

Terms of Reference for Brandon University Animal Care Committee

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Preamble

The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) requires that institutions conducting animal-based research, teaching or testing establish an animal care committee, and that it be functionally active. The committee's operation must be governed by formal Terms of Reference, but need not to be limited to them. The Terms of Reference must be tailored to reflect and refer to the institution's animal care and use program, including the members of the program and the institution's policies, practices and procedures.

The Brandon University Animal Care Committee (BUACC) is responsible directly to the Vice-President (Academic & Research).

1. Membership

Members of BUACC are appointed for a term of three years. The appointment can be renewable to a maximum of eight consecutive years of service. The complement of the Committee includes:

- a. three members chosen from scientists, teachers and laboratory instructors experienced in animal care and use, one of which is the animal facility manager appointed ex-officio;
- b. a veterinarian, preferably experienced in experimental animal care and use;
- c. an institutional non-animal user;
- d. one person and one alternate* representing community interests and concerns, and who has no affiliation with the institution;
- e. the animal health technician (ex-officio);
- f. a student representative

** the community representative alternate will only attend meetings in the absence of the community representative. The alternate will assume the role of community representative in the event of resignation.*

To avoid potential conflicts of interest the Chair should not be directly involved in the management of the institutional animal facilities, nor be the consulting veterinarian for the institution, nor be involved in the preparation of a significant number of the protocols to be reviewed by the Committee. This does not preclude a member of the Biology department from being the Chair. BUACC can co-opt other persons to the Committee as the need for other expertise arises. Quorum will consist of a majority of the members, and must include the veterinarian and the community representative.

The institution must be supportive of the Committee's work. This includes appointing a BUACC Coordinator, who supports BUACC by ensuring that animal use protocols are well managed, that Committee minutes and reports are promptly produced and distributed, that all exchanges between the BUACC and animal users are well documented and filed in a timely manner, and that animal users and BUACC members are provided with necessary information.

2. Authority

BUACC has the authority, on behalf of the President to:

- a. stop any objectionable procedure if it considers that an animal is experiencing unnecessary distress or pain;
- 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 killed humanely if pain or distress caused to the animal is not part of the approved protocol and cannot be alleviated.
- d. give the veterinarian absolute authority to initiate, treat, or euthanize animals as he/she deems necessary.

The Chair of BUACC and the veterinarian(s) must have access at all times to all areas where animals are or may be held or used.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of BUACC to:

- a. ensure that no research or testing project or teaching program (including field studies and off-site projects) involving animals be commenced without prior BUACC approval of an **Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching**; further to this, that no animals be acquired or used before such approval. This includes internally-funded projects. Workload assignments will not be approved for those courses that involve animal care until a Teaching Protocol has been submitted to and approved by BUACC. In addition, no animals will be purchased for the purposes of teaching or research until the appropriate protocol has been submitted to and approved by BUACC. The Committee requires the submission of a protocol no less than four weeks prior to commencement of the research project/course.
- b. ensure that no animals be held for display or breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research, teaching or testing projects, without prior BUACC approval of an **Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching**; except where current CCAC Guidelines provide for exemptions. BUACC should also be aware of other animal-based activities, such as commercial or recreational activities, within the institution, and should work with the persons responsible for these activities to ensure that animal care and use is undertaken according to appropriate procedures;
- c. require all animal users conducting internal and inter-university research, to complete an **Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching** and ensure that the information therein includes the following points clearly presented in a form that all members of BUACC can readily understand:

- i. project title and description procedural keywords or brief description of the procedures to be conducted on animals, as defined in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form*;
- ii. principal investigators/teachers, and all personnel who will handle animals, along with their training and qualifications with respect to animal handling;
- iii. departmental affiliation;
- iv. proposed start date and proposed end date (if the study is to take place over more than one year, the work and numbers of animals for the first year only should be approved, and further work can then be approved in yearly protocol renewals).
- v. (for research projects) funding source(s) and status of funding approval;
- vi. (for research projects) indication of whether the project has received peer review for scientific merit;
- vii. (teaching programs) a course number 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 policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation*; 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, infectious, biological, chemical or radioactive agents in animal-based projects; and if so, an indication of institutional approval of this use;
 - xi. category of invasiveness as defined in the *CCAC policy statement on: categories of invasiveness in animal experiments*, and *Purpose of Animal Use (PAU)* as defined in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form*;
 - xii. information with regard to the Three Rs (replacement, reduction, and refinement alternatives) of animal use as included in the *CCAC Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees*.
- xiii. a clear description detailing the procedures that are carried out on the animals (referring to appropriate SOPs as much as possible); the use of graphic representations is encouraged;
- 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*. 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.

- 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.
 - 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.
- d. ensure that, for both research and teaching protocols, a peer review of scientific and pedagogical merit, respectively, is carried out. If peer review of research projects is not carried out by the granting council or sponsor, BUACC requires that a peer review be conducted via the Office of the Vice-President (Academic & Research), as outlined in the *Brandon University Policy on Independent Peer Review and Pedagogical Peer Review of Scientific Merit of Animal Based Research, Testing, and Teaching*.
- e. review and assess all animal use protocols, with particular emphasis on *CCAC's guide to the care and use of experimental animals, ethics of animal investigation, and Guidelines on: animal use protocol review* 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. 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. The Committee 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 can be employed for the purposes of protocol management and to facilitate and expedite the submission and review of protocols. However, the Committee must meet in person for protocol discussion and final approvals. The Committee may delegate the responsibility of interim approvals to a protocol review subcommittee, which must include at least one scientific member, the veterinarian and the community representative, one of which should preferably be the Chair of BUACC. However, such interim approvals should only be used infrequently, and the interim review process, including exchanges between BUACC and the protocol author(s), must be documented and must then be subject to discussion and final approval at a full meeting of the Committee.
- f. ensure that animal users update their protocols with any modifications they intend to make, and approve any modifications to a protocol before they are implemented. Minor modifications can be approved by the Chair of the BUACC or a delegate. For any major changes to a protocol, a new protocol must be submitted. Major changes include: a considerable increase of the number of animals required, a change of species, use of more invasive or more frequent procedures, and/or use of entirely new procedures.
- g. review all **Applications to Use Animals for Research or Teaching** annually, i.e. within a year of commencement of the project, and approve any modifications before they are implemented. All 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, 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.

A submission of a new **Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching** is required after a maximum of three consecutive renewals.

- h. document all BUACC discussions and decisions in the Committee minutes and on attachments to the **Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching** forms;
- i. in the event an **Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching** is not approved by BUACC the applicant may appeal the decision. Appeals will be handled by the Vice-President (Academic & Research) in a timely manner. The Vice-President (Academic & Research) will resolve the appeal by ensuring a separate fair and impartial process including the expertise from appropriate institutions. The CCAC may be called upon for information purposes.
- j. ensure that all animal users have the opportunity to become familiar with CCAC's 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;
- k. ensure that animal users report any unanticipated problems or complications, as well as the steps they have taken to address the problem(s), to BUACC;
- l. ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations. In the event that veterinary care is needed, Brandon Hills Veterinary Clinic can be contacted. A veterinarian is available on a consultative basis and as a member of BUACC;
- m. 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. anaesthesia 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 BUACC. Painful studies requiring exemption from this 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;
- n. ensure that policies to provide for system of animal care that will meet the needs of the institution are established and implemented, and include:
 - i. requiring that all animal care and animal experimentation be according to CCAC guidelines and policies, and any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect.
 - ii. ensuring adequate animal care and management of the animal facilities, in particular by verifying that there is a person clearly designated to be in charge of animal care and management of the animal facility, who should be a member of BUACC and who should keep the other BUACC Members updated on the activities within the animal facility;
 - iii. assessing the training and qualification of animal users and animal care personnel. The veterinarian and animal care staff must receive continuing education in their field, and animal users must receive appropriate training according to the *CCAC guidelines on: institutional animal user training, 1999*, either within the institution or through the programs of other institutions;
 - iv. an occupational health and safety program for those individuals in animal care and use, in collaboration with the institutional authorities on occupational health and safety, that will appropriately protect all those who may be affected by animal-based work, according to *CCAC guidelines*;
 - v. maintaining standards of husbandry, facilities and equipment;
 - vi. maintaining standard operating procedures for all activities and procedures that involve animals, including animal care and facility management SOPs, and animal use SOPs. Ensure that all SOPs are regularly reviewed.
- o. encourage the use of pilot studies with few animals when new approaches, methods or products are being tried, before approving new, large scale protocols;
- p. in the case of projects involving proprietary or patentable research or testing, insist on close monitoring of animals in order to respect the elements outlined in 3m).
- q. ensure all necessary Standard Operating Procedures, the Terms of Reference for the Brandon University Animal Care Facility, and all other Animal Care polices are produced and regularly reviewed, at a minimum of every three years.

4. Meetings

Meetings will be held at least twice per year. Notification of a meeting is to be at least one week prior to the meeting. The purpose of the meetings is to ensure that the members of BUACC fulfill their Terms of Reference and that they are satisfied that all animal use within their jurisdiction is in compliance with institutional, municipal, federal and provincial regulations, and *CCAC guidelines*. Minutes must be produced for each meeting, and must be forwarded to the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use. Members of the

Committee shall undertake a site visit of the animal care facility once a year, and shall document these visits through written reports. This will include any and all research labs where animals are used for research or teaching purposes.

5. General

The Animal Care Committee:

- a. will regularly review (at least every three years):
 - i. its Terms of Reference to meet new CCAC guidelines and 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. the security of animals and research facilities;
 - iii. standard operating procedures and institutional animal care and use policies, and all SOPs that involve procedures that may result in deleterious effects to animal health or welfare; and
 - iv. policies and procedures for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures within the institution.
- b. must maintain liaison with the CCAC Secretariat and with provincial authorities where applicable, and inform the Secretariat of any changes to the program: to the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use, the Chair of BUACC, or the veterinary or senior animal care personnel.
- c. must submit complete and accurate animal use information in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form (AUDF)* format for all protocols annually – by March 31 – and also in pre-assessment documentation;
- d. must develop and update regularly a crisis management program for the animal facilities and for the animal care and use program, in conjunction with any general institutional crisis management plan(s);
- e. should, 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, BUACC members and other interested parties to attend as possible;
- f. should try to achieve and maintain a high profile within the institution and in the community in order to demonstrate the institution's efforts in promoting animal welfare and to allay some of the public concerns regarding animal experimentation;
- g. should be open to developing and maintaining communication with animal welfare organizations;
- h. should be prepared to cope with criticism which may develop from time to time.