

POLICY 7.10 – Institutional Animal User Training Program

Policy Category:	Research
Subject:	Standardized training in animal care and use
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors
Responsible Officer:	Vice-President (Research)
Responsible Office:	Animal Care & Veterinary Services Department
Related Procedures:	Procedures for the Institutional Animal User Training Program
Related University Policies:	MAPP 7.12 - Policy and Procedures for the Use of Animals in Research and Teaching MAPP 7.0 – Academic Integrity in Research Activities
Effective Date:	June 21, 2018
Supersedes:	November 26, 2015; September 24, 2015; November 22, 2012; November 29, 2009; January 27, 2005

I. PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to apply CCAC's guidelines for the training of Animal Users; and to outline the associated roles and responsibilities for the Animal User Training Program associated with Western's Research Community.

II. DEFINITIONS

Animal Users – all individuals who either use in animal-based science, or are employed to care for 'animals,' as defined by the Canadian Council on Animal Care ([CCAC](#)).

Western's Research Community – institutions and their departments involving animal-based scientists having Animal Use Protocols under the jurisdiction of Western's Animal Care Committee, the ACC

Competency – as per CCAC, the ability to effectively perform a particular task in relation to the care, maintenance or use of animals, while ensuring their welfare is protected as far as possible within the constraints of any approved AUPs.¹

¹ Canadian Council on Animal Care. CCAC Guidelines on: training of personnel working with animals in science. P.5

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Three Rs Tenet – Replace – avoid or replace the use of animals wherever possible; Reduce – utilize strategies that reduce the number of animals used while maintaining experimental design; Refine – modify procedures and/or practices to reduce animal stress or pain.

III. POLICY

1. Animal User Training Program elements must engender a culture of respect for animal life and must be designed to align with the Three Rs, as per CCAC's guideline on: training of personnel working with animals in science (2015).
 - a. All Animal Users must demonstrate their understanding of ethics associated with the humane use of animals, including the Three R's tenet of replacement, reduction and refinement.
2. Institutional senior administration must ensure adequate resources are available to facilitate the delivery of an up-to-date and relevant Animal User Training Program that supports the knowledge and skills required for undertaking ACC-approved Animal Use Protocols and institutional roles of Animal Care/Husbandry personnel and aligns with current veterinary standards of animal care.
3. The Animal User Training Program must be administered centrally by the Department of Animal Care & Veterinary Services (ACVS), which is responsible to: determine Animal User training requirements; establish training competency benchmarks; develop and maintain training program content and training platforms; and maintain training records.
 - a. Other Animal User trainers will be pre-approved by ACVS and will follow the centralized training program elements.
 - b. The ACC via its Executive must be apprised of any significant changes to the Animal User Training Program.
4. Animal Users must complete the following CCAC-mandated animal training prior to undertaking animal-based science or animal care work, as outlined within ACC-approved Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) and/or associated with institutional roles:
 - a. Western's *Basic Animal Care and Use* online ethics course, or an ACVS-approved alternative; and,
 - b. As required by the Animal User's role, hands-on animal workshops / training sessions and their associated online course prerequisites.
 - c. Exemption from the training requirements outlined in 4.a-b may be requested and will be considered by the ACC based upon documented and/or demonstrated evidence that an equivalent course or experience has been obtained elsewhere (See *Procedures for the Institutional Animal User Training Program*).
5. Animal User training must be offered with adequate frequency and oversight by proficient trainers to ensure all animal users receive necessary knowledge, skills and competency prior to performing ACC-approved animal procedures independently.
 - a. The responsibility for ensuring Animal Users are competent will be shared among ACC-approved trainers and supervisors of Animal User trainees, e.g. Principal Investigators, Animal Care facility supervisors.
 - b. Until personnel have obtained competence to perform animal procedures, a competent individual must closely supervise their work with animals.
 - c. When practical skills must be acquired, training should be timed in proximity to the timeframe when the skills are required.

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6. Any concerns associated with respect to Animal User competency and/or the Animal User Training Program must be forwarded to the ACC Executive for consideration, as per UCAC's Concerns Identification, Project Refinement and Corrective Response Policy (POL-004).