Purpose / Scope
The purpose of this policy is to outline Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and institutional requirements for Animal Care Committee (ACC) site visits to all animal holding and use laboratory areas associated with animal-based science activities identified within ACC-approved Animal Use Protocols.

ACC Site Visits are essential in providing the ACC with a direct connection between area supervisors and animal-based scientists who use these spaces. This opportunity for face-to-face dialogue will assist the ACC in its oversight role of the entire Animal Ethics & Care Program at Western and affiliates.

This opportunity for a subset of ACC members to meet directly with key stakeholders is intended to:

- Enhance the ACC’s understanding of the work being undertaken as well as area- and research-specific challenges, e.g., sufficiency of facilities, equipment, human resources, and related operations,
- Consider animal care and welfare implications through on-the-floor observations and discussions,
- Provide an approachable platform to share and receive feedback on the Animal Ethics & Care Program towards ongoing refinement.

Rationale
In its Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees (2006), the CCAC outlines requirements for the ACC to regularly visit all areas where animals are held and/or used in animal-based science.

Policy Statements

ACC Site Visit Participation
To visit all spaces where live animals are held and used, each ACC member must actively participate in, or at least volunteer for, a minimum of one site visit per year.

A minimum of three ACC members must participate in every ACC Site Visit, including a site visit leader, a veterinarian or designate, and one other ACC member.

Area supervisors and invited users of spaces must make themselves, or a knowledgeable designate, available during the in-person walk-through of the area.

ACC Site Visit Structure
ACC Site Visits must be undertaken at a minimum annually to all laboratory spaces where live animals are held and/or used in research or teaching.

ACC Site Visits must be announced and organized in advance of each visit to ensure availability of related stakeholders, as applicable.

Excluding exceptional circumstances, ACC Site Visits will take place in-person.

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The ACC Chair will approve exceptions requiring virtual visits.

During ACC Site Visits, as an important part in fulfilling the ACC’s AECP oversight role, participants will:

- Observe the space and assess sufficiency (physical characteristics, environment, etc.).
- Seek to understand related operations and assess sufficiency.
- Seek to understand live animal procedures performed within each area as well as the bigger picture of the animal’s overall experience from arrival to endpoint.
- Seek feedback from area supervisors and users on their challenges as well as their suggestions towards further refinement of the Animal Ethics & Care Program (AECP).
- Provide updates to area supervisors and users on new AECP initiatives.

Post-ACC Site Visit
ACC Site Visit Reports must be completed using an ACC Site Visit Report Template (Appendix 2) and distributed as follows:

- Report commendations, observations and recommendations will be forwarded to area supervisors and select users for their review and responses.
- Responses to site visitor recommendations will be included in the final report.
- ACC Site Visit Reports will be forwarded to the ACC Executive for review and follow-up.
  - Report content will include related follow-up actions.
- Closed reports will be forwarded to the full ACC.

Extra-vivarial space re-certification will be facilitated through the annual ACC Site Visit process.

References

Guidance for Animal Care Committee Members Conducting Annual Site Visits (2018).

Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Changes</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>08-10-2020</td>
<td>New stand-alone policy; previously embedded in POL-005 PAM Program</td>
<td>LT</td>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>09-12-2021</td>
<td>Reformat; update ‘Purpose’ to align with CCAC expectations; update and provide greater detail for the three-pronged approach to site visits.</td>
<td>LT</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>10-19-2023</td>
<td>Refined content to reflect current practices.</td>
<td>LT</td>
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