



McGill University

**Animal Policy & Welfare Oversight Committee's
ANIMAL ETHICS WORKING GROUP
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee's (APWOC) Animal Ethics Working Group reflects on ethical issues and assists the Animal Care Committees (ACCs) in their protocol review by offering guidance on those issues.

The Animal Ethics Working Group reports to the Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee (APWOC).

1. Membership

The Animal Ethics Working Group Chair is appointed by the APWOC for terms of no less than two years and up to four years and can be renewed. The Chair must be affiliated with McGill University and may be an ethicist, a researcher, a faculty member, or a member of the animal care program. Members are selected by the Animal Ethics Working Group. The expertise of the members may vary according to the needs of the committee, but, at a minimum, include:

- a) A minimum of three researchers and/or instructors experienced in animal care and use, who may or may not have an active animal use protocol during their term on the Animal Ethics Working Group.
- b) The APWOC Vice-Chair or Chair (*ex officio*).
- c) At least one veterinarian(s) from McGill.
- d) A representative from the Communication and Community Working Group.
- e) At least one, and preferably two, person(s) representing community interests and concerns, who has (have) no current affiliation with McGill and affiliates and who has (have) not been involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing; a community representative must be present for all meetings throughout the year.
- f) At least one representative(s) from Animal Facilities personnel.
- g) Animal Compliance Office representative(s).
- h) The Ethics Working Group Coordinator (from the Animal Compliance Office).
- i) A student representative

In cases of absence or in case of conflict of interest (real or apparent) on a particular file, the Chair shall delegate responsibilities to the Vice-Chair, who must also meet the above qualifications. A consultant expert on specialized subject of interest can be invited as needed including a bioethicist.

Individuals may act in more than one capacity listed above, provided they are not in conflict of interest. The role of the Chair is to encourage and facilitate constructive discussion between members and ensure decisions represent the collective or majority views of the committee.

The Coordinator supports the Animal Ethics Working Group by ensuring that committee minutes and reports are promptly produced and distributed, that all exchanges between the Animal Ethics, APWOC, and ACCs are well documented and filed in a timely manner, and that members are provided with necessary information.

2. Role

The Animal Ethics Working Group role is to:

- a) Reflect and discuss on different subjects related to the use of animals in research and teaching, including the 3Rs, stay abreast in any new development in animal ethics by reviewing publications, most recent CCAC positions and guidelines, society points of views and contribute to the dialogue with animal welfare groups.
- b) assist the Animal Care Committees (ACCs) in their protocol review by offering guidance when requested on evaluation of any aspect of a project.
- c) Act as a resource to provide expert advice on animal ethics.

The Animal Ethics Working Group can visit any areas where animals are or may be held or used as needed.

The Animal Ethics Working Group works with the ACCs, the Animal Compliance Office, the veterinarians, the research and teaching community, and members of the veterinary and animal care staff in ongoing discussions to ensure and promote best practices in animal welfare.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Animal Ethics Working Group:

- a) To recommend to the APWOC the creation of such policies and guidelines as may be helpful for establishing high standards of ethical awareness and practice among the scientific community using animals in research and teaching.
- b) To serve as a resource to the APWOC and the ACCs in matters pertaining to the ethics of animal care and use.
- c) To keep the members informed of the different projects undertaken, the Animal Ethics Working Group has the ability to review and/or discuss any Animal Use Protocol (either approved or in the process of being approved). The Animal Ethics Working Group will perform a review prior to approval of a protocol if requested by the ACCs or the APWOC.
- d) To recommend to ACCs Chairs such specific changes in an Animal Use Protocol that it may deem necessary to assist the ACCs in their review process and affiliated programs (upon request).
- e) To report activities to the APWOC on a regular basis.

4. Meetings

The Animal Ethics Working Group shall meet as needed to fulfill its responsibilities. The minutes detailing discussions must be produced for each meeting and the recommendations sent to the APWOC Chair and the appropriate stakeholder(s).

Quorum is the majority of the members, and must include research, community and veterinary representation. Meetings should be scheduled at times that are convenient for all members, including community representatives.

5. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed five years after their approval. APWOC may make recommendations for modifications to these Terms of Reference.

*UACC revised on May 17 2019
Ethics revised on April 7 2021
Ethics revised on June 10, 2021
Ethics revised on Aug 31, 2021
APWOC approved Sept 1, 2021
Ethics revised on Aug 29, 2025
Approved by APWOC October 01, 2025*