



McGill University

Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee
Community and Communications Working Group
Terms of Reference

Effective communications about the use of animals in research and teaching at McGill, a world-class research-intensive university, is critical to maintain a functional transparent relationship with the media and community at large.

The Community and Communications Working Group reports to the Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee (APWOC). It researches, develops, and recommends policies, procedures, and strategic plans to increase transparency and public understanding about the wide-ranging benefits of using animals in research and teaching, both at McGill and in science overall. When mandated by APWOC, the working group will propose and facilitate outreach projects between communications units at McGill and its affiliated research hospitals.

1. Membership

APWOC appoints the working group chair, who must be a senior communications professional from McGill or its affiliates. The term of the chair will be two years, and the chair may be reappointed once for a maximum tenure of four consecutive years. The chair represents the working group on APWOC and reports its activities.

Other members are either ex-officio members or selected by the Community and Communications Working Group for a term of two years. Appointees are eligible for reappointment, but may not serve more than six consecutive years, except in the case of extenuating circumstances. The expertise of the members may vary according to the working group's mandate and projects. However, the core membership of the working group includes:

- a)** Director, Communications and Operations, Research and Innovation (or delegate)
- b)** Director, Institutional Communications (or delegate)
- c)** One Representative, Communications, from faculty using animals in research, specifically, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
- d)** University Veterinarian (or delegate)
- e)** Associate Director, Animal Compliance Office
- f)** Two researchers who use animals in their work

- g)** One community representative
- h)** Working group coordinator
- i)** Other persons invited by the working group, which may include representatives of communications units in affiliated institutions

2. Roles

The purpose of the Community and Communications Working Group is to provide guidance and coordination on efforts to enhance McGill communications, outreach, and visibility initiatives as they relate to the use of animals in research and teaching. The working group's overall goal is to position McGill as a leading research-intensive institution that maintains the highest standards of animal ethics and care. As such, the working group focuses its efforts on:

- Recommending initiatives that will increase transparency about the use of animals in research and teaching at McGill as well as awareness and understanding of its scientific impact and necessity.
- Conducting research on the effectiveness of communications materials and channels on McGill's target audiences (e.g., affiliated hospitals, researchers, the media, funders, and the public), with the goal of sharing information widely among communications units at McGill, and affiliated institutions.
- Supporting communications teams at McGill by commenting on and contributing to the creation of communications plans, recommending communication channels to improve reach and visibility, and bringing diverse perspectives in reviewing communications messages and materials; when requested by the affiliated institutions on a special-project basis, this support may extend to the affiliated institutions.
- Providing advice on issues and opportunities related to McGill communications, branding, credibility, and reputation; advising on issues that the University or APWOC may wish to take a position on; and developing new policies related to public affairs and/or communications.
- Gathering information to help APWOC stay abreast of important communications trends or developments.

3. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Community and Communications Working Group to:

- Recommend to APWOC the creation of such plans, projects, initiatives, policies, and guidelines as may be helpful for establishing high standards of transparency in communications related to animal use in research and teaching at McGill and across Canada.
- Serve as a resource to APWOC in matters pertaining to communications, marketing, branding, and managing reputational risk.

- Keep the members informed of the different projects undertaken by the working group and by APWOC, as necessary.
- Report activities to APWOC on a regular basis.
- Recommend changes to the working group's terms of reference to APWOC.

4. Meetings and Process

The Community and Communications Working Group shall meet as needed to fulfill its responsibilities. The minutes detailing discussions must be produced for each meeting. The working group will send any recommendations to the APWOC chair and the appropriate stakeholders for consideration.

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.

Revised October 2021

APWOC approved Feb 2, 2022

APWOC revised September 30, 2025

APWOC approved October 01, 2025