

***Post Approval Monitoring Policy  
Veterinary Rounds for Field Studies***

***Approved: August 9, 2012***

***Goal***

The Animal Use Subcommittee's (AUS) CCAC-mandated Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) policy, developed in conjunction with Western's research community, provides the roadmap for ensuring appropriate animal care and use oversight at Western and its affiliates in compliance with national, provincial and institutional policies. In the absence of specific CCAC guidelines for post-approval monitoring of field research, the *Post-Approval Monitoring Policy - Veterinary Rounds for Field Studies*, one component of the AUS's PAM policy, will provide one venue for ensuring that researchers and their staff involved in field studies are conducting animal-related activities in accordance with their respective approved *Animal Use Protocols (AUPs)* and in compliance with applicable regulations.

The primary objectives of veterinary rounds of fields studies are to seek to fully understand the work being conducted, to dialogue with those working with the field animals, to support research by maintaining open dialogue with animal users, to offer assistance in correcting protocol drift, to offer advice concerning procedural refinements or additional training requirements, and to learn what refinements scientists have initiated that can be shared with Western's research community.

***Scope***

This policy is specific to field studies - the scientific study of free-living wild animals in which the subjects are studied in their natural or semi-natural habitat – associated with Western University. PAM veterinary rounds for field studies, in alignment with the principle of arms-length assessment of animal procedures, will be administered by the PAM office. Main elements include:

- advance scheduling in concert with field research timeframes,
- observation by an AUS-appointed arms-length representative of selected animal procedures through a video medium provided by the research group,
- a follow-up discussion with the research group directly involved in and/or responsible for animal care and use while in the field, and
- a follow-up *Veterinary Rounds for Field Studies* summary report.

AUPs involving field studies will undergo veterinary rounds a minimum of once every four years; however, additional rounds may be undertaken for AUPs that introduce additional animal procedures via *Protocol Modification* submission.

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Acting as a liaison between research staff and the AUS, the veterinarian and/or PSRLAT will endeavor to provide unbiased, positive, and constructive commentary in all cases.

In the event that the AUS requests expert advice, an advisory group consisting of minimum two animal-based researchers associated with field research and having AUS membership experience, will be called upon to act as consultants.

In the event of non-compliance or 'protocol drift,' every effort will be made to ensure the collegial development of a compliance assurance strategy.

***Veterinary Rounds for Field Research - Process***

***Criteria Used for Rounds Prioritization***

Veterinary rounds for field research will be triggered by *Animal Use Protocol* form submission, including AUPs that are either new, pilot studies, approved AUPs being renewed following four years, and *Protocol Modifications* involving new/novel animal procedures.

Animal procedures selected for rounds will be prioritized based upon the following criteria:

- Category of Invasiveness (potential for pain and distress)
- Cultural Sensitivity of Species
- AUP History, if any
- Novel and/or non-standard animal procedures or contexts

Rounds will be undertaken in alignment with field research timeframes.

In the event that an AUP contains both field and lab components, the PAM office will collaborate with the PI and the AUS to determine the type of veterinary rounds to be undertaken.

***Pre-Visit Communications***

- When an AUP is selected for veterinary rounds, the AUS PAM office will notify the Principal Investigator by email regarding their AUP's selection for rounds, and will request the PI to provide the expected end date in the current year for their upcoming field research activities.

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- If a PI designate has been identified, this individual will be copied on all correspondence.
- The PI is asked to provide the requested information to the AUS PAM office email notification within two weeks' time;
  - If the research group does not respond within two weeks, a reminder email and phone call will be sent;
  - If no response is received within two additional weeks, the Protocol Support Veterinarian will follow-up as per the AUS PAM Policy.
- The PAM office will perform an assessment of the AUP-approved animal procedures. An email will be sent to the PI listing the animal procedures requiring assessment, and identifying the due date for submission of a video record to the PAM office ([auspam@uwo.ca](mailto:auspam@uwo.ca)).
  - The field studies advisory group may be referenced in instances where the AUS requires expert opinion.
  - The due date will be **within two months** following the end of the field-specific animal work for the given year.
- The PI will confirm via email his/her intent to video record the requested animal procedures during the upcoming field research activities.
  - In the event that the PI requests and provides justification for the removal of a requested animal procedure from the video recording requirement, the PAM office will seek guidance from the AUS or field study advisory group; the PI will receive an update from the PAM office **within one month**.
- If a PI is willing and able to demonstrate animal procedures associated with his/her field research while on campus, the PI will request a regular veterinary rounds visit, and will provide the suggested location, date and time.

*Veterinary Rounds Activities*

- PI's will ensure that the requested animal procedures are captured on video during the next time period of field study activities,
  - PI's are encouraged to use their own video equipment.
  - ACVS will lease video equipment to those who are unable to provide their own equipment.
- **Within two months** following their return from the field, PI's will provide the PAM office ([auspam@uwo.ca](mailto:auspam@uwo.ca)) with the requested video clips.

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- **Within two weeks** of receiving the video record of field-based animal procedures, the PAM office will review the video, will identify and email questions and will request a follow-up discussion with the PI/PI group within one month of email request.
  - The field studies advisory group may be referenced in instances where the AUS requires expert opinion.
- At a mutually convenient time **within one month** of email receipt (see last step), the PAM office and PI/PI group directly involved in animal care and use associated with the field work will dialogue regarding the rounds.

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*Post-Rounds Follow-Up*

- **Within two weeks** of dialogue, the PAM office will forward the related *Facility Rounds for Field Studies* report to the PI.
- As per the AUS PAM Policy, the Protocol Support veterinarian will update the AUS on PAM visits, including veterinary rounds for field studies.
  - Any follow-up questions will be forwarded to the PI by the PAM office **within one week** of the AUS meeting.
- The *Facility Rounds for Field Studies* report will be appended to the AUP.

**At all times ACVS Veterinarians and the Protocol Support RLAT will endeavor to sustain and facilitate research through a collegial and supportive approach.**