



Terms of Reference for the Queen's University Animal Care Committee

The University Animal Care Committee (UACC) is an animal ethics committee, responsible for the review and approval of protocols proposing the use of animals in science for research, teaching or testing, to assure that the welfare of these animals is a prime consideration in their procurement, care and use and that the highest ethical standards, as defined by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), are observed.

1. PREAMBLE

The Queen's University Animal Care Committee (UACC) was originally established in 1971 pursuant to the Animals for Research Act, 1968-69 and Regulations 1971, and its Terms of Reference were published in the Queen's Gazette, Volume 3, No. 20 (June 9, 1971). The Terms of Reference were amended in 1980 to reflect a change in administrative responsibility to the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. The Terms of Reference reflecting this change were published in the Queen's Gazette, Volume 12, No. 23 (June 10, 1980). The Terms of Reference were subsequently revised in September 1993; September 1997; August 2000, November 2003; and March 2005 (to revise the Committee's Appeals Process); September 2006 (to reflect the revised CCAC *policy statement on: the Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees.*); January 2008 (to revise membership terms and quorum); February 2009 (to revise membership terms); August 2010 (to revise the renewal review process); January 2013 (to include university sanctioned events involving live animals and clarify the role of the quality assurance program and QA Coordinator); June 2015 (to reduce biology representation supporting the Faculty of Arts & Science from two to one and to change the process regarding level D renewal reviews); September 2015 (to link UACC policies where appropriate, further emphasize communication lines between the UACC and institutional senior administration and to clarify areas covered in the Policies and Procedures of the UACC document as per CCAC recommendation); and in June 2016 to reduce Faculty of Health Sciences representation from six to four. The current terms were revised in December 2020 to ensure consistent language and appropriate references to policy (both institutional and CCAC). These Terms of Reference are subject to review every three years.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The office of the University Animal Care Committee (UACC) is a service oriented office, reporting to the Vice Principal, Research which strives to provide leadership and to support and encourage the highest standards of animal welfare regarding the use of animals in research, teaching, testing and events or demonstrations sanctioned by the University.

Objectives:

- 1- To assure that the use of animals at Queen's University follows all guidelines and legislation of the [Animals for Research Act \(Ontario\)](#) and that the welfare of the animals in their procurement, care, and use be of the highest ethical standards, as defined by the [Canadian Council on Animal Care](#).
- 2- To teach and promote the ethical use and management of animals in research, by providing training opportunities to personnel engaged in the care and research of animals.
- 3- To encourage good communication between the investigators and instructors at Queen's University and the University Animal Care Committee and to work with investigators and instructors to create a research and teaching environment that promotes animal welfare.
- 4- To work with the *Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC)* and the *Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)* to assure that all animal care facilities meet or exceed all guidelines and legislation, and to report accurate numbers of animals used in research and teaching to these agencies.

3. OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIP

The University Animal Care Committee shall meet on a monthly basis and maintain a membership consisting of the following:

- A Chairperson who shall be appointed by the Principal on the advice of the Vice-Principal, Research. The Chair shall not be directly involved in the management of the animal care facilities, nor be the consulting veterinarian for Queen's University nor be involved in the preparation of a significant number of the protocols to be reviewed by the UACC, in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.
- An ex-officio UACC Coordinator to be provided by the Vice Principal, Research.
- Four members of the Faculty of Health Sciences, elected by the Faculty Board, supporting a range of research fields and models.
- At least two members of the Faculty of Arts and Science, including one from the Department of Psychology and one from the Department of Biology, selected by the respective Department Heads.
- Four members-at-large and/or representatives of other Faculties, Groups, or Institutions as may be appointed by the Principal on the advice of the Vice Principal, Research. At least one shall be an institutional non-animal user. At least one shall be a member of the community having no conflicting affiliation with the University and who is not involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing thus compromising their role.
- One member representing technical staff (an animal care technician or animal research technician).
- Ex-officio members consisting of the Director of Animal Care Services; the Director of Environmental Health & Safety (or delegate); a representative of the Vice Principal, Research; and at least one animal facility manager (or designate). Ex-officio members shall be voting members.
- At least one graduate student appointed in consultation with the Graduate Student Society.

3.1 Members shall take all reasonable efforts to protect the [confidentiality](#) of the nature and purpose of the research it oversees except in the case of documented willful or repeated neglect of responsibilities.

3.2 Members serve for a period of three years (unless otherwise stated in their appointment letter) and may be re-appointed for a second term (no more than 6 consecutive years).

3.3 A quorum is established when 50% of members, including at least 2 animal using faculty members excluding the Chair, at least one community member, and the University Veterinarian (or delegate) are present. Decisions are made by consensus. Meetings shall be scheduled on a monthly basis at times that are convenient for all members, especially community representatives.

3.4 Appeals of negative decisions made by the UACC may be made according to the procedure outlined in the [Procedures of the UACC](#) document.

4. AUTHORITY

The University Animal Care Committee (UACC) is an animal ethics committee reporting to the Principal through the Vice Principal, Research, which is mandated by the Animals for Research Act (OMAFRA), and the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC). The UACC has the authority, on behalf of the Vice Principal, Research who is responsible for animal care and use for the institution, to:

- a) Stop any objectionable procedure if it considers that unnecessary distress or pain is being experienced by

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UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (UACC)

an animal.

- b) Stop immediately any use of animals, which deviates from the approved use, any non-approved procedure, or any procedure causing unforeseen pain or distress to an animal.
- c) Have an animal killed humanely if pain or distress caused to the animal is not part of the approved protocol and cannot be alleviated.

4.1) The Chair of the UACC and the Veterinarian(s) must always have access to all areas where animals are or may be held or used.

4.2) The UACC in conjunction with the Quality Assurance/Training Coordinator is responsible for determining and working to correct breaches of compliance with approved animal use protocols and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Breaches of compliance that cannot be corrected by the UACC working with the concerned animal users, the Veterinarian, Quality Assurance /Training Coordinator and animal care staff must be referred to the Senior Administration (Vice Principal, Research), who must inform all members of the animal care and use program about sanctions that will be taken by the administration in the event of serious breaches of compliance. Please see the [UACC Policy on the Oversight of Animals in Science](#) for more information.

4.3) The UACC recognizes that the University Veterinarian is often the major operational figure in its work. Therefore, the UACC delegates to the University Veterinarian the ongoing authority to act on behalf of the institution and the UACC to ensure proper care and treatment of animals and is given the authority to intervene whenever necessary. The University Veterinarian will advise the UACC of emergency actions taken on its behalf.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

As detailed in the CCAC's [Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees \(Revised March 2006\)](#), it is the responsibility of the UACC to:

- a) Ensure that no research, testing or teaching (including field studies) involving animals be commenced without prior UACC approval of an animal use protocol (AUP); further to this, that no animals be acquired or used before such approval. This includes work carried out by all members of Queen's University who use animals therefore, a Principal Investigator from Queen's who wishes to carry out animal-based work within a host institution's facilities must also submit an animal use protocol to the UACC. Both institutions must approve the proposed work before it can begin and normally before animals can be acquired. The UACC must be informed of the host institution's decision and of any relevant conditions or details accompanying that decision. Researchers from other institutions who apply to use the Queen's University Biological Station (QUBS) or another Queen's animal care facility must provide the UACC with copies of their home approved protocols for UACC review. See the [UACC Policy on Animal Based Projects Involving Two or More Institutions](#).
- b) Ensure that no animals be held for display or breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research, teaching or testing, without prior UACC approval of an animal use protocol (AUP), except where current CCAC guidelines provide for exemptions (see the [CCAC Requirement for Submitting an Animal Use Protocol – Addendum to the CCAC Policy Statement on: Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees](#)). The UACC should also be aware of other animal-based activities, such as commercial or recreational activities, within the institution and should work with the persons responsible for these activities to ensure that animal care and use is undertaken according to appropriate procedures. See the [UACC Policy on Activities Involving Live Animals](#).
- c) Require that all animal users complete an animal use protocol (AUP) form detailing the research or teaching at hand. To facilitate the work of both protocol authors and UACC members, appropriate UACC approved standard operating procedures (SOPs) should be referred to as much as possible. Approved protocols and SOPs should be readily available in the areas where animal-based work is taking place (protocols should be accessed in Topaz Elements and approved SOPs on the Animals in

UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (UACC)

Science website, to ensure the most up to date versions are being referenced).

- d) Ensure that each research project has been found to have scientific merit through independent peer review before approving the project. See the [UACC Policy on Peer-Review for Scientific Merit](#).
- e) Review and assess all animal use protocols, and, where necessary, require further supportive information from the investigator/instructor or meet with the investigator/instructor to ensure that all members of the UACC understand the proposed animal use. The UACC must also ensure that proposed animal use complies with CCAC guidelines, and, if at variance with those guidelines, is scientifically justified.
- f) Ensure that animal users update their protocols with any proposed modifications and formally approve any modifications to a protocol prior to implementation. Amendments will be classified as administrative, minor or major and follow appropriate processes accordingly. See the [UACC Policy on Protocol Amendments](#) for full definitions and procedural descriptions.
- g) Review all protocols annually, i.e., within a year of previous approval. Annual renewals with a category of invasiveness of B-D will be assigned to the UACC Subcommittee for review. The actions of the UACC Subcommittee will be presented monthly to all UACC members in a Subcommittee Reviews Report. This report will be reviewed by the UACC for full committee approval of these actions. Category E renewals would be reviewed at a meeting of the full UACC.
- h) Require the submission of a new protocol after a maximum of three consecutive renewals.
- i) Document all UACC discussions and decisions in the UACC minutes. UACC minutes will be made readily available to all members of the UACC and to the senior administration responsible for animal care and use.
- j) Define an institutional appeal mechanism that can be used by the author of a protocol in the event that animal use is not approved by the UACC.
- k) Ensure that all animal users have the opportunity to become familiar with the CCAC's Guide; the CCAC policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation; all other CCAC guidelines and policy statements; federal, provincial or municipal statutes that may apply; as well as institutional requirements.
- l) Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations. Veterinary care must be available.
- m) Establish procedures, commensurate with current veterinary standards, to ensure that:
 - i) unnecessary pain or distress is avoided, and animal stress and injuries are avoided, whether during transfers of animals or in their normal quarters;
 - ii) anesthesia and analgesia are properly and effectively used; the only exception to this may be when agents must be withheld as a scientifically justified requirement of the study, and that this has been approved by the UACC. Painful studies requiring exemption from the use of either anesthetics or analgesia must be subject to particular scrutiny, not only prior to approval, but also during the experiment;
 - iii) appropriate postoperative care is provided;
 - iv) all due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental enrichment.
- n) Ensure that policies to provide for a system of animal care that will meet the needs of the institution are established and implemented, and include:
 - i) the requirement that all animal care and animal experimentation are conducted according to CCAC guidelines and policies, and to federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect;

UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (UACC)

- ii) ensuring adequate animal care and management of the animal facilities, in particular by verifying that there is a person clearly designated to be in charge of animal care and management of the animal facilities, who should be a member of the UACC, and who should keep the other UACC members updated on the activities within the animal facilities;
 - iii) the training and qualifications of animal users and animal care personnel; veterinarians and animal care staff (see the [UACC Policy on Animal User Training](#));
 - iv) an occupational health and safety program for those involved in animal care and use, in collaboration with the institutional authorities on occupational health and safety, that will appropriately protect all those who may be affected by animal-based work;
 - v) standards of husbandry, facilities and equipment;
 - vi) standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all activities and procedures that involve animals, including animal care and facility management SOP's (typically produced by the veterinary and animal care staff), and animal use SOP's (typically produced by animal users, in collaboration with veterinary/animal care staff as needed); the UACC should receive all SOP's and ensure that all necessary SOP's are produced and regularly reviewed;
 - vii) procedures for euthanasia (see the [UACC Policy on Euthanasia of Animals Used in Science](#)).
- o) Encourage the use of pilot studies with few animals when new approaches, methods, or products are being tried, before approving new, large scale protocols. Ensure that animal users report on the results of any pilot studies, no matter whether they wish to pursue the study immediately or not, in order to preserve important data on various approaches to animal-based studies, whether they work well or not.
- p) In the case of projects involving proprietary or patentable research or testing, ensure that as much information as possible is provided to the UACC in terms of what effects to expect on animal health and welfare, and insist on close monitoring of animals.

6. ADDITIONAL DUTIES

In addition, the University Animal Care Committee:

Must regularly review:

- I. Its Terms of Reference to meet new CCAC policies or guidelines and changing needs within the institution, the scientific community, the animal welfare community and society as a whole, and expand its Terms of Reference to meet the requirements of each institution;
 - II. the security of the animals and research facilities;
 - III. standard operating procedures and institutional animal care and use policies;
 - IV. policies and procedures for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures within the institution.
- 6.1) Must maintain liaison with the CCAC Secretariat.
- 6.2) Should consult with and identify the needs of teaching departments and investigators for healthy animals and for good quality animal care and advise on policies appropriate to those needs.
- 6.3) Should undertake site visits of animal care facilities and experimental laboratories within the institution at least once a year and document these visits through the UACC minutes or written reports. (See the [UACC Policy on the Oversight of Animals in Science](#))
- 6.4) Should make recommendations concerning the physical facilities, standards of care, principles of operation, and funding of Animal Care Services.
- 6.5) Should advise on major changes in the range and type of services provided by Animal Care Services.
- 6.6) Must submit complete and accurate animal use information using the CCAC Animal Use Data Form (AUDF) for all protocols annually (animal use information for each calendar year must be submitted by March 31 of



UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (UACC)

the following year) and using the CCAC Animal Care & Use Program Review Form for all regular and interim assessments.

- 6.7) Must develop a crisis management plan for the animal facilities and for the animal care and use program, in conjunction with any general institutional crisis management plan(s).
- 6.8) Should be open to developing and maintaining communication with animal welfare organizations.
- 6.9) Should be prepared to cope with criticism, which may develop from time to time.

Refer to the [Procedures of the University Animal Care Committee](#) for full details on:

- Procedures for the Use of Animals;
- Procedures of the Animal Care Committee;
- Protocol Review Process in Topaz Elements;
- Pilot Projects;
- Interim Approval;
- Appeal Mechanism;
- Conflict of Interest;
- Confidentiality