

Terms of Reference for the Brandon University Animal Care Committee (BUACC)

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 to the Senate Research Committee and reports directly to the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or designate.

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) two members chosen from scientists, teachers and laboratory instructors experienced in animal care and use;
- b) a veterinarian, preferably experienced in experimental animal care and use;
- c) a faculty or staff member at Brandon University whose work does not involve animals;
- d) one person and one alternate* representing community interests and concerns, and who has no affiliation with the institution;
- e) the Animal Health Technologist (ex-officio); and
- 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.*

The Chair of BUACC is appointed by and from the Committee. 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 an animal health or veterinary personnel member charged with ensuring compliance with CCAC guidelines, nor be involved in the preparation of a significant number of the protocols to be reviewed by the Committee. 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.

All BUACC members are expected to attend scheduled meetings having reviewed and considered all materials in advance. BUACC members are also expected to be familiar with applicable Brandon University and Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) policies, guidelines, and procedures, and contribute to the development of

institutional documents related to the animal care and use program. BUACC members are further expected to participate in the preparation of and attendance at CCAC assessment site visits.

BUACC members shall respect the confidentiality of Committee matters. Only that which must be reported (e.g. CCAC Animal Use Data Reports, institutional research statistic reports, etc.) as deemed by the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) and the Chair of BUACC, shall be made available and only via the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or Chair of BUACC.

Chair:

The Chair of BUACC serves as the public spokesperson for animal-related inquiries and represents BUACC at the Senate Research Committee and other meetings as required. The Chair ensures administrative and procedural policies concerning the protocol application process are followed and reports to the Senate Research Committee on BUACC policies and procedures.

The Chair is a BUACC member whose primary obligations are to fulfill the BUACC responsibilities in the context of BUACC and CCAC policies, guidelines, and procedures on animals used in research, teaching, and other applicable criteria which inform ethics review, deliberation and decision-making. At times, the Chair may, during deliberations, bring the perspective, interests and concerns of his/her discipline; however, the Chair should not champion any particular perspective or interest of concern.

The Chair shall demonstrate exemplary conduct in all matters concerning the care and use of laboratory animals and will lead by example. The Chair shall advise researchers about the process of ethics review, the principles which inform ethics deliberation, and decisions and changes in practice and policy which may influence deliberations and decisions.

The Chair, with the assistance of the BUACC Coordinator, is responsible for the materials prepared by Brandon University for assessment visits conducted by the CCAC. The Chair may assist the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) who is responsible for institutional responses to reports and requests for information.

Two members chosen from scientists, teachers and laboratory instructors experienced in animal care and use:

These positions shall include animal scientists and/or teachers that can assist BUACCs mandate with a distinct knowledge, prior experience, and expertise on conducting research and/or pedagogy.

At least one representative from this grouping shall attend Quality Assurance procedure observations for each approved protocol, and shall contribute, as applicable, to the written report of said observations.

Animal Health Technologist

In relation to the responsibilities as a BUACC member, the Animal Health Technologist shall keep BUACC apprised of all animal activities in the Facility. As well, the Animal Health Technologist is responsible for developing and updating Standard Operating Procedures for the Facility in accordance with BUACC and CCAC policies, guidelines, procedures, and recommendations, and presenting these documents to BUACC for review and approval.

The Animal Health Technologist shall assist with the development of CCAC assessment materials relating to the Animal Facility in particular.

Student Representative:

The student representative is typically selected from those students in pre-veterinary studies; however, the student shall have demonstrated experience working with and/or knowledge of animals. The student representative shall assist BUACC's mandate by approaching review and approval of protocols, and discussion and development of policies and procedures from the student perspective.

Member whose work does not involve animals:

The member whose work does not involve animals shall be a faculty or staff member at Brandon University with whom normal activities do not depend on or involve animal use for research, teaching or testing. This member shall have an active interest in animal care, welfare and science; and feel confident with raising ethical concerns to be addressed in applications and policies/procedures.

Community representative:

The community representative shall be an individual external to the institution who shall represent community interests and concerns by providing unbiased opinions on the ethical nature of animal studies without personal consequence, for example affecting one's own work. The community representative shall have no affiliation with the institution and is not involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing. As the general consensus of everyday society may differ from the academic community, it is important that the community representative attend all meetings and assessments to ensure the potential academic advantage does not overshadow any procedures that would not be tolerated, morally or ethically, in a non-research based setting.

Consulting Veterinarian:

The Consulting Veterinarian serves on the BUACC as an advisor and animal advocate on strategies to address the three Rs – reduction, refinement and replacement – and on matters of animal welfare, housing, care, and use. This will include anesthesia and analgesia, suitability of animal models, establishment of endpoints, zoonoses, biohazards, and occupational health and safety as it relates to the housing and use of animals.

The Consulting Veterinarian shall conduct site assessments of the Animal Facility, laboratories, and alternative housing sites, once as an independent assessment and once as part of the BUACC assessment, at minimum once per year. This number may be adjusted as warranted, according to the number of animals and/or specialized animal care and use programs would require. They shall provide a written report on the independent assessment to BUACC within seven days of the site visit.

The Consulting Veterinarian shall be involved with the development, implementation, and oversight of an animal health program for each species maintained in the Animal Facility. This includes identifying measures taken to receive, quarantine, condition, and introduce various species into the Facility.

The Consulting Veterinarian shall participate in the ongoing improvements in animal and veterinary care standards, guidelines, and techniques through interaction and communications with BUACC, senior administration, researchers, and animal care staff, to ensure best practices in the care and use of experimental animals. They shall participate in the development of programs and the delivery of education and training of animal users and animal care givers. They shall also participate in the development, implementation and review of Standard Operating Procedures for animal care, animal use, facility management, and of institutional animal care and use policies.

BUACC Coordinator:

The BUACC Coordinator 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. The BUACC Coordinator may also provide administrative support by drafting policy and procedural documents for review and approval, maintaining accurate and complete files, and advising researchers on policy, training, application preparation, review processes, and providing general guidance. The Coordinator facilitates the merit review process for both scientific merit reviews and pedagogical reviews. The Coordinator also organizes and prepares materials, in coordination with the Chair, for CCAC site visits and communication requests.

2. Authority

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

- a) stop a 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 euthanized humanely if pain or distress caused to the animal is not part of the approved protocol and cannot be alleviated; and
- 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 a Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application; further to this, that no animals be acquired or used before such approval. This includes internally-funded projects. No animals shall be purchased for the purposes of teaching or research until the appropriate protocol has been submitted to and approved by BUACC. Please refer to the Animal Procurement Standard Operating Procedure. 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 teaching display or breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research, teaching or testing projects, without prior BUACC approval of a Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application; except where current CCAC Guidelines provide for exemptions. Please refer to Policy on the Oversight of Animal-Based Activities and Community Outreach.
- c) require all animal users conducting research, to complete a Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application 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 descriptive procedural keywords or brief description of the procedures to be conducted on animals, as defined in the CCAC Animal Use Interpretation Bulletin on: the 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*; and 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 respect 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 which shall not exceed 7 days beyond the conclusion of the approved experiment(s); and
 - 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 & Provost), 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*, CCAC policy statement on: *ethics of animal investigation*, and CCAC and BUACC policies, procedures, and guidelines, where necessary. Such review may require further supportive information from the investigator/teacher or a meeting 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, and may be subject to a new peer review of scientific or pedagogical merit. Major changes include: an increase of more than 10% of the approved number of animals required (20% increase for fish), a change of species, a change in category of invasiveness, 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 Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application 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 applications to use animals for research or teaching forms;
- i) in the event a Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application is not approved by BUACC the applicant may appeal the decision. Appeals will be handled by the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) in a timely manner. The Vice-President (Academic & Provost) 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 Policy Statements and Guidelines, 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, Grand Valley Animal 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; and
 - iv. all due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental enrichment.
- n) ensure that policies to provide for a 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 policy statement for: senior administrators responsible for animal care and use programs, 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; and
 - 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 when new approaches, methods or products are being tried, before approving new, large scale protocols. Pilot studies should be conducted with a very small number of animals (fewer than 10 animals) and within a short period of time;
- 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 policies are produced and regularly reviewed, at a minimum of every three years; and

- r) develop procedures for investigating reports of non-compliance. All faculty members, staff, and students must adhere to all current BUACC and CCAC policies, procedures, and guidelines. The Principal Investigator named on the Application to Use Animals for Research or Teaching is ultimately responsible for the care and welfare of the animals listed on that protocol.

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 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 ethical 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.