Research Ethics (ORE) and the respective Department chairs and/or Dean. The Chair and Vice Chair will be selected from among the membership of the ACC. The Chair will have a minimum of one term's prior experience as a member of the ACC.
- 3.2 The role of the Chair is to be accountable for the overall operation of the ACC and the compliance component of the University of Waterloo animal care program. The Vice-Chair may discharge the responsibilities of the Chair when the Chair is unable to do so, discharge responsibilities assigned by the Chair and assist in the overall operation of the ACC and the compliance component of the University of Waterloo animal care program, as requested.
- 3.3 The members of the ACC (except ex-officio) are appointed by the Vice-President, Research and International (or delegate) on the recommendation of the Director, ORE.
- 3.4 Each member of the ACC will serve for a three-year term. This term normally is renewed once.
- 3.5 The Manager, Research Ethics shall serve as Secretary to the ACC.
- 3.6 All members of the ACC are full voting members

### **4.0 Frequency of Meetings of the Animal Care Committee**

- 4.1 The Committee will normally meet eleven times per year. Additional meetings may be called, as necessary.
- 4.2 For the meeting to proceed, a quorum (i.e., 50% of the membership plus one) must be present. The quorum shall include the Veterinarian and one community member.
- 4.3 Detailed minutes of each meeting will be taken outlining ACC discussions, decisions, and recommendations for revisions with respect to each protocol under review as well as procedural and other issues related to the care and use of animals. Decisions are reached using a consensus model. A copy of the minutes is uploaded and available at the next meeting. A copy will also be provided to the Vice-President, Research and International, upon request.
- 4.4 In addition to meetings, members of the ACC will conduct, at least annually, one site visit to each of the animal facilities. The ACC can request additional site visits of facilities if they wish to see the facilities earlier than the annual visit. The Veterinarian, or a subset of the ACC will also conduct visits to each facility on a more regular basis. The observations from these visits, together with any recommendations and/or

commendations, will be discussed at the subsequent ACC meeting and included in the minutes. A report will be provided to the administration of each animal facility, as required.

- 4.5 A declaration of non-disclosure and confidentiality form will be signed by members upon starting their term on the ACC. This includes but is not limited to discussions at the ACC meetings and facility site visits and any documentation uploaded to the research ethics system. This information may be oral, written, or electronic and must be kept confidential for a period of 5 years after association with the ACC.

## **5.0 Responsibilities and Duties of the Animal Care Committee**

The ACC has responsibilities in the following areas:

### **5.1 *Ethics Review Mandate***

- 5.1.1 All research or teaching/training activities involving animals may not begin, or animals may not be acquired, without prior ethics review and approval of a written animal use protocol. The content of the animal use protocol must comply with current guidelines and standards within the field. These will be provided during orientation and updated regularly on the MS Teams site. The ethics review and approval process, which is conducted by the ACC, ensures all protocols comply with the requirements of the CCAC, the Animals for Research Act and the University of Waterloo Guidelines for the Care and Use of Animals in Research and Teaching.
- 5.1.2 ACC Procedures will be established for the submission, consideration, approval or disapproval of animal research and teaching/training protocols.
- 5.1.3 All research and teaching/training projects involving animals will be reviewed to determine the proposed procedures are conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and guidelines. The decision of the ACC, and any required revisions, will be communicated in writing to the researchers and a follow up determination will be identified to ensure the required revisions are received.
- 5.1.4 Complete, accurate, and up to date records of the protocols and review process are kept in an online database. Standard operating procedures are reviewed every three years.
- 5.1.5 All amendments and renewals, to approved protocols will be reviewed and approved by an ACC subcommittee. The sub-committee is comprised of 7 ACC members including: ACC Chair; Director, ORE; Veterinarian, Animal Facility Technician, Animal Facility Manager, Manager, Research Ethics and one community member. Details related to these amendments and renewals are presented to the full ACC within the next month's minutes.
- 5.1.6 A new animal use protocol must be submitted for all ongoing research after three consecutive annual renewals.
- 5.1.7 Once approved an animal use protocol will be monitored throughout its life through a post approval monitoring process as outlined in the ACC standard operating procedures.

### **5.2 *Scientific and Educational Merit Review Mandate***

- 5.2.1 All research projects (including pilot studies) involving animals must undergo prior review. Protocols that are funded and undergo scientific merit review as part of the peer review

process established by the granting/funding agency, are not required to undergo additional scientific merit review.

- 5.2.2 Projects conducted for an undergraduate/graduate level course, laboratory assignments, or training required for laboratory/field animal procedures, must undergo review for educational merit. The ACC itself does not conduct either scientific or educational merit reviews. However, the ACC is responsible for ensuring that information about the requirements for scientific or educational merit review is communicated to researchers.
- 5.2.3 As the delegated senior administrator for the animal care use program, the Vice President, Research and International (or delegate) is responsible for ensuring that a process is established to ensure research for which animals will be used has been independently reviewed by experts and for ensuring that:
- Peer reviewers are identified for each project that has not already been peer reviewed
  - Any concerns raised by the reviews are addressed before scientific or educational merit is confirmed and the application submitted for ACC ethical review.
- 5.2.4 The scientific or educational merit review process(es) shall be conducted prior to the ethics review process and an Assessment of Scientific or Educational Merit to use animals in research or teaching/training must be completed, approved, and appended to the ethics review application to which it refers.
- 5.3 *Animal Welfare Mandate*
- 5.3.1 Any procedure considered to result in an animal experiencing unnecessary distress or pain will be stopped by the Veterinarian on behalf of the ACC.
- 5.3.2 Any use of animals for purposes other than those approved, or use of non-approved procedures will be stopped by the Chair and Veterinarian on behalf of the ACC.
- 5.3.3 Any animal that is in pain or distress that cannot be alleviated will be humanely euthanized by the Veterinarian or an Animal Health Technician on behalf of the Veterinarian.
- 5.3.4 Adequate veterinary care shall be provided to all animals regardless of the stage in lifespan, and that access to veterinary care is available at all times.
- 5.3.5 Animal health technicians shall work collaboratively with the ACC to ensure animal welfare is maintained and adherences to institutional, CCAC guidelines, and best practices for laboratory animal welfare.
- 5.3.6 A set of standard operating procedures will be developed, and reviewed on a regular basis, for emergencies, animal husbandry, facility and equipment management, alleviation of pain or distress, proper and effective use of anaesthesia and analgesia, pre-and post-operative care and monitoring, procedures for euthanasia, and other topics as required.
- 5.3.7 A copy of the standard operating procedures will be available to Animal Health Technicians, animal researchers, and course instructors and these procedures will be regularly reviewed.
- 5.3.8 A crisis management program shall be in place for the animal facilities and the animal care and use program, in conjunction with the institution's crisis management plan.

#### 5.4 *Animal Care Facilities Mandate*

- 5.4.1 The ACC Chair and Veterinarian will have full access to all the animal housing facilities (including satellite locations) and animal procedure spaces (including pre-approved research laboratory spaces for animal use) at any time.
- 5.4.2 The ACC shall ensure animals are held or used only in areas that have been inspected and approved for this purpose by the CCAC and OMAFA and according to standard operating procedures for the housing or holding of animals
- 5.4.3 The level of security in the animal facilities is appropriate for the protection of the animals housed therein and personnel working with animals, and this is reviewed on a regular basis.
- 5.4.4 Reports and recommendations regarding necessary development/improvements, maintenance and use of the animal facilities are provided to departmental administration which oversees each facility.

#### 5.5 *Education Mandate*

- 5.5.1 The ACC will ensure on-going education consistent with the CCAC *guidelines on: institutional animal user training* is provided for all personnel who will handle animals (i.e., principal investigators, course instructors, post-doctoral fellows, research and technical staff, graduate and undergraduate students) on issues related to the proper care and use of animals in teaching/training and research, including but not limited to, the ethics of animal experimentation focused around the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) species-appropriate anaesthesia and analgesia, aseptic surgical techniques, establishment of humane endpoints, surgical monitoring, species-appropriate euthanasia methods and legislation applicable to laboratory use and care.
- 5.5.2 All personnel engaged in the care or maintenance of animals will be adequately trained and qualified and encouraged to attend in-house or external continuing education opportunities, as appropriate.
- 5.5.3 The ACC will liaise with the academic community to ensure researchers and instructors receive current information pertaining to provincial regulations and federal guidelines as well as current institutional policies and practices.
- 5.5.4 The ACC will work with and make recommendations as needed to appropriate committees within the institution to (a) provide information to the public on matters concerning animal welfare and research and teaching/training activities involving animals at the institution, and (b) ensure the safety and security of both the animals and personnel working with the animals.
- 5.5.5 The ACC will encourage the use of alternatives to animals in teaching/training and research activities, wherever possible.

#### **6.0 General**

- 6.1 The Animal Use Data Forms are accurately completed and submitted on an annual basis and by the required dates to the CCAC and OMAFA.

## **7.0 Reconsideration and Appeal Mechanisms Associated with the Animal Care Committee's Decisions**

### *7.1 Reconsideration or Informal Appeal*

A researcher or instructor who disagrees with the ethics review feedback and/or decision of the ACC on his/her research, teaching or training protocol may request reconsideration of this decision in writing to the ACC. The reconsideration request with any additional supporting documents will be sent to the Manager, Research Ethics, who will bring this to the attention of other members of the ACC for discussion at the meeting immediately following receipt of the reconsideration request. The ACC will review the written document and any additional supporting materials. An informal meeting may be called between the ACC and the researcher or instructor to further discuss the matter. Following consideration of all additional information, the ACC will reach a decision as to whether the additional information/explanation provided will result in a change in the ACC's decision. Every attempt will be made by the ACC to reach a resolution by informal means.

### *7.2 Formal Appeal*

If a resolution of the matter has not been reached through the reconsideration process, the matter will be referred to the Vice-President, Research and International (or delegate), for opinion and decision. The Vice-President, Research International (or delegate), will review documentation provided by the ACC and the researcher/instructor, and will consult with others as required, including but not limited to, members of the ACC, the researcher/instructor, and the CCAC. Subsequently, the Vice-President, Research and International (or delegate), will issue a decision on the matter in writing with copies to the researcher /instructor and ACC. This decision will be final.