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Animal Ethics Policy

Office of Accountability:	Vice-President (Research)
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Research Ethics Office (REO)
Approver:	Board of Governors
Scope:	Compliance with this university policy extends to all academic, support and excluded staff, postdoctoral fellows, and academic colleagues as outlined and defined in the Recruitment Policy (Appendix A and Appendix B: Definitions and Categories); undergraduate and graduate students; emeriti; visitors to campus, including visiting scholars; third party contractors; and volunteers who use animals for research, teaching or testing.

Overview

The University of Alberta holds that scholarly integrity and trust are vital to the responsible conduct of research. It is committed to ensuring the ethical and humane use and responsible care of animals in research, teaching and testing. The University of Alberta regards the use of animals in research, teaching and testing as a privilege, not a right. Animals are used only for valid scientific studies with a reasonable expectation of obtaining knowledge for the potential benefit of people and/or animals. The University of Alberta is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards in the care, well-being, quality of life and use of its animals in accordance with applicable laws, the **Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC)** guidelines and policy statements, and the *Tri-Agency Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions*.

Purpose

- To promote the highest standards of practice in research, teaching and testing involving animals.
- To establish the nature of these standards and address instances when these standards have not been met.

POLICY

1. GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF ANIMAL CARE AND USE
 - a. Animals used in research, teaching and testing by University of Alberta staff and trainees must be cared for and maintained in accordance with applicable laws, CCAC guidelines and policy statements, and the requirements of the *Tri-Council Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions*.
 - b. The Russell-Burch Three Rs Replacement, Reduction and Refinement principles will be upheld in the design and review of animal use protocols.
2. ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEES
 - a. The Vice-President (Research) shall establish an institutional Animal Policy and Welfare Committee [University Animal Policy and Welfare Committee (UAPWC)] to concern itself with the ethical and responsible use and care of animals in research, teaching and testing.
 - b. UAPWC has the authority, on behalf of the Vice-President (Research) to:
 - i. stop any procedure if it considers that unnecessary and/or unanticipated pain or distress is being experienced by the animal;
 - ii. stop immediately any use of animals that is not described within an approved protocol or that deviates from the approved protocol;

- iii. direct that any animal be humanely euthanised if it is experiencing unnecessary and/or unanticipated pain or distress that cannot be alleviated; and
 - iv. order the closure of facilities that do not meet CCAC standards and/or endanger the well-being of animals contained therein.
- c. UAPWC shall establish such specialized Animal Care and Use Committees (ACUCs) as necessary to review and manage animal use applications. All **Principal Investigators (PIs)** using animals must apply to and be accountable to at least one of the specialized ACUCs.
- d. UAPWC will serve as the appeal body concerning a negative decision of an ACUC. A PI who disputes an ACUC decision, following reconsideration by ACUC, may appeal that decision to UAPWC. Refer to the *Animal Care and Use Committee Appeal Procedure*.
- i. Because ethics review and the observance of research ethics at the University is premised on collegial relations between ACUCs and researchers, a request for appeal must be a last resort. An appeal may only be made on the grounds that there has been a miscarriage of justice, such as an error in process, procedural irregularity, lack of due process, and exceptions to the precepts of natural justice such as bias.
 - ii. If an appeal is upheld, UAPWC will immediately review the animal use protocol in question. Decisions by UAPWC on appeals are final.

3. ETHICS REVIEW OF ANIMAL USE

- a. The purpose of the University's animal care and use program is to ensure that in the use of animals in research, teaching and testing conducted under the auspices of the University, the highest ethical standards are adhered to at all times and in all circumstances.
- b. University of Alberta staff and trainees shall not acquire or use an animal for research, teaching, or testing without prior written approval from one of the University's ACUCs.
- c. Each ACUC shall have a defined area of expertise and shall be capable of considering a range of research methods and animal models within that area. ACUCs are mandated to approve, reject, propose modifications to or terminate the approval of any proposed or ongoing animal use that is subject to review under this Policy. PIs should apply to ACUC best equipped to review the proposed animal use for which approval is requested.
- d. ACUC has the authority to:
 - i. stop any procedure if it considers that unnecessary and/or unanticipated pain or distress is being experienced by the animal;
 - ii. stop immediately any use of animals that is not described in an approved protocol or that deviates from an approval protocol; and
 - iii. direct that any animal be humanely euthanized if it is experiencing unnecessary and/or unanticipated pain or distress that cannot be alleviated.
- e. If a PI is collaborating with researchers at other institutions to conduct animal research, the *Policy Statement for Animal-Based Projects Involving Two or More Institutions* will apply.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. The University of Alberta aspires to the highest standards of animal care and use and is regularly assessed by CCAC in accordance with its standards of GAP – Good Animal Practice.

5. PROCUREMENT, USE, HOUSING AND MAINTENANCE OF ANIMALS

- a. Typically, animals must be obtained through one of the University of Alberta **animal services units**, except animals used in the field. Prior to arranging for the procurement of animals, PI and Directors of the animal services units must ensure that the facilities and expertise are available to care for the animals and that consideration is given to the type of animals required, the ability to house and care for those animals and any potential impacts on other animals in the facility.
- b. All approved animal use must receive veterinarian oversight from one of the animal services units.

- c. Whenever possible, animal procedures should be conducted in facilities managed by one of the animal services units.
- d. Animal procedures may be conducted in other locations, provided they are suitable and both the location and procedures, including the transfer of the animals, has been approved by ACUC and the University's Office of Environment, Health and Safety (EHS).
- e. Animals will normally be housed in facilities managed and maintained by one of the animal services units.
- f. In certain circumstances, a PI may apply for special permission to house animals in an alternate site. Refer to the *Animal Care and Use Alternate Animal Housing Procedure*.

6. ACCESS TO ANIMALS AND FACILITIES

- a. All animals maintained at the University of Alberta and the facilities in which they are used or housed are subject to post-approval monitoring and periodic inspection by the University Veterinarian, UAPWC, ACUCs, Directors and staff of the animal services units, EHS and REO staff. These people must have access at all times to all areas where animals are housed or used.

7. ANIMAL USER TRAINING

To promote the highest standards of animal care and use, all University of Alberta staff and trainees engaged in the care and use of animals must, at a minimum, be trained in the principles and ethics of animal care and use. University of Alberta staff and trainees:

- a. associated with an animal use protocol must successfully complete Part 1 Institutional Animal User Training and provide REO with proof of completion.
- b. engaged in animal care and use must also complete relevant Part 2 Institutional Animal User Training appropriate to the species of animal and the procedure(s) to be performed. No person shall handle animals or perform any procedures with animals until they have completed appropriate Part 2 training.

8. EUTHANASIA

- a. Any veterinarian licensed by the Province of Alberta called upon to attend an animal used in an University ACUC approved protocol is delegated authority to stop any unapproved procedure or any procedure causing unnecessary and/or unanticipated pain or distress to the animal, and to humanely euthanize any animal believed to be in unnecessary and/or unanticipated pain or distress that cannot be alleviated. The veterinarian will consult with the PI and ACUC Chair, if possible, and will salvage research data, if possible. The veterinarian will send a written report to the PI, the ACUC Chair and the veterinarian who reviewed the protocol following any such event. The ACUC is to determine whether the circumstances leading to the euthanasia were unforeseeable and accidental. If so, any salvaged data is to be released to the PI. If, however, the circumstances causing the euthanasia resulted from a serious infraction of ethical standards or a failure to CCAC standards, then the data are not to be released to the PI, who is prohibited from using the data.
- b. University veterinarian staff may delegate authority to humanely euthanize animals to senior animal services unit staff.
- c. PIs are responsible for working with the ACUC to establish appropriate humane endpoints and to ensure that approved humane endpoints are followed. Every effort must be made to expose animals to the minimum distress or pain necessary for the scientific objectives of the research, for as short a period as possible, and to monitor them carefully to identify and euthanize animals reaching their humane endpoints.

9. NON-COMPLIANCE

- a. Any animal acquisition or use that has not been approved by an ACUC and/or animal use that is not conducted in the manner in which it was described in an animal use protocol and approved by an ACUC will constitute non-compliance.
- b. Any animal care that does not meet CCAC guidelines or is not described in an approved animal use protocol constitutes non-compliance.
- c. Non-compliance will be addressed according to the *Animal Care and Use Non-Compliance Procedure*.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [▲Top](#)

Animal	Any living non-human vertebrate and any living invertebrate of the class of cephalopoda, including free-living and reproducing larval forms, used for research, teaching, or testing purposes by University of Alberta staff or trainees.
Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC)	The national organization responsible for setting and maintaining standards for the ethical use and care of animals used in science (research, teaching and testing) in Canada.
Principal Investigator (PI)	A member of the academic staff who is responsible for the design, conduct, supervision and oversight of the care and use of animals in research, teaching or testing as described in an approved animal use protocol.
Animal Services Units	Animal facilities established and operated by the University of Alberta as ongoing administrative units to provide veterinary and animal care staff, infrastructure, training, oversight and other resources to support the use of animals in research, teaching and testing by University staff and trainees. They currently are: Agricultural Food and Nutritional Sciences Animal Services (AFNSAS), Health Sciences Laboratory Animal Services (HSLAS) and Science Animal Support Services (SASS).

RELATED LINKS

Should a link fail, please contact uappol@ualberta.ca. [▲Top](#)

[Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#) (Government of Canada)

[Animal-Based Projects Involving Two or More Institutions](#) (CCAC)

[Animal Protection Act](#) (Government of Alberta)

[Animal Protection Regulation](#) (Government of Alberta)

[Canadian Council on Animal Care Guidelines](#) (CCAC)

[On-line Research Ethics System](#) (University of Alberta)

[Recruitment Policy \(Appendix A\) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows, Academic Colleagues and Excluded Academic Staff](#) (UAPPOL)

[Recruitment Policy \(Appendix B\) Definition and Categories of Support Staff](#) (UAPPOL)

[Research and Scholarship Integrity Policy](#) (UAPPOL)

[Research Ethics Office](#) (University of Alberta)

[University Animal Policy and Welfare Committee](#) (University of Alberta)

PUBLISHED PROCEDURES OF THIS POLICY

[Animal Care and Use Alternate Animal Housing Procedure](#)

[Animal Care and Use Committee Appeal Procedure](#)

[Animal Care and Use Committee Structure, Application and Review Procedure](#)

[Animal Care and Use Non-Compliance Procedure](#)

[Animal Care and Use Post-Approval Monitoring Procedure](#)

[Animal Care and Use Roles and Responsibilities Procedure](#)

[Animal Care and Use Standard Operating Procedures: Definition, Creation, Approval and Management Procedure](#)

[Institutional Animal User Training Program Procedure](#)