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**Purpose/Scope**

The primary purpose of this document is to define Western university and its affiliate’s institution’s requirements for ethical oversight, governance, and regulatory compliance of Animal Spaces. These requirements are issued under the Vice-President, Research (VPR) portfolio and are established in alignment with Western’s MAPP 7.12 – Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF), which sets out the structures and controls necessary to ensure compliant, safe, and coordinated oversight of animal-based activities across Western and its affiliated institutions.

Specifically, these requirements are intended to ensure that:

- Responsibilities related to the care and use of animals within designated spaces are clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders,
- Animal Spaces comply with applicable national and provincial regulations, institutional policies, and Animal Care Committee (ACC) standards,
- Processes for planning, repurposing, and maintaining Animal Spaces are transparent and support animal welfare, and
- Relevant stakeholders are engaged in decision-making processes related to animal spaces to uphold regulatory and ethical obligations.

This document applies to all Animal Spaces within institutionally owned or controlled buildings or structures, including those within and external to purpose-built laboratory animal facilities, where animals are housed or used for research, teaching, or testing under ACC oversight. These requirements do not apply to field sites.

For the purpose of this document ‘Animal Spaces’ are herein referred to as ‘Spaces’.

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## Rationale

This document aligns with the Canadian Council on Animal Care's (CCAC) requirement that senior administrators ensure appropriate and sufficient animal facilities are in place for the species to be held and the types of work to be undertaken. Within this governance framework, the role of the Animal Care Committee (ACC) is to provide ethical and regulatory oversight and compliance review related to the care and use of animals. The ACC is not responsible for managing the operational, infrastructural, or contractual aspects of animal space planning, development, or maintenance.

This document clarifies institutional responsibilities for the planning, use, modification, and oversight of animal spaces, and establishes a transparent framework to support animal welfare, regulatory compliance, and appropriate engagement of relevant stakeholders, consistent with regulatory requirements.

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## Requirements

### Responsibilities

Western's senior administrator, the VPR, and institutional/affiliate Senior Leadership are ultimately responsible for ensuring that appropriate and sufficient Spaces are in place within their respective institution/department to:

- Facilitate optimal animal care and welfare in accordance with applicable regulatory standards e.g., CCAC policies and guidelines /Ontario's Animals for Research Act (R.S.O. 1990 c. A.22), human safety, and labor standards,
- Enable animal-based science to be undertaken in a manner that supports animal welfare and compliance, and
- Minimize biosecurity, occupational health and safety, and other institutional risks.

This responsibility may be formally delegated to an accountable senior administrator (e.g., AVPR, University Veterinarian), and any such delegation of authority, including to affiliate institutional leaders, must be documented, role-specific, and formally acknowledged by both institutions.

Where Animal Spaces are located within Western university or affiliated institutions and housed in facilities that are institutionally owned by jointly governed, institutional responsibilities must be clearly articulated through written agreements (e.g., MOUs). These agreements must specify authority for decision-making, resource allocation, and corrective action.

### Regulatory Compliance Responsibilities

- Western's ACC and Institutional Veterinarians under the authority of the University Veterinarian, are responsible for providing oversight to ensure that Spaces comply with applicable external regulations, CCAC guidelines and institutional policies.
- The ACC maintains approvals for Space and identifies deficiencies through its site visit and inspection processes. When deficiencies are identified, the ACC will request corrective action



from the appropriate party (e.g., PI, space supervisor, operational leader, or institutional senior leadership).

- The VPR's AECW Working Group (AECW-WG) participates in the evaluation of proposed Space planning or modification and provides initial compliance review for proposed [Space Repurposing](#).
- Space supervisors are responsible for ensuring that Space(s) under their oversight are maintained and operated in accordance with approved standards, SOPs, and institutional requirements.

### Resource Allocation Responsibilities

Institutional Operational Leaders are responsible for ensuring sufficient resources are available to support Spaces and maintain compliance. The ACC relies on these provisions to fulfill its oversight role.

The process for allocating space to PIs must be documented in writing and should clearly set out the responsibilities for those assigned spaces, including compliance with applicable standards for its use and maintenance.

### Communications Responsibilities

Western University's ACC, AECW-WG, University Veterinarian and citywide operational leaders must collaborate to ensure regular communication between animal-based scientists, and oversight personnel regarding significant plans, challenges, and changes to Spaces. Communication should be transparent and use appropriate channels to keep stakeholders informed.

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## Oversight

All Spaces must be subject to routine monitoring by qualified individuals who operate independently and maintain objective oversight, as outlined in the *ACC's Post Approval Monitoring Policy (POL-005)*.

Western's ACC must conduct annual site visits to all Spaces, in accordance with the *ACC Site Visits Policy (POL-019)*.

Space supervisors are responsible for overseeing the use of Spaces under their management to ensure compliance with approved standards and institutional requirements. The frequency of supervisory oversight should be commensurate with the type of Space, potential impact on animal health and welfare, human safety risks, and frequency of use.

In the event of a Space-related crisis, the institutional crisis response teams will lead per the *Crisis Management Program Policy (POL-022)* and associated institution-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (see References section). The University Veterinarian and AECW-WG will provide advisory support to ensure animal welfare considerations are addressed.

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## Standards

Spaces used in scientific activities must be as conducive to the welfare and safety of the animals as possible, facilitate optimal animal care practice, provide an appropriately appointed and safe workplace



for personnel, and, in the case of research and testing, establish a stable environment that will contribute to the reproducibility of studies.<sup>1</sup>

- Space infrastructure, equipment and operations must align with external regulations, e.g., the CCAC and Ontario's Animals for Research Act, and ACC and institutional policies (human and animal) and related procedures (see [References](#) and [Glossary](#)).
- Each Space must be adequately equipped to accommodate the type of animal holding and/or use.
- Spaces must be regularly maintained in accordance with the *Citywide Animal Area Housekeeping SOP* (CW-FAC-001).

All applicable standards must be easily accessible (e.g., via shared document repository) and communicated to impacted stakeholders through appropriate channels such as email, newsletters, training sessions, etc.

Under Institutional Veterinarian direction and with reference to research needs, those responsible for Spaces must endeavour to achieve and maintain acceptable health statuses that meet the needs of the animal-based science.

- Space-specific animal health status standards must align with the Animal Health Biosafety Policy (POL-024) and related SOPs, e.g., CW-442 – Mouse and Rat Health Status Levels, CW-445 Rodent Procurement and Quarantine Processes.

Before the introduction of new devices and/or caging equipment associated with Spaces, an Institutional Veterinarian, space supervisor and occupational safety representative must review and provide input to ensure regulatory alignment. Final approval will be determined by institutional leadership (e.g., University Veterinarian, VPR).

The Space supervisor must work directly with users and oversight personnel – animal health professionals, arms-length personnel – to promptly identify and attempt to correct a divergence from standards. If resolution requires additional funds, the Space supervisor will inform the Operational Leader, who will lead efforts to secure resources and implement solutions.

- If the divergence cannot be resolved within six months, the ACC must be notified in writing via the Concern Report process, and AECW Working Group must be informed of the deficiency along with short-term mitigation strategies.

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### Documentation and Responsibilities for Animal Spaces

- The AECW-WG Administrator must maintain up-to-date Spaces Inventory Lists readily accessible by senior administrators, ACC leadership, Institutional veterinarians, operational leaders, area supervisors and their designates.
- A standardized [Rooms Classification System](#) should be used across all Animal Spaces to ensure consistency.
- Responsibilities for the operations and maintenance of Spaces must be clearly defined and communicated to relevant parties. Institutions should ensure documentation outlining these

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<sup>1</sup> CCAC. CCAC Guidelines: Laboratory Animal Facilities (2024) P.11. Guideline 1. Retrieved 11APR2025 from [https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC\\_guidelines-Laboratory\\_animal\\_facilities.pdf](https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_guidelines-Laboratory_animal_facilities.pdf)



responsibilities is available and accessible to Space users, supervisors, and Senior Leaders responsible for AECF oversight.

- Space supervisors must develop and/or make readily available documentation relating to operational standards and must include this documentation in the training of prospective users, e.g., SOPs, checklists, logs in conjunction with:
  - Laboratory Animal Facilities Policy (POL-023)
  - Animal Holding and Use Within Extra-Vivarial Spaces Policy (POL-016)
  - Animal Husbandry Policy (POL-010)
  - Citywide SOPs
  - Institution-specific SOPs
  - Space-/equipment-specific SOPs / Work Instructions
- Door-level signage must include:
  - [Rooms Classification](#) elements
  - [SAR Information](#)
  - [PPE](#) and OHS related requirements
  - Emergency contact information for area supervisors and users.

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### Strategic Space Planning

Senior Leaders – VPR, AVPR, and University Veterinarian – or their Designate(s) should ensure that the planning for and allocation of Space is transparent and aligned with institutional priorities. Strategic planning should consider animal health and welfare, scientific needs, personnel impacts, and regulatory requirements. Institutions are encouraged to document space planning processes, share them with stakeholders, and review them periodically to ensure continued relevance.

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### Repurposing & Renovations

Construction and/or renovation of Spaces should involve comprehensive planning and commissioning to ensure quality control. The project team should include key stakeholders, as appropriate to the scope of work, such as:

- Structural consultants, e.g., engineers, architects
- Institutionally designated project leader
- Institutional Veterinarian(s)
- OMAFA Inspector, (as directed by the University Veterinarian or their designate)
- Space Supervisor(s) / Operations Experts
- Institutional Occupational Health and Safety officer(s)
- End Users

All requests for repurposing Spaces must be reviewed by the AECF Working Group. Proposed changes to infrastructure, equipment, or intended use (e.g., species, procedures, containment level) should follow the [Space Repurposing](#) Process. Institutional leadership retains final approval authority. AECF Working Group evaluators must be notified at the initial planning stage.



For significant construction and renovation projects, the commissioning agent should report to the facility owner who is responsible for ensuring all elements have been met prior to the introduction of animals.

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## References

### Canadian Council on Animal Care

- Senior Administrators responsible for Animal Care and Use Programs (2008)
- Animal Husbandry (2017)
- Laboratory Animal Facilities (2024)
- Species-specific guidelines

### Ontario's Animals for Research Act (R.S.O. 1990, c. A.22) and its Regulations

- Reg. 22 General
- Reg. 24 Research Facilities and Supply Facilities
- Reg. 25 Transportation

### Ontario's College of Veterinarians (CVO)

### CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care (2020)

### Other Regulators

- Public Health Agency of Canada
  - [Canadian Biosafety Standard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition](#)
  - [Canadian Biosafety Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition](#)
  - [Canadian Biosafety Guideline, Containment Level 1 Physical Design and Operational Practice](#)
- CFIA
  - [Health of Animals Act \(S.C. 1990, C. 21\)](#)

### Animal Care Committee Policies

- Animal Husbandry (POL-010)
- Laboratory Animal Facilities Policy (POL-023)
- Animal Holding and Use Within Extra-Vivarial Spaces Policy (POL-016)
- Sick Animal Response (POL-009)
- Post-Approval Monitoring (POL-005)
- PAM Visits by Animal Health Professionals (POL-020)
- Concerns (POL-004)
- Crisis Management Program Policy (POL-022)
- Citywide Animal Area Housekeeping SOP (CW-FAC-001)



- Crisis Management Program for Western’s Animal Holding / Procedure Areas & Field Locations (ADM-SAF-501)

### Western University

- [Western University Laboratory Health and Safety Manual](#)
- [Western Biosafety Guidelines and Procedures Manual For Containment Level 1 & 2 Laboratories](#)
- [Western University Radiation Safety Manual](#)

### Lawson Health Research Institute

- Radiation (Isotope) Safety Program and Policies for St. Joseph’s Health Care London and the Lawson Research Institute of St. Joseph’s
- Research Biosafety Manual

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## Revision History

Version	Date <i>dd-mm-yyyy</i>	Description of Changes	Author
001	11/03/2026	New document	LT, AB, EB, SD, AA

## Glossary

*Laboratory Animal Facility* – An Animal Care Committee (ACC) approved vivarium that has been purpose-built in alignment with national and provincial regulations; is used to house – containment and animal husbandry activities - animals for at least 12 hours, or for the life of an animal, whichever is less; and is directly overseen by a Facility Supervisor.

*Animal Space (Space)* – Rooms or areas used for the housing of animals or for surgical, experimental, or testing procedures involving live animals and every room used for storing feed, bedding or waste or for the preparation of food in a Space (ARA Reg. 24 2.)

*Animal Space Allocation Team* – (A-SAT) – The team directly involved in Strategic Space Planning process to include:

- Senior leadership representing each organization, including affiliates, e.g., VPR
- University Veterinarian
- Operational Leaders responsible for Spaces
- Clinical Veterinarians responsible for Spaces
- Compliance Veterinarian
- Space Supervisors
- Animal Users Group Leaders
- ACC Chair/ACC Executive representative

*AECP* – *Animal Ethics and Care Program* - A comprehensive integrated program consisting of institutional structures, policies and processes focused upon ensuring regulatory alignment of Animal-Based Science activities that is centralized through Western's Vice President (Research) and Animal Care Committee (ACC)

*AECP-WG* - The *Animal Ethics and Care Program Working Group* (hereto 'AECP-WG'), is a VPR-mandated working group established under MAPP 7.12 – Animal Ethics and Care Program (ACEP) to provide coordinated, city-wide operational oversight for Western University's AECP across Western and its affiliated institutions. The AECP-WG is comprised of leaders responsible for AECP compliance and operations. The AECP-WG functions as the operational decision-making body for the city-wide AECP. Its core responsibilities include:

- Ensuring operational alignment with regulatory requirements across the AECP.
- Applying operational ACC requirements and directives in AECP operations.
- Reviewing and approving requests for the new use, repurposing, or modification of Animal Spaces involving live animals used in research and teaching at Western and its affiliates, in accordance with the institutional Animal Facility Space Use Requirements.
- Coordinating city-wide preparation for CCAC (Canadian Council on Animal Care) assessments, including planning, participation, and follow-up.

**Authority:** The AECP-WG operates under the Vice-President, Research pursuant to MAPP 7.12, and its determinations within the scope defined above are binding for operational implementation across Western and its affiliated institutions.

*AECP Evaluation Team* – A small group – Institutional Veterinarian, Animal Research Safety Consultant and/or Institutional OHS Officer, ACC Manager – tasked with undertaking direct evaluation of plans and associated

spaces under consideration for repurposing and engaging appropriate institutional stakeholders in the evaluation and recommendation process.

*Multi-Media Means* – Emails, in person and virtual presentations, notice boards, electronic information repositories. Electronically, centrally stored documentation:

- ACC Policies, Procedures – FAQs, infographics, guidelines
- Citywide standard operating procedures
- PPT presentations

*OMAFRA* - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness – Enforcers of the Animals for Research Act (R.S.O. 1990, c. A.22) and its regulations (Reg. 22,24,25). Performs unannounced site visits to Spaces.

*Operational Leaders* – Institutional roles directly accountable for the development and management of budgets for Spaces involving live animal activities.

*PI Dedicated Spaces* – Areas allocated to specific animal-based scientists and their teams for performing animal procedures both inside and outside purpose-built vivaria.

*PPE* – Personal Protective Equipment

*Rooms Classification System* – Standardized, customizable labeling of rooms that specifies containment level, species, animal health status and procedure type.

*Senior Leadership* – The Vice President (Research) for ACVS-managed facilities, equivalent institutional leaders for hospital-based institutions and faculty deans for purpose-built vivaria and extra-vivarial spaces with budgetary authority for Space.

*SAR* – Sick Animal Response – A formal citywide program laid out within the SAR Policy (POL-009) and Procedures (PROC-009) documents.

*Space Repurposing* – Changes in the use of Spaces including but not limited to room type, animal type, procedural type, and animal health status. May involve minor to major renovations. Requests will be routed through the AECW Working Group for review and approval. A small evaluation group involving a veterinarian, human safety and ACC leader will undertake proactive evaluation on behalf of the AECW Working Group.

*VPR Designate* – A senior administrator granted authority to represent the VPR's interests during meetings.

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## Animal Spaces Procedures – Strategic Planning, Space Repurposing



### *Step 1 – Establish / Review / Ratify the AECF Vision, Mission and Values Statements*

Senior leaders representing each organization -- the *Animal Space Allocation Team (A-SAT)* -- will ensure the AECF's Vision, Mission and Values statements align with:

- Institutional strategic plans, e.g., Master Plan, Western Research
- External regulations / guidelines

The VPRs of each institution will determine representatives for the A-SAT.

Stakeholders of the A-SAT will be involved in Step 2 and Step 5.

The **University Veterinarian** will lead in identifying core prioritized values (suggestions 1 – 4 below) to guide space allocation decisions:

1. Animal health and welfare.
2. Facilitate animal-based science.
3. Deliver services efficiently and effectively within budgetary constraints.
4. Ensure decision-making processes are collaborative, inclusive, and transparent.

### *Step 2 – Perform an Environmental Scan / Needs Assessment re. Space*

The **A-SAT** will assess the state of Spaces, related human resource allocations, animal-based science activities and animal health and welfare considerations to identify current deficiencies and future Space-related needs (within 3 years) specific to:

- Animal Health and Welfare – current Space-related risks
- Animal-based Science – current Space usage and future Space-related needs
- Infrastructure – aging facilities and equipment
- Human Resources – operational and oversight personnel capacities

### *Step 3 – Set Strategic Space-Related Priorities & Success Measures*

Each institution will

- Allocate resources and spaces to optimize and support alignment of animal health and welfare, present and near-future scientific needs and regulatory compliance.
- Formulate realistic, quantifiable measures of success.

### *Step 4 – Develop Space-Related Implementation Plan with Goals and Milestones*

**Operational leaders and space supervisors** will develop a specific space utilization plan with realistic goals and associated milestones that present in stepwise fashion actions to be taken to meet strategic priorities set out in Step 3 to close identified gaps and meet identified strategic priorities.

### *Step 5 – Review, modifications, and approval of the Space-Related Operational Plan*

The **A-SAT** will review and suggest appropriate modifications and ultimately be responsible to approve the space utilization plan, its goals and milestones developed by operational leaders to ensure alignment with strategic priorities.

Once approved by senior leaders and the A-SAT, a formal *Strategic Space Operational Plan* containing the AECOP Vision, Mission Statement, Values, Strategic Priorities, Success Measures, Goals and Milestones will be developed and shared with applicable VPR Working Groups.

### *Step 6 – Communicate & Implement the Space Operational Plan*

Once finalized, the *Strategic Space Operational Plan* will be shared with all institutional stakeholders via multi-channel and multi-level communications.

A readily accessible feedback mechanism will be established and maintained to facilitate ongoing real-time communications channels that inform senior leaders of any new challenges / changes that might impact the operational plan.

**Operational leaders**, in conjunction with **Space-specific supervisors, Institutional Veterinarians and OHS**, will follow the established goals and milestones to implement the *Strategic Space Operational Plan* within their respective areas of accountability.

- Operational leaders will promptly notify Senior Leaders (University Veterinarian, AVPR) of their progress as well as any unforeseen roadblocks / divergences that might impact established milestone achievement.

**Operational Leaders** will:

- Hold quarterly meetings (minimum) with area supervisors to assess implementation progress.
- Identify needed changes in Space allocation made necessary by either new user demands or Space repairs or renovations, and

- Communicate proposed changes to Senior Administration (VPR, AVPR, University Veterinarian, ACC Chair).

### *Step 7 – Review, Update & Share*

Annual **A-SAT** meetings will be held to discuss progress reports and will direct updates to be made to the *Strategic Space Operational Plan*, as appropriate.

The VPR's *Resource Allocation and Planning (RAP) Working Group*, which will engage with applicable leadership in each organization to review the *Strategic Space Operational Plan* and implementation progress reports minimum annually with a view to ensuring alignment as well as identifying needed divergences.

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## Space Repurposing Process

See flow chart below.

