

## Purpose / Scope

The purpose of this policy is to outline visits by animal health professionals (hereto referred to as 'Visits') in support of the Post Approval Monitoring Program (PAM) associated with Western and its affiliates.

The goals of these Visits include:

- ensuring compliance with approved Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) and regulatory standards;
- promoting and sharing veterinary best practices that advance animal health and welfare while facilitating the progress of research and teaching;
- supporting research personnel through education and training; and
- fostering positive, effective two-way communications that engender trust.

Visits will include the following:

- Facility Visits
- Animal Use Protocol Visits
- ACC Directed Evaluations
- Field Research Reviews

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## Rationale

In its Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committee's, the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) states, "Each institution must establish procedures for post-approval monitoring of animal use protocols, and must define the roles and responsibilities of the members of the animal care and use program in the monitoring process."<sup>1</sup>

The CCAC also supports the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine's *CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care* (2020), which outlines the critical role played by animal health professionals in ensuring that animal-based practices align with veterinary standards of care. Through regular, collegial Visits to areas where live animals are held and/or procedures are undertaken, and through direct engagement with associated stakeholders – Laboratory Animal Facility staff and animal-based scientists and their staff – animal health professionals provide essential support for ensuring optimal animal health and welfare are maintained across the animal ethics and care program.<sup>2</sup>

Animal health professionals act as a resource for research personnel to proactively identify and resolve issues that may be identified more formally by regulators.

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<sup>1</sup> CCAC. CCAC's Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees. Sect. 2. P.3-4. Retrieved 08APR2024 from [https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Terms\\_of\\_reference\\_for\\_ACC.pdf](https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Terms_of_reference_for_ACC.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine. *CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care* (2020). Retrieved 08APR2024 from <https://calam-acmal.org/resources/Documents/CALAM-ACMAL%20STANDARDS%20OF%20VETERINARY%20CARE.pdf>

## Policy Statements

### General

Visits must be centrally managed and primarily undertaken by the Animal Ethics & Care Program Compliance Team on behalf of Western Research's Research Ethics and Compliance Office.

- Visits will be focused on assessing animal health and welfare, sharing procedural and record-keeping best practices, and AUP alignment.
- Visits will be driven by proactive and reactive triggers:
  - *Proactive*: Category of Invasiveness, species, non-arms-length holding, primary animal husbandry provided by research staff, Animal Care Committee or Compliance Veterinarian-directed, and/or as outlined within the *Risk Analysis Record*.
  - *Reactive*: Referrals from other program operations, e.g., Institutional Veterinarians, Sick Animal Response (SAR), ACC Site Visits, Facility Supervisors' Reports, Animal Care operations, Concerns response, Reportable Animal Welfare Incidents (RAWIs).

Visits must be documented; associated logs and/or reports must be centrally maintained for regulatory reporting purposes, and made regularly available to the ACC's Executive Working Group.

Visits must be undertaken in a manner as outlined within the Post Approval Monitoring Policy (POL-005), and the *Procedures for Visits by Animal Health Professionals* (PROC-020).

### Facility Visits

All Laboratory Animal Facilities and non-arms-length holding spaces must be visited by an animal health professional at the frequency outlined within the *PAM Risk Analysis Record*.

- Announced Visits will focus on in-room animal health and welfare assessments through observation of the micro- and macro- environments, impacts of experimental/teaching procedures, and animal-related records and AUP alignment.

### Animal Use Protocol Visits

Either following initial AUP approval or at Annual Renewal, AUP Visits must be prioritized based on the degree of impact to animal health and welfare.

- All AUPs should be assessed by an animal health professional at minimum once during its full renewal cycle.
- AUPs will be proactively assessed for alignment with approved elements and veterinary standards of care through direct observation of associated procedures and related documentation, e.g., the AUP, in-room records.
- AUPs identified through reactive triggers as benefitting from an AUP Visit will be prioritized accordingly.

### ACC Directed Evaluations

AUPs requiring evaluations by animal health professionals will include Pilot Studies and may also include any AUPs based upon perceived risk to animal health and welfare, e.g., invasive and/or novel and/or unfamiliar procedures.

PIs undertaking Pilot Studies or having AUPs identified by the ACC as requiring veterinary or veterinary designate observation and/or evaluation must provide advance notice to Institutional Veterinarians, or

their assigned designates, and the ACC Office regarding the forthcoming commencement of related animal procedures.

- For Pilot Studies, the *Animal Use Protocols-Pilot Studies Policy* (POL-002-D) must be followed.
- PIs will facilitate animal health professional observation of these procedures.

### Field Research Reviews

Review of AUPs involving Field Research must be undertaken at minimum every four years.

In the event that on-site observation by an animal health professional is not feasible, a meeting will be arranged between the PI Field Researcher and the PAM Coordinator in order to determine AUP elements – procedures and/or equipment - that require review.

A PI Field Researcher must provide the ACC Executive via the AECF Compliance Team with video, photographic and/or other pictorial records of the following AUP elements:

- capture techniques,
- housing conditions,
- sedations/euthanasia,
- transportation,
- manual handling/restraint, and
- invasive procedures.

### References

- Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine’s *CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care* (2020)
- Canadian Council on Animal Care. *Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees* (2006)

### Revision History

Version	Date <i>dd-mm-yyyy</i>	Description of Changes	Author
00	08-10-2020	New stand-alone policy; previously embedded in POL-005 PAM Program	LT
01	13-06-2024	Updates to Purpose/Scope, Rationale, Policy Statements (General, Facility Visits & AUP Visits), Updated references	LT, SG, AE, PB