

POLICY 7.12 – Animal Ethics and Care Program

Policy Category:	Research
Subject:	Use of Animals in Research, Testing, Teaching and Display
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors
Responsible Officer:	Vice-President (Research)
Responsible Office:	Office of the Vice-President (Research)
Related University Policies:	MAPP 7.0 – Academic Integrity in Research Activities
Effective Date:	April 22, 2021
Supersedes:	September 26, 2006, November 26, 2009, November 22, 2012, November 26, 2015; June 23, 2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out provisions that all Animal-Based Science activities at Western University and/or its affiliate institutions and hospitals are conducted in accordance with best practices and all external regulatory standards for animal care in a research environment including instituting and maintaining an Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF).

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Animal-Based Science activities associated with Western University and/or its affiliated institutions and hospitals.

III. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- a. Regulators having direct certification and licensing authority for the AECF include the Canadian Council on Animal Care ([CCAC](#)), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and, for U.S. funding, the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW).
 - i. At the national level, the CCAC sets standards, certifies, and continually assesses institutions wishing to engage in Animal-Based Science activities. Institutions that maintain these standards receive a certificate of Good Animal Practice (GAP).
 - ii. At the provincial level, OMAFRA enforces Ontario's *Animals for Research Act*, R.S.O. 1990 through unannounced inspections. Institutions that comply with the *Act* maintain annual licensing.

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- b. Through collaborative and collegial interactions with one another, all stakeholders listed in this policy are responsible to align their practices with external and institutional statutory requirements relating to animal ethics and care.
- c. Western's senior administration must ensure the AECP is provided with the necessary and sufficient ongoing financial and administrative resources as outlined in Appendix 1 – Responsibilities – b) through g).
- d. The Vice-President (Research) is designated as the senior administrative officer of the University responsible for the administration of this Policy, and as outlined within the *Senior Administrator's Terms of Reference* (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- e. To ensure Western is following the standards required to maintain regulatory certification and licensing, Western's Animal Care Committee (ACC), as delegated by the Vice-President (Research), will undertake the role of 'working Animal Care Committee' per its [Terms of Reference](#) and with reference to CCAC's [Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees](#) (2006).
- f. Western's Research Ethics and Compliance Office (RECO), is responsible to provide administrative support and to facilitate ACC operations and directives in collaboration with senior administration, the University Veterinarian and other institutional stakeholders (e.g., Animal-Based Scientists, animal health professionals, facility supervisors and staff).
- g. Animal Care and Veterinary Services (ACVS), is responsible to provide leadership to the AECP and to serve Western's research community and its associated committees, to ensure alignment with all external and institutional statutory requirements, and to facilitate compliant Animal-Based Science activities.
- h. Faculty, staff and students share responsibility for undertaking Animal-Based Science activities in alignment with all external and institutional statutory requirements, including the ACC's [Policies and Procedures](#).

IV. NON-COMPLIANCE

- a. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the revocation of grant funding, institutional certification (CCAC's Good Animal Practice – GAP) and/or provincial licensing (OMAFRA) and/or U.S. licensing (OLAW).
- b. All contraventions of AECP policies and procedures will be adjudicated by the Animal Care Committee, as per its [Terms of Reference](#).

Glossary of Terms

Affiliates – Lawson Health Research Institute, London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Health Care London, Huron University College, Kings University College, Brescia University College.

Animal-Based Science – Branches of scholarship where live vertebrate and cephalopod animals are used in research, teaching or testing

Animal Care Committee (ACC) – Western's Animal Care Committee (ACC), under the leadership of its Chair and Vice Chairs, maintains and improves the Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF) so it remains in compliance with all external and institutional statutory requirements, as outlined within its Terms of Reference. The ACC advises the Vice President (Research) on all aspects of the program and to ensure compliance with regulators' requirements, those who have direct certification and licensing authority for the AECF

Animal Care Committee Executive – An ACC Working Group, as per the ACC Terms of Reference, that provides real-time feedback and support to institutional stakeholders accountable for the animal care and use program; provides leadership for animal ethics reviews; acts as front-line responders to Concerns brought to its attention, as outlined within the Concerns Policy (POL-004); receives updates from ACC designates regarding their mandated activities; provides direction and support to other ACC Working Groups; and relays decisions to the Full ACC

Animal Care and Veterinary Services (ACVS) – A department under Western Research led by its Director – the University Veterinarian – that is responsible to provide animal health professional support for the Animal Ethics and Care Program to ensure alignment with all external and institutional statutory requirements and to support Animal-Based Science programs

Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF) – A comprehensive integrated program consisting of operations and compliance assurance components. The program is integrated across Western and its affiliates through its Animal Care Committee with accountability for the program resting with Western's Vice President (Research). Compliance assurance occurs through institutional structures, policies and processes focused upon ensuring regulatory alignment of Animal-Based Science activities

Animal Use Protocol (AUP) – The Animal Care Committee's (ACC) mandatory animal ethics form that contains details of a AUP holder's intended live vertebrate and cephalopod animal use, which must be reviewed and approved by the ACC in advance of Animal-Based Science activities (see POL-002)

Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) – A not-for-profit organization, created in 1968 to oversee the ethical use and care of animals in science (research, teaching and testing) throughout Canada on behalf of Tri-Agency and the Canadian public; responsible for developing national policies and guidelines, assessing research facilities' compliance with these standards, and administering the Certificate of Good Animal Practice (GAP) to compliant facilities

Institutional Animal User Training Program – A Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) mandated centralized program focused on training Animal-Based Scientists and those responsible for animal care on the ethics, care and use of live animals, which is developed, presented and administered by delegates of Western's Animal Care Committee (ACC), e.g., animal health professionals within the Department of Animal Care and Veterinary Services (ACVS).

Institutional Veterinarian – A veterinarian within the Department of Animal Care and Veterinary Services (ACVS) that, under the direction of the University Veterinarian, provides veterinary support for the Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF) in alignment with the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine's (CALAM) Standards of Veterinary Care as well as external and internal regulators' laws, policies and guidelines

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Post Approval Monitoring (PAM) Program – A Canadian Council On Animal Care (CCAC)-mandated program overseen by the Animal Care Committee (ACC) and undertaken by arms-length designates (e.g., Visits by Animal Health Professionals (POL-020), ACC Site Visits (POL-019)) to ensure animal-based science practice aligns with principle (as outlined within the approved Animal Use Protocol (AUP)) and current standards of ethics and care (see POL-005)

University Veterinarian – Western’s senior veterinarian accountable to Western’s Vice President (Research) who is responsible for providing expert leadership for the citywide Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF) in conjunction with institutional senior administration and the Animal Care Committee (ACC), and for acting as Director of the Department of Animal Care and Veterinary Services (ACVS)

Vice-President (Research) – The senior administrative officer of the University responsible for the Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF), as outlined within the *Senior Administrator’s Terms of Reference* (see MAPP 7.12, Appendix 1).

Appendix 1



Institutional Senior Administrator Responsible for Western's Animal Care and Use Program Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Canadian Council on Animal Care's (CCAC) *policy statement for senior administrators responsible for animal care and use programs* (2008),¹ requires that an institution have a single senior administrator ultimately responsible for ensuring appropriate animal care and use in partnership with institutional members and with the CCAC. While the institution ultimately bears responsibility for its animal care and use program through institutional leaders, the senior administrator is the individual responsible to coordinate efforts, ensure that all organizational responsibilities are met, and ensure the Institution provides adequate resources to fulfill its commitments.

As a signatory to the Tri-Agencies' "Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions", Western has committed to this obligation.

The senior administrator ultimately responsible for the Western Research Community's animal care and use program is Western's Vice President (Research). Other institutional leaders with shared accountability for supporting the Vice President (Research) in fulfilling these responsibilities include Deans, Vice-Deans, Associate Deans, and Chairs/Directors.

Responsibilities

Western's senior administrator is responsible to ensure that:

- a) A CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice – is in place for all areas associated with animal-based science under the authority of Western's Animal Care Committee (ACC),
- b) At minimum one Animal Care Committee (ACC) is appropriately composed, structured and well-functioning in accordance with CCAC's policy statement on terms of reference for animal care committees; that this committee is provided with sufficient human resources to function appropriately and effectively,
- c) Appropriate animal care and use operations are in place to meet the institution's scientific goals of research, teaching and testing; appropriate and sufficient animal facilities are in place to accommodate the species and types of work to be undertaken,

¹ Canadian Council on Animal Care (2008) Retrieved from http://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Senior_administrators.pdf

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- d) Sufficient, well-structured and knowledgeable veterinary and animal care staffs are in place to provide effective support to animal-based researchers within Western's Research Community; adequate resources are provided to these roles to support their continuing education and training specific to their fields,
- e) Animal care and use is conducted appropriately, according to institutional and CCAC policies and guidelines and the Animals for Research Act (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs-Ontario),
- f) Animal users are well-informed with regard to all aspects of Western's animal care and use program; animal users understand that animal use is a privilege granted conditionally upon adherence to all regulatory and institutional standards of animal care and use,
- g) A sound structure is in place to support solid pre- and post-approval monitoring programs that eliminates unnecessary barriers to animal-based research, that fosters effective communications between animal users, the ACC and veterinary and animal care staffs and that results in prompt resolution of concerns; in the event of serious differences of opinion that cannot be readily resolved between researchers and the ACC, the senior administrator will provide direct support to the ACC in order to seek prompt resolution that aligns with regulatory and institutional standards,
- h) Institutional measures are in place to protect those who may be exposed to animals from related hazards, including an occupational health and safety and a crisis management program,
- i) Western's Research Community appropriately prepares for and contributes to every CCAC assessment visit; key roles associated with the animal care and use program, including the senior administrator, are made available to respond to questions; the senior administrator acts as the main institutional contact with CCAC by receiving and sending all formal CCAC communications; comprehensive responses from the senior administrator are provided in a timely manner to address CCAC recommendations about institutional program deficiencies.