

Saint Mary's University Animal Care Committee

Terms of Reference



Updated: Nov 2023

The purpose of the Saint Mary's University Animal Care Committee (SMU ACC) is to ensure that all animal used in teaching, research or testing at SMU are treated ethically and in accordance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care's (CCAC) policies and guidelines. The SMU ACC is governed by the following Terms of Reference (ToR), which follow The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) current [CCAC Policy: Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees](#).

NOTE: Use of the words 'should' and 'must' in this document is consistent with their defined use in the CCAC Guidelines: the word 'should' indicates an obligation for which any exception is justified to and approved by the SMU ACC; the word 'must' indicates a mandatory requirement.

1. MEMBERSHIP

SMU ACC membership is reviewed and appointed by the Vice President Academic and Research. Terms of office for non *ex officio* Committee members are three years, with the possibility for renewal, and should not exceed eight years of consecutive service.

The Committee includes:

- Committee Chair (full-time faculty member, nominated by the Dean of Science and/or the Associate Vice President Research and appointed by the VPAR). The Chair should not be directly involved in the management of SMU's Animal Facilities, be a clinical veterinarian for SMU, be an employee responsible for ensuring CCAC guideline compliance, or be involved in a significant number of animal use protocols submitted to the committee.
- Consulting Veterinarian (*ex officio*);
- Animal Care Facility Manager (*ex officio*);
- Animal Care Coordinator (*ex officio*);
- Two faculty members experienced in animal-based research;
- One faculty member whose teaching, testing and research activities do not involve or depend on the use of animals,
- One faculty member from Mount Saint Vincent University whose animal care program oversight is described in a Memorandum of Understanding with Saint Mary's University;
- One Saint Mary's University graduate student;
- At least one (up to three) community member(s) that do not have an affiliation with Saint Mary's and have not conducted research, teaching or testing involving animals.

NOTE: Committee members must respect the confidentiality of SMU ACC matters and the privacy and/or intellectual property of those who submit material for review. Committee members must not distribute or share any ACC material. All deliberations, discussions, and decisions of the Committee are confidential. Communication of any recommendations, decisions or proceeding should be made by the ACC Chair or Coordinator, on behalf of the Committee. All proceedings of the Committee are subject to

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preparing for their first meeting as outlined in the Policy on Animal Care and Ethics Training for Animal Care Committee Members at Saint Mary's University, and discuss what confidentiality implies for members. Newly appointed community and student members also receive the [Manual for Community](#)

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2.2 ACC Site-Visits

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- d) Ensure that each research project has been found to have scientific merit through independent peer review before approving the project; if the review is not carried out by an external, peer review agency, SMU requires that it be obtained according to the CCAC policy statement on: the importance of independent peer review of the scientific merit of animal-based research projects, 2000. SMU has implemented a mechanism through which non-peer-reviewed projects are reviewed for their scientific merit.

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constitutes a major change to a protocol (e.g., a considerable increase of the number of animals required vs. the number in the original protocol, a change of species, use of more invasive or more frequent procedures, use of entirely new procedures, or other criteria; see the SMU Animal Care Committee Review Process document).

Ensure that animal users report any unanticipated problems or complications, as well as on the steps they have taken to address the problem(s), to the ACC;

- g) Review all protocols annually, i.e., within a year of commencement of the project; annual renewals should be approved by at least a scientist, a veterinarian and a community representative and should be brought to the attention of the full ACC for its information. Institutions may choose to use a shorter protocol renewal form, but no matter what form is used, 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 (unpredicted outcomes, and any animal pain, distress or mortality), 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

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- k) Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations. Veterinary care must be available. Formal arrangements must be made to obtain the services of a veterinarian, at least on a consultative basis, if they are not readily available within the institution. These formal arrangements must be based on the elements contained in the CALAM/ ACMAL Standards of Veterinary Care of the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine (2020), which define the roles and responsibilities of veterinarians involved in scientific animal care and use programs;
- l) 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. anesthesia 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 the ACC. Painful studies requiring exemption from the 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;
- m) Ensure that policies to provide for a

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will appropriately protect all those who may be affected by animal-based work,
according to CCAC guidelines (see Chapter VIII of Volume 1 (2nd Edn, 1993) of the CCAC
Guide or the most recent CCAC guidance on occupational health and safety (2.5 (a)2.2 (d)Tc 0 Tw (Tf0.00

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Saint Mary's University Animal Care Organization Chart

