UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE
(UACC)
TERMS OF REFERENCE

The University Animal Care Committee (UACC) is responsible for issuing policies regulating the humane care and use of animals in research, teaching or testing, carried out by McGill University/affiliated institutions personnel, harmonizing the work of Facility Animal Care Committees (FACCs) in order to meet Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines throughout the institution.

UACC’s operation is governed by the following Terms of Reference.

1. Authority

With provision that issues are to be resolved with the FACC, the UACC retains the authority in extraordinary circumstances, on behalf of the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use for the institution, to ensure compliance with the policies.

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

The UACC works with the FACCs, the Animal Compliance Office and members of the veterinary and animal care staff to ensure compliance with its decisions and policies.

2. Membership

UACC 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 does not apply to UACC members who must be part of the UACC because of their role within the institution (ex officio members). The complement includes:

a) a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson
b) the Chairperson of each FACC
c) A non-animal user who has experience in ethics
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; community representation must be ensured for all UACC activities throughout the year;
e) Veterinarian(s) experienced in laboratory animal medicine
f) A representative of Animal Facilities Managers/Supervisors
g) A representative in Public Relations
h) the Animal Compliance Office representative(s)
i) Other person(s) as may be deemed necessary by the Committee as the need arises
j) the UACC coordinator.

In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, UACC must have a chair who is not directly involved in the management of an animal facility, nor is the veterinarian, nor is an animal health or veterinary personnel member charged with ensuring compliance with CCAC guidelines.

The coordinator supports the UACC by coordinating meetings and activities of UACC subcommittees, and ensuring that committee minutes and reports are promptly produced and distributed, that all exchanges between the UACC, the VP RIR and FACCs are well documented and filed in a timely manner, and that animal users and FACC members are provided with necessary information.

3. Responsibility of higher administration:

The VP Research and International Relations (VP RIR) appoints the UACC Chair and Vice-Chair and provides a UACC Coordinator.

The VP RIR ensures that UACC members are provided with training opportunities to understand their work and role: these include at least a formal orientation session, to introduce new UACC members to the institution's animal care and use program and its members, policies and procedures, as well as to CCAC guidelines and policies. Ongoing opportunities to better understand animal care and use in science are also provided.

The VP RIR receives appeals that can be requested by the author of a protocol in the event that animal use is not approved by the FACC. The VP RIR defines a mechanism that includes an appropriate expertise and ensures a separate, fair and impartial process.

4. Responsibility of UACC

It is the responsibility of the UACC to:

a) Ensure appropriate care and use of animals throughout the McGill network by establishing policies and guidelines and harmonizing the work of FACCs in accordance with the CCAC policies and guidelines and to any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect.

b) Support ongoing educational programs to ensure training and appropriate qualifications of animal users and animal care personnel, according to the CCAC guidelines.

d) Ensure that the institution or institute has an occupational health and safety program in place for those involved in animal care and use that will appropriately protect all those who may be affected by animal-based work, according to CCAC guidelines or the most recent guidance on occupational health and safety.

e) Ensure that a crisis management plan for the animal care and use program is in place, in conjunction with any institutional or facility crisis management plan(s). This program must include a communications plan for addressing public and media inquiries on concerns related to animal use.
f) Bring to the attention of the VP RIR any matters requiring special attention, and to make recommendations as appropriate.

h) Regularly review (at least every three years):
   i) its Terms of Reference and the ones of the FACCs and the standing subcommittees of the UACC which include Executive, Ethics, Protocol Form Review, Training and Qualifications, Community and Communications, Occupational Health and Safety, Quality Assistance and Veterinary Care, to meet 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.
   ii) standard operating procedures and institutional animal care and use policies; SOP review may be delegated to a UACC subcommittee with the appropriate expertise, but SOPs should be accessible to all UACC members, and the full UACC should review all SOPs that involve procedures that may result in deleterious effects to animal health or welfare.
   iii) 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 FACC to conduct monitoring.

i) Maintain liaison through VP RIR with the CCAC and inform them of any major changes to the program such as the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use, the chairperson of the UACC, FACCs or the veterinarians or senior animal care personnel.

j) 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 must be submitted by March 31 of the following year) and also in pre-assessment documentation;

k) Maintain communication with the community to educate the public on the positive aspects of, and the benefits derived from, animal based research.

l) 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.

m) Maintain a high profile within the institution and in the community in order to demonstrate the institution's efforts in promoting animal welfare.

n) To continue to conduct a constructive dialog with animal welfare organizations.

5. Meetings

UACC meets generally 4 times per year (minimum twice) and as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. Minutes detailing UACC discussions and decisions are produced in a timely fashion for each meeting, and are forwarded to members.

Quorum is the majority of the members, and must include Community Representative and Veterinarian. Meetings are scheduled at times that are convenient for all members, including community representatives. If the Chairperson of a FACC is unable to attend a meeting, a representative is expected to attend. The representative is a member of the FACC, preferably a Faculty Member but cannot be a student.

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