FACILITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE
(FACC)
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Facility Animal Care Committees (FACCs) are established for each major McGill University campus and affiliated institutions using animals in research, teaching or testing, in accordance with the Policies and Guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC). The purpose of each FACC is to ensure that all animals used in research, teaching or testing within its jurisdiction, are used and cared for in accordance with all applicable requirements. Each FACC’s operation is governed by the following Terms of Reference.

The FACCs are

1. Downtown Campus A FACC - jurisdiction includes all downtown campus-based departments within the Faculty of Medicine, Science, Dentistry and others (non-field study projects),
2. Downtown Campus B FACC - jurisdiction includes all downtown campus-based departments within the Faculty of Medicine, Science, Dentistry and others (non-field study projects),
3. Macdonald Campus FACC – jurisdiction includes all Macdonald Campus departments/institutes, and all associated animal facilities, including the farm as well as field study projects from the Faculty of Science, Science and others.
4. The Montreal Neurological Institute
5. Research Institute of the McGill University Health Center (RI MUHC) Glen site
6. Research Institute of the McGill University Health Center (RI MUHC) MGH site
7. Shriners Hospital for Children
8. Douglas Mental Health University Institute
9. Sir Mortimer B. Davis Jewish General Hospital’s Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research

On the basis of CCAC certification, the “McGill FACCs” consist of the Downtown Campus A, Downtown Campus B, Macdonald Campus and MNI FACCs while the individual “Research Institute FACCs” are the MUHC Glen and MGH sites, JGH, Douglas and Shriners.

The FACC reports to the Dean/Director of the Faculty/Institute. In addition, FACCs have representation on UACC and report to it.

1. Membership

FACC members are appointed for terms of no less than two years and no more than four years, renewable only up to a maximum of eight consecutive years of service. This maximum should not be exceeded, except in the case of very small institutions (i.e. those that have 3 or fewer animal
users). This does not apply to FACC members who must be part of the FACC because of their role within the institution (*ex officio* members): the FACC coordinator, the veterinarian(s), the Animal Compliance Office representative (ACO) and the animal facility manager. The complement may vary according to the needs of each committee, but, at a minimum, includes:

- **a)** a minimum of two scientists and/or teachers experienced in animal care and use, who may or may not be actively using animals during their term on the FACC; representation of all the major animal-using divisions of the institution must be ensured;
- **b)** veterinarian(s) experienced in laboratory animal medicine
- **c)** an institutional member whose normal activities do not depend on or involve animal use for research, teaching or testing;
- **d)** at least one, and preferably two or more, person(s) representing community interests and concerns, who has (have) had no recent affiliation with the institution, and who has (have) not been involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing for at least one year; community representation must be ensured for all FACC activities throughout the year;
- **e)** technical staff representation (either an animal care, an animal facility or an animal research technician);
- **f)** the animal facility supervisor, whether a veterinarian, a scientist, or a technical staff member
- **g)** the Animal Compliance Office representative(s)
- **h)** student representation (graduate); and
- **i)** the FACC coordinator.

The FACC must have a Chair who is not directly involved in the management of the institutional animal facilities, nor is the facility clinical veterinarian, nor is an animal health or veterinary personnel member charged with ensuring compliance with CCAC guidelines, nor is 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.

In the absence of the Chair, or when in conflict of interest, a Chair may delegate his/her authority and responsibilities, to another member of the committee, who is not directly involved in the management of the institutional animal facilities, nor is the facility clinical veterinarian, nor is an animal health or veterinary personnel member charged with ensuring compliance with CCAC guidelines, nor is in conflict of interest, who will act according to the Terms of Reference and institutional policies. This member is often referred to as Vice-Chair of the FACC.

The coordinator supports the FACC by ensuring that animal use protocols are well managed, that committee minutes and reports are promptly produced and distributed, that all exchanges between the FACC and animal users are well documented and filed in a timely manner, and that animal users and FACC members are provided with necessary information.

### 2. Authority

The FACC has the authority, on behalf of the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use for the institution, to:

- **a)** stop any 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 euthanized humanely if pain or distress caused to the animal is not part of the approved protocol and cannot be alleviated.

d) Order the withholding of research funds and/or animal ordering privileges for projects in non-compliance with the applicable requirements.

e) Revoke animal facility access privileges and take further action if appropriate: animal facilities must report revoking of privileges to the FACC with appropriate documentation justifying this action.

The FACC must have access at all times to all areas where animals are or may be held or used.

The FACC works with the ACO, the Quality Assistant, members of the veterinary and animal care staff to ensure compliance with its decisions and with the conditions set out in approved protocols. The ACO, the Quality Assistant, the veterinary and animal care staff must work in a collegial manner with animal users and attempt to correct deficiencies collaboratively. Where there are persistent breaches of compliance or threats to the health and safety of personnel or animals, these must be reported back to the Chair (or delegate) of the FACC, and the FACC must promptly address these issues, through communications with the animal user(s), meetings and site visits, and eventually communications with the senior administrator, as necessary.

The FACC also delegates to the 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 must attempt to contact the animal user whose animal is in poor condition before beginning any treatment that has not previously been agreed upon, and must also attempt to contact the FACC Chair (or delegate), but the veterinarian has the authority to proceed with any necessary emergency measures, whether or not the animal user and FACC Chair (or delegate) are available. A written report should be sent by the veterinarian to the animal user and to the FACC following any such event.

The FACC is the body responsible for determining and working to correct breaches of compliance with approved animal use protocols and SOPs. Breaches of compliance that cannot be corrected by the FACC working with the concerned animal users, the Quality Assistant (QA) responsible for post-approval monitoring and veterinary/animal care staff must be referred to the senior administration, which 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.

3. Responsibility of higher administration:

In consultation with the current FACC Chair, the senior administrator of each Faculty and Institute appoints FACC members and Chairs. They also provide a FACC coordinator. For specifics on appointment of community representatives refer to UACC Policy on Community Representatives.

The Faculties and Institutes must also ensure that FACC members are provided with training opportunities to understand their work and role: these must include at least a formal orientation session, to introduce new FACC members to the institution's animal care and use program and its members, policies and procedures, as well as to the animal facilities and to CCAC guidelines and policies. Ongoing opportunities to better understand animal care and use in science are also provided.
The Faculties and Institutes must also ensure that projects involving the use of animals are reviewed for their scientific or pedagogical merit, according to CCAC policies.

4. Responsibility of FACC

It is the responsibility of the FACC to:

a) Ensure that no research or testing project or teaching program (including field studies) involving animals be commenced without prior FACC approval in the form of an Animal Use Protocol; further to this, that no animals be acquired or used before such approval. This includes internally funded projects;

b) Ensure that no animals be held for breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research, teaching or testing projects, without prior FACC approval in the form of an Animal Use Protocol, except where current CCAC guidelines provide for exemptions.

c) Require all animal users to complete an Animal Use Protocol form in its entirety and ensure that the information therein includes the following points, clearly presented in a form that all members of the FACC can readily understand. To facilitate the work of both protocol authors and FACC members, appropriate SOPs are to be followed when applicable.

i) project title and descriptive procedural keywords and brief description of the procedures to be conducted on animals

ii) principal investigators/teachers, and all personnel (post-doctoral fellows, research staff, graduate and undergraduate students) who will handle animals, along with their training and qualifications with respect to animal handling;

iii) departmental affiliation;

iv) the work and numbers of animals for the first year only should be approved, and further work can then be approved in yearly protocol renewal(s) or new protocols;

v) for research or testing projects, funding source(s);

vi) for research projects, an indication of whether the project has received peer review for scientific merit;

vii) for teaching programs, a course number (if applicable) and an indication of whether the course has been reviewed with respect to the pedagogical merit of using live animals;

viii) for testing projects, an indication that the testing has been planned according to the most current regulatory requirements, using guidelines acceptable to the regulatory agency(ies) and which meet the requirements of the CCAC Policies; that the planned animal use not exceed the requirements of the regulatory authorities - if it does, justification for the additional animal use must be provided;

ix) lay summary;

x) an indication of the use of biohazardous, hazardous chemical or radioactive agents in animal-based projects;

xi) category(ies) of invasiveness and Purpose of Animal Use (PAU) as defined in the CCAC Policies,

xii) awareness with regard to the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement alternatives) of animal use, to include:

xii.1 Justification of why sentient animals must be used for the project, of how the applicant arrived at this conclusion (e.g., searches of databases on alternatives), and of possible replacement alternatives (non-animal methods,
cell/tissue culture, computer simulations, audio-visual teaching methods, the replacement of sentient animals with animals of lower sentiency, etc.) and justification if these are not to be employed;

xii.2 justification of the species and numbers of animals to be used over the course of the year, to emphasize reduction of animal use within an appropriate experimental design, while ensuring that sufficient numbers of animals will be used to fulfill requirements for statistical significance/scientific validity in the case of research projects, or for acceptance of regulatory tests;

xii.3 awareness of all of the refinements to be employed to protect and enhance animal health and welfare, which may include:

xii.3.1 anesthesia and analgesia, including dosages and methods of use, for all invasive protocols;

xii.3.2 other medical treatments as appropriate, as indicated through veterinary consultations;

xii.3.3 housing and husbandry methods, and environmental enrichment as a means to refine animal care; any limitations on environmental enrichment from that normally offered to animals in the institution, based on CCAC guidance, must be justified to the FACC;

xii.3.4 refinements to the procedures to be employed on the animals;

xii.3.5 refinements to the length of time that animals will be held/used;

xii.3.6 any other possible refinements;

xiii) a clear description detailing the procedures that are carried out on the animals (referring to appropriate SOPs as much as possible);

xiv) a description of the endpoint(s) of the experimentation, selected according to the CCAC guidelines on: choosing an appropriate endpoint in experiments using animals for research, teaching and testing, 1998 (refer to institutional SOPs, if available and relevant); the person(s) responsible for monitoring the animals and applying endpoints should be identified, and the schedule for monitoring animals and any relevant checklists of signs and symptoms to be used when evaluating the animals should be included; all protocols, even non-invasive ones, must identify endpoints, to ensure that any animals requiring treatment are treated and that animals are not simply kept indefinitely; relevant information for identifying and applying endpoints must be readily available, preferably posted, in the area where the animal-based work is taking place;

xv) a description of capture, restraint, transportation and/or housing of animals used in field studies, as well as any other information pertinent to field studies, such as capture of non-target species, ecological impacts and potential injuries or mortality during capture or transportation, if relevant;

xvi) the method of euthanasia, if used; justification for any physical euthanasia methods, or for any methods that deviate from those described in the most recent CCAC guidance on euthanasia;

xvii) a description of the fate of the animals if they are not to be euthanized, including the length of time that they are to be held;

xviii) any other information considered important or necessary and pertinent, including information or results derived from any relevant previous protocols; the description and use of previous relevant results is particularly important to ensure that methodologies are not simply re-used without learning from any animal welfare problems that were encountered in the past, that the protocol
continues to have relevant goals and methodology, and that appropriate refinements to protect and enhance animal welfare are sought and implemented;

d) Ensure that each research project has been found to have scientific merit through independent peer review before approving the project; if the review is not carried out by an external, peer review agency, it must be obtained according to the CCAC policy statement on: the importance of independent peer review of the scientific merit of animal based research projects, 2000, and the mechanism in place through which non-peer-reviewed projects are reviewed for their scientific merit;

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. Information exchanges and FACC discussions with protocol authors can be very useful, but protocol authors and members of their teams must always clearly remove themselves from FACC decision-making on their own protocols.

The committee must also ensure that all procedures comply with CCAC guidelines, and, if at variance with those guidelines, require justification for the variance on scientific grounds. FACCs should both discuss protocols and make decisions on them during full committee meetings, rather than through individual reviews, and should attempt to reach decisions by consensus. Electronic tools are widely used for protocol management purposes and to facilitate and expedite the submission and review of protocols. This is encouraged as long as FACCs continue to meet in person for protocol discussions and final approvals.

A FACC can delegate the responsibility of interim approvals to an interim approval subcommittee, which must include at least one scientific member, one veterinarian and one community representative, one of which should preferably be the chair of the FACC. The interim review process, including exchanges between the FACC and protocol authors, must be documented and must then be subject to discussion and final approval at a full meeting of the committee. Protocol authors requiring an interim approval must contact the Chair (or delegate) and justify the need for such a review.

f) Ensure that animal users update their protocols with any modifications they intend to make, and approve any amendments to a protocol before they are implemented.

i) For any major changes, a review by the full committee is required. Major changes are defined as: change in the fundamental objective, a considerable increase of the number of animals required, a change of species, use of more invasive or more frequent procedures.

ii) For moderate modifications, a review by the subcommittee of the FACC is required. A moderate modification is defined as any changes that are more significant than minor ones (refer to iii) but less than major changes (refer to i) such as adding a procedure or drug, husbandry changes and change of location for housing and/or procedures”.

iii) For minor modifications, a review by the Chair of the FACC or a delegate is required. Minor modifications are defined as: changing contact information, changing funding source, addition or removal of personnel, addition of a small percentage of the number of animals (e.g. 10%), addition of a new strain, changing housing or procedure location, switching to less invasive, distressful or painful procedures, switching to a non-physical euthanasia
method covered by an approved SOP. Minor modifications approved by the Chair (or delegate) are documented in the minutes of the following FACC meeting.

iii) 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 FACC;

**g)** Review all protocols annually, i.e., within a year of commencement of the project; annual renewals should be approved by at least a scientist, a veterinarian and a community representative and should be brought to the attention of the full FACC for its information. Protocol renewals must emphasize:

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; and

v) any other changes from the original protocol.

Require the submission of a full protocol after a maximum of three consecutive renewals;

**h)** Document all FACC discussions and decisions in the committee minutes and on attachments to the protocol forms;

**i)** Ensure that all FACC 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;

**j)** Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations. Veterinary care must be available. Formal arrangements must be made to obtain the services of a veterinarian, at least on a consultative basis, if they are not readily available within the institution. These formal arrangements must be based on the elements contained in the *CALAM/ACMAL Standards of Veterinary Care* of the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine (2004), which define the roles and responsibilities of veterinarians involved in scientific animal care and use programs;

**k)** 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 FACC. 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;

**l)** 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; and

m) In the case of projects involving proprietary or patentable research or testing, ensure that as much information as possible is provided to the FACC in terms of what effects to expect on animal health and welfare, and insist on close monitoring of animals.

n) Designating areas in which animals may be housed, cared for and used so as to ensure facilities and personnel are adequate to provide humane care and use.

o) Supports the Quality Assistance Program to ensure that all animal facilities and research laboratories where live animal work is conducted, are visited by the QA on a regular basis to facilitate compliance to animal use protocols. In collaboration with the QA, addresses pending and/or unresolved non-compliance issues in a timely manner.

p) For multi facility protocols, it is the home FACC to which the protocol is submitted and where it is reviewed. The Chair of the home FACC will send a copy to the Chair of the host FACC who will discuss it with the appropriate committee members as necessary and send comments back to the home FACC Chair or administrator. Comments from both FACCs will be incorporated into one letter to the PI.

q) For construction and renovations of all proposed and current animal housing and research facilities, the FACC, or a sub-committee thereof, forms part of the overall evaluation process of facility planning with the Director of the Facility, and reports to the UACC on progress of major projects.

r) Ensure that assessment documentation is supplied by the deadline. That a response it given to the CCAC for recommendations made in assessment reports and requests for updates.

5. Meetings

Animal care committees should meet at least four times per year and as often as necessary to fulfill their 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. Minutes detailing FACC discussions, decisions and modifications to protocols must be produced for each meeting, and, McGill and MNI FACCs must forward this information to the ACO.

Quorum is the majority of committee members, but under most circumstances it must include Community Representative and Veterinarian. Meetings should be scheduled at times that are convenient for all members, including community representatives. Comments should be sent in by non-attending committee members.

Visits of the animal facilities and areas in which live animals are used must be conducted at least once a year, and must be documented through the FACC minutes or written reports. Those responsible for the animal facilities and laboratories should respond to any FACC recommendations in writing, and site visit reports should be followed up on conjointly with the senior administration and the FACC. Visits to animal care facilities and areas in which live animals are used may be divided between the various members of the committee. Each member of the FACC should participate in at least one of the facility visit(s) on an annual basis.

In addition, the FACC is encouraged to 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 (ageing facilities, overcrowding, insufficient staffing, appropriate
management of controlled substances and documentation of use, and any other concerns) and to
forward any recommendations or commendations to the person(s) responsible for the facilities
and for animal use.

More frequent FACC site visits should be made as necessary 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 may be carried out by the Chair of the FACC or delegate, accompanied or
not by other members or animal care staff.

6. General

The animal care committee:

a) FACCs of Research Institutes must submit the Animal Use Data Form of the past year (CCAC
report) by March 31 to the CCAC. For McGill and MNI FACCs, the AUDF is completed in
collaboration and the ACO is to submit to the CCAC.

b) Must ensure that a crisis management program is in place for the animal facilities and for the
animal care and use program, in conjunction with any general institutional crisis
management plan(s). This program must detail plans in the event of power outages (short
and prolonged), work stoppages, fires, natural disasters, large chemical spills and other
similar crises, and must include a communications plan for addressing public and media
inquiries on concerns related to animal use;

c) May, from time to time, sponsor seminars or workshops on the use of animals in science and
the ethics of animal experimentation, and encourage as many animal users, animal
caregivers, students, FACC members and other interested parties to attend as possible.

UACC approved on March 27 2017