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Purpose / Scope

The objective of this policy is to outline criteria for the generation, review, and approval of changes ('Modification') to the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) to ensure alignment with current National, Provincial, and Institutional regulatory policies and guidelines.

Rationale

Our national, Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and provincial, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) regulators require that all animal-based science activities be disclosed within an AUP and pre-approved by the Animal Care Committee (ACC) before it is undertaken in practice. In both its *Terms of Reference* and *Guidelines for Protocol Review*, the CCAC states: "All modifications must be approved and documented by the ACC before being initiated by the investigator."¹

Policy Statements

Any changes to an approved AUP must be submitted and approved by the ACC prior to their implementation. Changes to approved AUPs (Animal Use Protocols) (hereto referred as 'Modifications') must be submitted using the ACC's AUP software system.

¹ Canadian Council on Animal Care. CCAC Guidelines on Animal Use Protocol Review (1997) - Sect. 1 and ACC T of R P.8, Sect.3 f)
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Protocol Modification Scope

Where a Modification involves a notable change in animal utilization or the direction of the animal-based science activity, a full AUP must be submitted; this includes conditions identified under 'Animal Use Protocol Scope' within the *Animal Use Protocols-A* policy.

Protocol Modification Review & Approval Determination

The ACC must review Modifications with respect to whether animal use is acceptable “ethically and in practice and must decide whether the animal-based methods are appropriate for the proposed work, with careful consideration of the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use).”²

Final approval of Modifications by the ACC must only be granted following confirmation of associated approvals.

All Modifications that were approved using Delegated Review must be disclosed to the full ACC.

ACC decisions must align with the criteria outlined within the *Animal Use Protocols* Policy (POL-002-A).

Modifications Requiring Full Review – Major Modifications

Major Modifications must be subjected to Full Review as outlined within *AUP Review Processes for Principal Investigators* (GUID-002) including at minimum a discussion and ACC member representation as outlined by the CCAC.³ The following changes define a Major Modification,

- All animal number increases involving Directed Species
- For other species, animal number increases greater than or equal to 25%
- An increase in Category of Invasiveness (COI)
- Addition of any new COI 'D' or 'E' level procedure(s)
- An increase in predicted mortality rate of 20% or more
- A novel negative animal welfare impact.

Modifications Eligible for Delegated Review – Minor Modifications

Proposed changes to an AUP not specified as requiring Full Review are considered Minor Modifications. Minor Modifications are reviewed via the Delegated Review process per the *AUP Review Processes for Principal Investigators* (GUID-002) and involve a subset of ACC members competent to perform an informed review, e.g., Institutional Veterinarian, ACC Chair, ACC Administrators.

² CCAC. CCAC policy statement on: scientific merit and ethical review of animal based research. Sect.2. Retrieved 26MAR2019 from https://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Scientific_merit_and_ethical_review_of_animal-based_research.pdf

³ CCAC. Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees. P.1 Para 3. Retrieved 13FEB2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Terms_of_reference_for_ACC.pdf

References

- OMAFRA's Animals for Research Act, R.S.O. 1990
- Canadian Council on Animal Care
 - Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees (2006)
 - Requirement for submitting an animal protocol (2020)
 - Frequently Asked Questions (2020)
 - CCAC guidelines on: animal use protocol review (1997)
 - Ethics of Animal Investigation (1989)
 - Categories of Invasiveness in Animal Experiments
- Animal Care Committee policies and procedures
 - AUP Review Processes for Principal Investigators (GUID-002)
 - Animal Use Protocols (POL-002-A)

Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
00	07-10-2015	New Policy	LT / LC
01	11-04-2017	Updates to definitions for Major & Minor Protocol Modifications, and Protocol Review Types to align with CCAC recommendations (2015)	LT / LC
02	08-10-2020	Split POL-002 into three distinct policies: AUPs (A), Annual Renewals (B) & Protocol Modifications (C); Allocate Modification types to the two review types: Full ACC & Delegated; Streamline criteria for Mods requiring Full Review. Update References; update formatting; Remove Roles & Responsibilities	LT / LC / EB
03	14-03-2024	Associate 'Major' & 'Minor' Modifications; refine criteria for full vs. delegated reviews; include the AUP Review Working Group as optional review group for Mods requiring full review	LT / JM / AB / YM / KK / LH / LC / JSN / SG

Glossary

- **Animal Morbidity** – Any sick animal whose condition warrants humane intervention.
- **Animal Mortality** – Any animal that has died under any circumstance or condition, with the exception of one that has reached its experimental endpoint as outlined within the related AUP. Includes animals found dead and morbid animals requiring immediate early euthanasia as their humane intervention.
- **AUP Review Working Group** – This standing working group of the ACC reviews AUP forms except for those reviewed by the full ACC or designates. The AUP Review Working Group consists of six roles to include Animal-Based Scientist, Community Representative, Institutional Veterinarian, Technical Representative, Non-Animal User, and the ACC Administrator as per the Terms of Reference for ACC Working Groups. Participation is on a rotational basis for roles represented by more than one individual.
- **Categories of Invasiveness** – Levels assigned to AUPs in accordance with CCAC policy. Experiments involving:
 - A** – Most invertebrates or live isolates
 - B** – Little or no discomfort or stress
 - C** – Minor stress or pain of short duration
 - D** – Moderate to severe distress or discomfort
 - E** – Procedures causing severe pain at or above the pain tolerance threshold of unanaesthetized conscious animals
- **Directed Species** - Pigs, sheep, dogs, cats, non-human primates, and rabbits