

**Animal Care Committee  
Terms of Reference**

**1. Introduction**

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) is committed to the humane and ethical care and use of animals and adheres to the principle that in order for animal use to be justifiable in science, the research or teaching must have a reasonable expectation of providing a benefit to the health and welfare of people or of animals, or of advancing basic knowledge.

To ensure that this commitment is carried out, UFV has established an animal care committee to facilitate research and teaching that complies with Canadian Council on Animal Care Guidelines and Policies and with the Three Rs' tenet of "reduction, replacement and refinement".

UFV must work with the Animal Care Committee to ensure that all animal users and caregivers are informed of and comply with institutional animal care and use policies and procedures.

The animal care committee will operate in accordance of these terms of reference.

**2. Membership**

The Provost and Vice-President, Academic, in consultation with the AVP Research and Graduate Studies, will determine the number of members on the ACC and is responsible for appointing members to the ACC. Members are appointed for terms of no less than two years and no more than four years (renewable once). The ACC is composed of the following members:

- a. UFV scientists and/or teachers experienced in animal care and use in science, (who may or may not be actively using animals during their term on the ACC);
- b. A veterinarian (consulting or permanent, ex-officio);
- c. Institutional members whose normal activities do not depend on or involve animal use for research, teaching or testing;
- d. At least one member representing community interests and concerns, and who has no affiliation with the institution, and who is not involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing;
- e. Technical staff representation (responsible for the management of the animal facilities);
- f. Student representation – one to two students currently registered at UFV;
- g. The ACC Coordinator (ex-officio);
- h. The ACC Secretariat (optional) (ex-officio);
- i. Any other person the Provost and Vice-President, Academic may deem appropriate (ex-officio)

The Chair of the ACC is appointed by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic. The Chair will not be directly involved in the management of the institutional animal facilities, nor be the clinical veterinarian for the institution, nor be involved in the preparation of a significant number of the protocols to be reviewed by the committee, in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Provision will be made to co-opt other persons to the ACC as the need arises.

The Provost and Vice-President, Academic appoints the ACC Coordinator (UFV Ethics and Compliance Officer). The Office of Research and Graduate Studies will act as the secretariat for the ACC and thus, provide administrative support.

The ACC Coordinator is responsible for:

- a. organizing meetings of the ACC
- b. organizing annual site visits;
- c. organizing Post Approval Monitoring and Animal Welfare Assessments
- d. contributing to the training of ACC members, including providing relevant resources and information as necessary;
- e. managing animal use protocols, including amendments and renewals;
- f. producing and distributing committee minutes and site visit reports, and ensuring appropriate follow up of any issues raised;
- g. documenting and filing of all exchanges between the ACC, animal users, and senior administration;
- h. documenting and acting on any animal incidents;
- i. contributing to the development and revision of the ACC 's terms of reference, animal use protocol forms and standard operating procedures (SOPs);
- j. documenting the training completed by all animal users;
- k. managing ACC membership and quorum
- l. participating in the preparation of animal use data for sending to the CCAC in the Animal Use Data Form annually; and
- m. preparing and submitting the Animal Care and Use Program Review Form for CCAC assessment visits and preparing and submitting the Implementation Report once recommendations from the CCAC are received.

UFV will have an official, signed contract with the consulting veterinarian if necessary, based on the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine's *CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care*. The contract outlines and defines the expectations of both parties with regard to the ACC veterinary duties and responsibilities and describes the continuing education of the veterinarian on the use of animals in science.

### **3. Meetings**

The Animal Care Committee will meet at least two times per year and as often as necessary to fulfill its Terms of Reference and be satisfied that all animal use within their jurisdiction is in compliance with institutional, municipal, federal and provincial regulations, and CCAC guidelines. Standing ACC meetings have been set for March, August, and December of each year to give animal users enough warning to submit protocols and to ensure that the ACC meets at least two times per year. The ACC will document all ACC discussions and decisions in the committee minutes and on attachments to the protocol forms. Minutes will be taken by the

ACC Coordinator or delegate (UFV Research Office), produced for each meeting, and forwarded to the AVP of Research and Graduate Studies.

For ACC meetings, a quorum will be a simple majority of ACC members, including the veterinarian, a researcher, and a community representative. If the ACC reaches a decision that is contrary to the comments of the community representative, veterinarian or researcher, the decision will be delayed until the next ACC meeting. The approval of a protocol will be done by consensus.

If a committee member has a potential conflict with a protocol review, the member will be asked to leave the room for the discussion and may not participate in a vote or count as part of the quorum concerning that protocol. Examples of conflict include being listed part of the project as Principal Investigator (PI), Co Investigator (Co-I), or staff or being a shareholder or having involvement with the sponsoring agency.

The ACC is responsible for setting the procedures for review and approval of protocols and the consensus necessary for any decision with respect to a protocol. The use of electronic tools is encouraged for protocol management purposes and to facilitate and expedite the submission and review of protocols; the ACC will meet synchronously for new protocol discussions and final approvals of new applications or major amendments.

Members of the ACC shall hold confidential materials including research protocols associated with the ACC and all discussions that take place at meetings of the ACC in the strictest confidence.

#### **4. Authority**

The ACC has the authority, on behalf of the head of the institution to:

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

The Chair of the ACC and the veterinarian will have fob access at all times to all areas where animals are or may be held or used. If the veterinarian is not a UFV employee, they shall be granted access at their request.

The ACC delegates to the on-call veterinarian(s) the authority to treat, remove from a study or euthanize, if necessary, an animal according to the veterinarian's professional judgment. The veterinarian will attempt to contact the animal user whose animal is in poor condition before beginning any treatment that has not previously been agreed upon, and will also attempt to contact the ACC Chair, but the veterinarian will have the authority to proceed with any necessary emergency measures, whether or not the animal user and ACC Chair are available. A

written report will be sent by the veterinarian to the animal user and to the ACC following any such event.

The ACC reports to the Provost and Vice-President, Academic or delegate. The consulting veterinarian and the manager of the animal care facility (Agriculture Program Technician) report to the Provost and Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Dean of Science respectively.

The intent of the ACC is to resolve concerns of the Committee with the investigator; the Committee will invite the investigator, if necessary, to appear before the Committee. The investigator has the right to appeal if the final decision of the ACC is to reject a protocol. The request for appeal is to be made to the Provost and Vice-President, Academic.

## **5. Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the ACC to:

- a. Ensure that no research or testing project or teaching program (including field studies) involving animals be commenced without prior ACC approval of a written animal use protocol; further to this, that no animals be acquired or used before such approval.
- b. Ensure that no animals be held for breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research or teaching projects, without prior ACC approval of a written animal use protocol. The ACC will take steps to make the institution aware of the ACC mandate and responsibility of other animal-based activities, such as commercial or recreational activities, within the institution, and will work with the persons responsible for these activities to ensure that animal care and use is undertaken according to appropriate procedures.
- c. Require all animal users to complete an animal use protocol form and ensure that the information is clearly presented so that all members of the ACC can readily understand.
- d. Require all animal users to complete the Scientific or Pedagogical Merit requirements prior to submitting an Animal Use Protocol (see ACC SOP 301 and 302).
- e. Review and assess all animal use protocols, with particular emphasis on the CCAC policy statement on ethics of animal investigation and CCAC guidelines on animal use protocol review as well as on all other relevant CCAC guidelines and policy statements and, where necessary, require further supportive information from the investigator/teacher or meet with the investigator/teacher to ensure that all members of the committee understand the procedures to be used on the animal. The committee will ensure that all procedures comply with CCAC guidelines, and, if at variance with those guidelines, require justification for the variance on scientific grounds.
- f. Ensure that animal users update their protocols with any modifications they intend to make, and approve any modifications to a protocol before they are implemented. Minor modifications are those aspects of the project that are not significantly different from the original protocol and have little impact on the conditions of the animals in use and can be approved by the Chair of the ACC or its designate.

The addition or reduction of the number of animals from the original protocol would be considered minor in the following situations.

1. for protocols using up to 10 animals, an addition/reduction of one animal;
2. for protocols counting between 10 and 20 animals, an addition of 2 new animals; and
3. for protocols involving more than 20 animals, an addition of up to 10 % of the original number of animals.

An exception can be made to the number of animals used in teaching protocols where the enrollment numbers are not confirmed but the AUP needs to be approved in advance of the course. The course instructor will state the animal numbers based on full enrollment or give a range of animals and will ensure the ratio of instructor to student remains relatively the same.

Other minor amendments include:

1. addition or change of personnel who have received proper training or have the proper experience to work safely with animals
  2. changes in the supplier of animals
  3. changes in minor procedures such as blood collection, injection route, type of gaseous anaesthetic used, etc., and
  4. change in drug(s) used, when the effects on the animal are equivalent
- g. For any major changes to a protocol, the ACC requires that a new protocol be submitted. Major changes are those aspects of the project that are significantly different from the original protocol and include an increase of the number of animals in excess of that defined in Section 5f, a change or addition of animal species, use of more invasive or more frequent procedures, and use of entirely new procedures.
- h. Ensure that animal users report any unanticipated problems or complications, as well as on the steps they have taken to address the problem(s), to the ACC;
- i. Review all protocols annually, i.e., within a year of commencement of the project; annual renewals will be approved by at least a scientist, a veterinarian and a community representative and will be brought to the attention of the full ACC for its information. The ACC requires the submission of a new protocol after a maximum of three consecutive renewals. All protocol renewals must emphasize on the renewal form:
- i. the number of animals used in the preceding year;
  - ii. the number of animals needed for the year to come, with a justification;
  - iii. a brief progress report, describing any complications encountered relative to animal use (unpredicted outcomes, and any animal pain, distress or mortality), any amendments to the original protocol, and any progress made with respect to the Three Rs of replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use;
  - iv. a brief report on the adequacy of the endpoints for the protocol, and on any complications encountered or refinements made relative to protecting animals from pain, distress or mortality;
  - v. a brief report on the animal welfare assessment activities; and
  - vi. any other changes from the original protocol.

- j. Ensure that all ACC members and animal users have the opportunity to become familiar with the CCAC Guide and *CCAC policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation* and all other CCAC guidelines and policy statements, federal, provincial or municipal statutes that may apply, as well as institutional requirements;
- k. Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations with veterinary care always available. These formal arrangements will be based on the elements contained in the *CALAM/ACMAL Standards of Veterinary Care* of the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine (2020), which define the roles and responsibilities of veterinarians involved in scientific animal care and use programs;
- l. 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; best practices and alternative methods will be explored and implemented whenever possible to minimize pain and distress when demonstrating animal procedures
  - 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 ACC. 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 post-operative care is provided;
  - iv. all due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental enrichment;
- m. 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 any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect;
  - 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 will be a member of the ACC, and who will keep the other ACC members updated on the activities within the animal facilities;
  - iii. training and qualifications of animal users and animal care personnel. The consulting veterinarian and animal care staff will be offered continuing education opportunities in their field. The consulting veterinarian will be offered a membership of the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine. Animal users (instructors, scientists/study directors, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and research technicians) will be required to take the Core Module Training Program available online (<https://ufv.ca/animal-care/training-resources/>) prior to using animals in teaching or research.
  - iv. new members appointed to the ACC will be given training by the ACC Chair or the ACC Coordinator who give the new members a tour of the animal facilities

- v. an occupational health and safety program for those involved in animal care and use, in collaboration with the UFV Safety and Security Office that will appropriately protect all those who may be affected by animal-based work;
  - vi. standards of husbandry, facilities and equipment;
  - vii. standard operating procedures for all activities and procedures that involve animals, including animal care and facility management SOPs which will be developed and reviewed by the consulting veterinarian and animal care staff), and animal use SOPs. The ACC will receive all SOPs and ensure that all necessary SOPs are reviewed every three years or when necessary, particularly with respect to using new species.
  - viii. procedures for euthanasia;
- n. 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;
  - o. May delegate the responsibility of interim approval subcommittee, which must include at least one scientific member, one veterinarian, and one community representative. Interim approvals will be used infrequently and only when necessary when a full board meeting cannot be scheduled in time (e.g. urgent circumstances) and must be justified by the PI. The interim review process, including exchanges between the ACC and the protocol authors, will be documented and then subject for discussion and final approval at a full meeting of the committee. If additional concerns are raised, the principal investigator or course instructor must address them before final approval is granted.
  - p. In the case of projects involving proprietary or patentable research or testing, ensure that as much information as possible is provided to the ACC in terms of what effects to expect on animal health and welfare, and insist on close monitoring of animals in order to respect the elements outlined in 3).
  - q. Ensure that for collaborative projects involving CCAC certified institutions, protocols are submitted to and evaluated by both the UFV ACC and the ACC of the collaborating institution(s) before any work involving animals begins. ACC SOP 311 described this process in detail<sup>3</sup>
  - r. Ensure any major animal incidents are reported to the Animal Care Committee Coordinator immediately. The ACC will report major animal welfare incidents to the CCAC within 10 days of occurrence using the CCAC [Major Animal Welfare Incident Self-Reporting Form](#).

## **6. Procedures for Protocol Review:**

- a. Protocol review  
The applicant submits an animal use protocol form for review before purchasing animals and before housing animals at UFV. The applicant submits the protocol to the ACC Coordinator who reviews it for completeness. If complete, the ACC Coordinator sends a copy to the ACC veterinarian for the first review to note any veterinary concerns. If there are no issues, copies are then forwarded to the Chair and members of the ACC. If this is a new

protocol, it is brought to a synchronous meeting. The ACC discusses the protocol and if in agreement by consensus, approves the protocol. If changes are requested the protocol will be returned to the applicant requesting changes. . Once approved, the applicant receives a certificate of approval provided the merit review is complete.

b. Protocol amendment

If there are changes to the original protocol, the applicant must submit a protocol amendment form to the ACC Coordinator who will ensure completeness, and if complete, will distribute the form to the veterinarian first if there are any concerns and then the ACC for their review and comment. This will be completed over email. If approved by the ACC, a certificate for the amended protocol will be issued. If the amendment is major, the ACC will meet to review and approve the changes.

c. Protocol renewal

For protocols that take place over more than one year, the applicant must submit a protocol renewal form prior to expiry; the renewal may be submitted after the expiry if the course or research does not happen annually within reason (for example rotation of courses, or postponing work due to leaves or challenges with fieldwork). The ACC Coordinator will ensure completeness, and if complete, will distribute the form to ACC for their review and comment. This will be completed over email. If approved by the ACC, a certificate for the amended protocol will be issued.

## **7. Post Approval Monitoring Program**

Post approval monitoring (PAM)<sup>4</sup> is required to provide assurance to the UFV ACC that all research and teaching involving animals are performed in accordance with an approved ACC Application for Use of Animals for Teaching / Research and conform to all regulatory and institutional requirements, including those of the CCAC and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

After a protocol has been approved and animals are in place, post approval monitoring visits will be made by the Chair of the ACC or a designate, who may be accompanied by other members or animal care staff, to ensure the protocol is being followed and note any concerns. This is an opportunity for the PI or course instructor to communicate any needs or concerns.

## **8. Site Visits<sup>5</sup>**

The ACC will annually visit all animal care facilities and areas in which animals are used, in order to better understand the work being conducted within the institution, to meet with those working in the animal facilities and animal use areas and discuss their needs, to monitor animal-based work according to approved protocols and SOPs, to assess any weaknesses in the facilities (aging facilities, overcrowding, insufficient staffing and any other concerns) and to forward any recommendations or commendations to the person(s) responsible for the facilities and for animal use.

The ACC will visit the animal facilities at least once a year through dedicated site visits or through PAM visits. The ACC will document the visit through the ACC minutes or written reports. A formal site visit will be conducted twice a year by a contracted veterinarian. Those responsible

for the animal facilities will respond to any ACC recommendations in writing, and site visit reports will be followed up on jointly by the senior administration (Provost and Vice-President, Academic and AVP, Research and Graduate Studies) and the ACC.

More frequent ACC site visits will be made as necessary and documented to follow up on any protocols that have raised significant concern during the protocol review process, or where problems have been encountered with a protocol being carried out in practice or with other aspects of animal facility operations; these visits will be carried out by the Chair of the ACC or a delegate, who may be accompanied by other members or animal care staff.

## **9. Animal Welfare Assessment**

Animal welfare assessments (AWAs) will be conducted by the PI or course instructor or delegate according to the SOP ACC 403<sup>6</sup>. They may be conducted by a subcommittee of the ACC. Animal Welfare Assessment (AWA) is required for all studies and courses. The frequency will depend on the duration and category of invasiveness.

## **10. General**

The animal care committee will:

- a) Regularly review (at least every three years):
  - a. its Terms of Reference to meet new CCAC guidelines or policies 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;
  - b. the security of the animals and research facilities;
  - c. standard operating procedures and institutional animal care and use policies; (SOP review may be delegated to ACC members with the appropriate expertise, but SOPs will be accessible to all ACC members, and the full ACC will review all SOPs that involve procedures that may result in deleterious effects to animal health or welfare); and
  - d. policies and procedures for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures within the institution, including the identification of the persons responsible for monitoring animal health and welfare, and the procedures carried out by the ACC to conduct monitoring;
- b) Maintain liaison with the CCAC Secretariat, and inform the Secretariat of any changes to their program: to the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, the chair of the ACC, or the veterinary or senior animal care personnel;
- c) Submit complete and accurate animal use information in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form* (AUDF) format for all protocols annually (animal use information for each calendar year will be submitted by March 31 of the following year) and also in pre-assessment documentation;

- d) Implement and maintain a crisis management program for the animal facilities and for the animal care and use program, in conjunction with any general institutional crisis management plan(s). This program will detail plans in the event of power outages (short and prolonged), work stoppages, fires, natural disasters, large chemical spills and other similar crises, and will include a communications plan for addressing public and media inquiries on concerns related to animal use;
- e) Sponsor seminars or workshops, from time to time, on the use of animals in science and the ethics of animal experimentation, and encourage attendance from animal users, animal caregivers, students, ACC members and other interested parties;
- f) Achieve and maintain a high profile within the institution and in the community in order to demonstrate the institution's efforts in promoting animal welfare and to allay some of the public concerns regarding animal experimentation; and
- g) Be open to developing and maintaining communication with animal welfare organizations.

References:

- 1: Scientific Merit PI and Reviewer Forms: <https://ufv.ca/animal-care/scientific-merit/>
- 2: Pedagogical Merit Course Instructor and Reviewer Forms: <https://ufv.ca/animal-care/pedagogical-merit-review/>
- 3: ACC SOP 311: Animal Based Projects Involving Two or More Institutions (not posted for public yet, still TBA by AVP)
- 4: Post Approval Monitoring Forms: <https://ufv.ca/animal-care/training-resources/>
- 5: Site Visit Forms: <https://ufv.ca/animal-care/training-resources/>
- 6: ACC SOP 403: Animal Welfare Assessment.