



STATEMENT ON ANIMAL USE IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

The University of Waterloo is a research-intensive institution which supports the ethical and responsible use of animals in research for the purpose of obtaining knowledge that has the potential to benefit the health and endeavors of humans and the health and conservation of animals. The use of animals for scientific and technical education and training is also supported in situations where no alternatives exist. The University of Waterloo operates in compliance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care and the Animals for Research Act of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs which regulate the use of laboratory animals in research and teaching. Further, the university is proactively committed to the reduction and replacement of animal use and the refinement of procedures wherever possible, in teaching and research.

All research and teaching activities at the University of Waterloo (the University) that involve use of live non-human vertebrate animals must be reviewed and receive ethics approval by the institutional Animal Care Committee (Committee) before the work can begin. The Committee is multidisciplinary and is comprised of animal researchers, non-animal researchers, community members not associated with the university, animal health technicians and/or laboratory instructors, graduate students and a laboratory animal veterinarian. The Committee meets eleven times per year to review protocols. Each protocol undergoes rigorous review and scrutiny as described by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC). This includes ensuring that the procedures comply with guidelines of the CCAC and the University of Waterloo as well as regulations under the Animals for Research Act; that the species to be used are appropriate for the study; that only the minimum number of animals necessary for the study will be used; and that species-appropriate procedures, anaesthesia and analgesia are used to alleviate pain or discomfort both during and after the study. Only projects that receive prior ethics approval may proceed and according to an approved protocol. The scientific merit of all research protocols is peer-reviewed. As well, all teaching protocols undergo review for educational merit. While ethics approval of protocols has a four-year duration, each one is reviewed annually and approval continued, if appropriate. Any changes to approved protocols must receive prior ethics approval. Animal housing facilities are monitored through regular inspections to ensure compliance with guidelines.

From time to time, animal cadavers or tissue may be required for teaching purposes. In these instances, instructors and departments should first ensure that no appropriate alternative to the use of an animal cadaver exists e.g., computer simulation. In situations where no alternative exists and the cadaver or tissue is required for classroom teaching purposes, it should be handled professionally, respectfully, and ethically. Failure to handle animal cadavers or tissues appropriately will be treated as a serious breach of this policy and may result in significant disciplinary sanctions being applied.

The Office of Research Ethics (ORE) through its Director provides centralized administration for the Committee and for the animal research ethics operation. In addition, it is responsible for developing guidelines and procedures for the ethics review process and revises these regularly taking into account changing societal values, evolution in the area of animal research ethics and evolving provincial, federal and professional ethics requirements. Within the ORE, educational programs, workshops and materials are developed and delivered to all UW undergraduate and graduate students, animal health technicians, research staff, post-doctoral fellows and faculty involved in research with animals.

The ORE and the Committee are committed to assisting researchers in identifying, considering and addressing the issues of animal well-being inherent in their research, recognizing that all members of the University community share a common commitment to maintaining high standards in research with animals. The University, through the ORE and the Committee, endorses the importance of the ethics review and approval processes as a mechanism to facilitate and ensure the conduct of ethical and responsible research with animals. The University also recognizes the important role animals have played in the past, and the valuable contribution they will continue to make, to the advancement of biomedical and other types of research. Thus, the University is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards in the care, well-being, quality of life and use of its animals.