

Animal Care Committee (ACC) Terms of Reference

Overview

Ethics approval must be obtained before any use of animals (vertebrates or cephalopods) for research, teaching or testing is undertaken. A dynamic and collaborative peer review process is vital to the animal care and use program. Senior administrators at all levels of the institution should acknowledge, support and, wherever possible, recognize the work of current ACC members and assist with identification and recruitment of new members. Consulting veterinarians and staff who serve on ACC, like researchers who are also reviewers, must be able to provide support and advocacy for both scientific excellence and ethical and humane use of animals according to CCAC guidelines. The ACC and the PIs share responsibility for the effectiveness of the university animal care and use program.

Purpose

1. Define the structure and mandate of the Animal Care Committee at Concordia University of Edmonton (“Concordia”).
2. Describe the membership of the ACC.
3. Describe the authority, roles and responsibilities of the ACC.
4. Describe decision-making and review requirements for ethics review of animal use.

Structure and Mandate

1. The Animal Care Committee is established by and reports to the Vice-President (Research and International).
2. The ACC provides an annual report to the Vice-President (Research and International) on its activities.
3. The ACC will review and assess animal use protocols, according to the *Animal Care and Use Committee Structure, Application and Review Process*, the *CCAC policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation* and CCAC guidelines on animal use protocol review as well as any other relevant CCAC guidelines and policy statements.
4. The ACC is mandated to approve, reject, require or propose modifications, or terminate the approval of any proposed or ongoing animal use for research, teaching, testing, or display at Concordia.

5. The ACC shall function impartially, provide a fair and constructive review with respect to an application and provide reasoned and appropriately documented opinions and decisions.
6. The ACC should make decisions on the ethical acceptability of animal use in an efficient and timely manner, and shall communicate all decisions in writing, in print or by electronic means.
7. The ACC will work with the Laboratory Manager to ensure compliance with its decisions and with the conditions set out in approved animal use protocols.
8. The ACC will receive and follow-up unanticipated adverse event reports as required.
9. The ACC will conduct an annual on-site review of any facilities or area in which animals are used related to the animal use protocols it reviews. The ACC will develop alternatives to on-site reviews for research conducted in the field.
10. The ACC will implement strategies and recommendations arising from post-approval monitoring activities as required.
11. The ACC will contribute to and participate in CCAC site visits and assessments and other such assessments as required.

Membership

1. The ACC Chair will typically be selected from among the current scientific/faculty membership of the ACC and will be appointed by the Vice-President (Research and International).
2. Normally, ACC members will be appointed for terms of no less than two years and no more than four years, renewable to a maximum of eight consecutive years of service.
3. The voting membership will include:
 - i. Three faculty/scientific members, which may include the chair, experienced in animal care and use and representative of the animal use commonly reviewed by the ACC;
 - ii. A veterinarian experienced in experimental animal care and use, who may serve longer than 8 years;
 - iii. An institutional member whose normal activities, past or present, do not depend on or involve animal use for research, teaching or testing;

- iv. At least one and preferably two or more person(s) representing community interests and concerns, who has (have) had no affiliation with the institution, who has (have) not been significantly involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing. Community representatives may serve more than 8 consecutive years;
 - v. Technical staff representation;
 - vi. Student representation;
 - vii. The ACC Coordinator, although not a voting member of ACC, will provide advice and recommendations to ACC on animal use protocols, CCAC requirements and ACC processes.
4. Quorum will constitute the Chair, one veterinarian, one community member, at least one scientific faculty member, and one technical staff member.
 5. ACC members shall disclose any potential conflict of interest and recuse themselves from meetings or discussions about animal use protocols on which they are named.

Authority, Roles and Responsibilities

1. The ACC has the authority, on behalf of the Vice-President (Research and International), to:
 - a) Stop any objectionable procedure if it considers that unnecessary distress or pain is being experienced by an animal;
 - b) Stop immediately any use of animals which deviates from the approved use, any unapproved procedure, or any procedure causing unforeseen pain or distress to animals; and
 - c) Have an animal killed humanely if pain or distress caused to the animal is not part of the approved protocol and cannot be alleviated. This authority is delegated to the veterinarian, who has the authority to treat, remove from a study, or euthanize an animal if necessary, according to the veterinarian's professional judgment, but will attempt to contact the animal user and ACC chair first.
2. The ACC will ensure that no research or testing project or teaching program involving animals is commenced, or holding of animals for display without prior ACC approval of a written protocol, and that no animals will be acquired before such approval.

3. The Chair of the ACC and the veterinarian must have access at any time to all areas where animals are or may be held or used.
4. The ACC will ensure that ACC members and animal users are provided training and given opportunity to become familiar with CCAC guidelines and policies, provincial and federal laws and requirements, and institutional policies.
5. The ACC will ensure that animal users and animal care personnel are qualified and trained for the species and techniques they use, and receive continuing education as needed to meet CCAC guidelines.
6. The ACC will ensure that animals are appropriately cared for at all stages of their life and in all situations under Concordia's control, including 7 day a week care and formal arrangements for veterinary consultation.
7. The ACC is responsible for determining and working to correct breaches of compliance with approved animal use protocols and Standard Operating Procedures.
8. The ACC is responsible for reviewing institutional animal care and use policies, and any policies for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures.
9. The ACC will establish procedures for post approval monitoring of animal use protocols and define the roles of ACC members and other members of the institution in this process.
10. The ACC will liaise with Concordia personnel or outside personnel as required to ensure Biosafety, Hazardous Materials, or other safety considerations are addressed.

Decision Making and Review Requirements

1. ACCs will typically meet four times a year in person or as required at the call of the Chair.
2. The ACC will ensure reviews of animal use will be done using an animal use protocol form that meets CCAC guidelines, including information with regard to the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement alternatives) of animal use.
3. The ACC will ensure that each research project has been found to have scientific merit and proposals to use animals in teaching receive pedagogical merit, through independent peer review according to CCAC guidelines.

4. The ACC will review all animal use protocols and any associated Standard Operating Procedures according to CCAC policies and guidelines, and ensure that all procedures comply with CCAC guidelines, and if at variance then require justification on scientific grounds.
5. The ACC will require animal users to update their protocols with any modifications and will review and approve any modifications before they are implemented.
6. Interim approvals are discouraged and will be the exception, however if they are required, the review must be made by a subcommittee including the Chair and Veterinarian, and must be ratified at the next full ACC meeting.
7. The ACC will require animal users to report any unanticipated problems or complications and any steps taken to address the problems.
8. The ACC will review renewals for all protocols annually, including number of animals used, number of animals needed for the year to come, a progress report, a report on adequacy of endpoints or any complications, refinements, and any other changes from the original protocol.
9. The ACC will require submission of a new protocol after a maximum of three consecutive annual renewals.
10. Minor modifications (e.g. a change in personnel, a small percentage increase in animals, a non-invasive procedure) can be approved by the Chair of the ACC. Major modifications must be reviewed by the entire committee and if they are found to be extensive or significant the ACC may require submission of a new protocol.
11. ACC meetings, including tours of facilities, and deliberations and decisions will be documented in meeting minutes and correspondence.
12. Decisions will, to the extent possible, be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, decisions must be supported by a simple majority of eligible voting members.
13. ACC records and discussions are confidential unless otherwise indicated.