



University College of the North

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE NORTH

ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Effective from October 10, 2023

Replaces: October 22, 2020

1. GENERAL

University College of the North (UCN) is committed to meeting Canadian standards on animal care and use, where it chooses to use animals for teaching and scientific purposes. UCN will ensure that animals will be cared for and used ethically and appropriately, within a rigorous, well-structured and administered program that is infused with sufficient human, financial and physical resources. **Animal** for the purpose of these Terms of Reference (ToR) refers to all vertebrates, as well as certain invertebrates such as cephalopods, and any species identified as at risk.

UCN follows guidelines developed by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), which is the national, peer review organization responsible for overseeing the care and use of animals in science. The CCAC works with academic, government and private institutions across Canada to ensure appropriate animal care and use in research, teaching, testing and production (of animals and biologics for scientific purposes).

The heart of UCN's animal care and use program is its **Animal Care Committee (ACC)**. In overseeing the program, UCN's ACC represents all interested parties and provides quality control services. It functions according to this ToR based on the "CCAC Policy Statement on: Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees".

UCN's animal care and use program focuses primarily on compliance. The ACC oversees compliance of all animal care and use activities at UCN with relevant guidelines, policies, procedures and regulations, by working with all stakeholders, including faculty and technical staff. In addition, while it is UCN's responsibility institutionally to ensure that animal users have access to well-qualified veterinary services, professional development opportunities related to animal care and use, and other required services, the ACC has a key advisory and coordinating role to play relative to such services and professional development.

The ACC also has an advisory and coordinating role in working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop best practices for activities that use animals, both living and deceased, in culturally appropriate and respectful ways.

2. POLICY

UCN supports the ethical, responsible use and optimal physical and psychological care of animals in research and teaching by following accepted Canadian and scientific standards on animal care and use. The ACC is responsible for overseeing all UCN activities related to animal care and use, ensuring compliance with all relevant UCN policies and procedures, and promoting the highest possible standards in the well-being, quality of life, use and care of animals.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The ACC is a multi-disciplinary committee whose composition follows the guidelines in the *CCAC Policy Statement on Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees*. Membership consists of both institutional members from within UCN, as well as external representatives.

Nominations for appointment to the ACC are made to the Vice-President, Academic and Research (VPAR) by the UCN staff. Letters of confirmation are issued by the VPAR.

Terms of office for *ex-officio* members are unlimited. For all other members, terms of office shall be from two (2) to four (4) years, renewable once.

The ACC membership shall be composed of a chairperson, veterinarian, faculty – animal user, faculty – non-animal user, Elder, community representative, technical staff representative, UCN student community representative, ACC Coordinator, *ex officio* members, and *ad hoc* committee advisors. The ACC may choose a Vice-Chairperson by consensus. The roles and responsibilities for each member of the ACC are defined below.

3.1. Chairperson

The ACC Chairperson is appointed by the VPAR.

The Chairperson may, but is not required, to be an animal user with good experience in animal care and use. The Chairperson cannot have any conflict of interest, or appear to be biased in his/her role, and therefore should not be directly involved with a large proportion of the animal-based activities within UCN. Decision-making shall be by consensus.

The ACC Chairperson will:

- Report all ACC recommendations to the VPAR; and
- Submit the ACC activity report with an updated membership list annually to the VPAR.

3.2. Veterinarian

An individual that is a certified veterinarian who has experience in experimental animal care and use. The veterinarian is an *ex-officio* member.

3.3. Faculty, Animal User

The faculty member is a scientist and/or teacher and must be experienced in animal care and use. They may or may not be actively using animals during their term.

3.4. Faculty, Non-Animal User

The faculty member may have experience in animal care and use. However, their normal activities, past or present, do not depend on or involve animal care and use for research, teaching or testing.

3.5. Elder

UCN is sensitive to the importance of elders in the community and values their input with respect to land use. An Elder brings historical, cultural and holistic perspectives to the committee with respect to animal care and use.

The role of the Elder on UCN's ACC is to represent their community and provide perspectives regarding the role of animals in Indigenous culture, allowing the ACC to review its procedures/policies/protocols with a lens that is respectful to the land.

3.6. Community Representative

Community representatives symbolize, in the broadest sense, the eyes of the public-at-large, and must be chosen carefully for this reason. UCN is sensitive to the perception that designated or chosen community representatives might be biased in favor of, or against, animal use, institutional goals, research, etc. Community representatives chosen must be comfortable in raising questions about the ethical and humane use of animals, but should not be disruptive or obstructive.

The role of the community representative on the ACC is to represent community interests and concerns. They must not have or have had any affiliation with UCN. They must not be involved in animal care and use for research, teaching or testing.

The community representative must be available (and present) for all ACC activities throughout the year.

3.7. Technical Staff Representative

Representation of technical staff actively involved in animal care and use at UCN must be present.

3.8. UCN Student Community Representative

Representation of the student body must be present. The representative provides student views, particularly those who work with animals, that can help inform ACC discussions. Student(s) can then in turn explain the ACC's work to their peers.

3.9. ACC Coordinator

The ACC Coordinator or designate will serve as Secretary to the committee.

The main responsibility of the ACC coordinator is to support the committee's work by ensuring that animal use protocols are well managed, that committee minutes and reports are promptly produced and distributed, that all exchanges between the ACC and animal users are well documented and filed in a timely manner, and that animal users and ACC members are provided with necessary information.

The ACC Coordinator is an *ex-officio* member.

3.10. Other *Ex-officio* Members or their Designates

They may include the following:

- Director, Research and Academic Innovation
- Others from UCN

3.11. *Ad hoc* Committee Advisors

If required, they are from the following areas:

- External Relations
- Member from UCN's Facilities Management unit with occupational health and safety experience
- Community Based Services
- Others

4. AUTHORITY

UCN bears the ultimate responsibility for its animal care and use program. Within UCN, the Vice President, Academic & Research (VPAR) is responsible to coordinate efforts and to ensure that all institutional responsibilities are met with respect to UCN's animal care and use program, including its ACC.

The ACC reports directly to the VPAR, who in turn ensures that appropriate animal care and use operations are in place to meet UCN's scientific goals of research and teaching, and that all animal care and use conforms to the most rigorous ethical and scientific standards. For the purposes of communicating with the CCAC, VPAR is the CCAC's main contact within UCN and is responsible for receiving and responding to all formal CCAC

communications. The VPAR will ensure that all institutional responses to CCAC communications will be vetted through UCN's ACC prior to distribution.

UCN grants authority to the ACC to:

- a) Stop any objectionable procedure if it considers that unnecessary distress or pain is being experienced by an animal.
- b) Immediately stop any use of animals which deviates from the approved use and procedures or causes 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.

Both the Chair of the ACC and the veterinarian(s) on the ACC must have access at all times to all areas where animals are or may be held or used. Furthermore, the ACC delegates to the veterinarian(s) the authority to treat, remove from a study or euthanize, if necessary, an animal according to the veterinarian's professional judgement. The veterinarian must have the authority to proceed with any necessary emergency measures, whether or not the animal user and ACC Chair are available.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the ACC are to:

- 5.1. Ensure no research project or teaching program (including field studies) involving animals be commenced without prior ACC approval of a written use protocol.
- 5.2. Ensure no animals be acquired or used before such approval including those for internally funded projects.
- 5.3. Ensure no animals be held for display or breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research or teaching projects, without prior ACC approval of a written animal use protocol except where current CCAC guidelines provide for exemptions.
- 5.4. Be aware of other animal-based activities within the UCN such as commercial or recreational activities. The ACC should work with the persons responsible for these activities to ensure that animal care and use is undertaken according to appropriate procedures.
- 5.5. Ensure that each research project has been found to have scientific merit through independent peer review before approving the project in accordance with *CCAC Policy Statement on: Scientific Merit and Ethical Review of Animal-based Research*, and *Frequently Asked Questions on the CCAC Policy Statement on: Scientific Merit and Ethical Review of Animal-based Research*.
- 5.6. Ensure that a mechanism is in place at UCN through which non-peer reviewed projects are reviewed for scientific merit.
- 5.7. Require all animal users to complete and submit a UCN Animal Use Protocol Form and its renewals according to established procedures.
- 5.8. Establish and maintain a process for animal use protocol submissions, reviews and approvals.

5.9. Following established formal procedures for protocol reviews and approvals, review and assess all animal use protocols submitted, with particular emphasis on the CCAC policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation and CCAC guidelines on: animal use protocol review as well as on all other relevant CCAC guidelines and policy statements.

5.9.1. Request additional supportive information from the instructor/investigator if needed to better inform the decision-making process.

5.9.2. Ensure that all procedures submitted comply with CCAC guidelines. In the event that the procedures vary from guidelines, the ACC will request scientific justification from the instructor.

5.9.3. Review protocols, render decisions and reports back to applicants in a timely manner. Decisions will be made during ACC meetings and will operate on the basis of consensus.

5.9.4. The use of electronic tools for protocol management purposes and to facilitate and expedite the submission and review of protocols is encouraged as long as final approvals are made as a committee in person and/or via videoconference or teleconference.

5.9.5. The ACC has the option of delegating the responsibilities of interim approvals to an interim approval subcommittee. The interim approval subcommittee shall consist of at least one scientific member, one veterinarian and one community representative, one of which should preferably be the Chair of the ACC.

5.9.6. All decisions regarding animal use protocols will be documented in meeting minutes and as attachments to the protocol forms.

5.9.7. Ensure that animal users update their protocols with any modifications they intend to make, and get ACC approval for all modifications to a protocol before they are implemented. All modifications and updates must be submitted to the ACC using Animal Use Protocol Amendment/Modification Form.

Minor modifications (e.g., 1 or 2 animal users added or removed, a small number of animals added or removed, etc.) can be approved by the Chair of the ACC or a delegate.

For any major changes to a protocol, a new one must be submitted for approval by the full ACC. A major change is defined as:

- 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 changes that significantly deviate from the original protocol.

Following discussions with protocol authors and any members of their team, the ACC will ensure protocol authors (and members of their teams) be removed from any ACC decision-making regarding their submitted protocols.

Ensure that the following are completed in accordance with *CCAC Policy Statement on: Scientific Merit and Ethical Review of Animal-based Research*, *CCAC Policy Statement on: Pedagogical Merit*

of Live Animal-based Teaching and Training, and Frequently Asked Questions on the CCAC Policy Statement on: Pedagogical Merit of Live Animal-based Teaching and Training:

- An independent, expert peer review(s) of both the scientific and pedagogical merit of the project; and
- A review by the ACC of whether the proposed animal use, as described in the animal use protocol, is acceptable, and whether the proposed animal-based methods are appropriate.

Both levels of review are equally important, and it is also important that:

- The ACC respects the findings of the expert, independent peer review(s) with regard to the scientific and pedagogical merit of the project and refer any questions on scientific merit to the research administration of the institution; and
- The principal investigator whose protocol is being examined by the ACC understands that the ACC will review the protocol with regard to animal-based methods, and collaborates with the ACC to determine the most appropriate methods to be used.

No funding intended to support research or teaching under the project shall be released until the ACC has approved the animal use protocol(s).

5.9.8. 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.

5.9.9. Require the submission of a new protocol after a maximum of three consecutive renewals.

5.10. Ensure that animal users report any unanticipated problems or complications, as well as on the steps they have taken to address the problems, to the ACC.

5.11. Provide applicants with the appealing mechanism and procedure for a decision by the ACC.

5.12. Ensure that all ACC members and animal users are provided training in animal care and use including required training in CCAC 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 UCN policies and requirements.

5.13. Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations.

5.13.1. Establish procedures, commensurate with current veterinary standards, to ensure that:

- Unnecessary pain or distress is avoided, and animal stress and injuries are avoided, whether during transfers of animals or in their normal quarters.
- 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.
- Appropriate post-operative care is provided.

- All due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental enrichment.

5.13.2. 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:

- The requirement that all animal care and animal experimentation are conducted according to CCAC guidelines and policies, and to any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect.
- 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 facilities, who should be a member of the ACC, and who should keep the other ACC members updated on the activities within the animal facilities.
- The training and qualifications of animal users and animal care personnel; veterinarians and animal care staff must receive continuing education in their field, and animal users (scientists/study directors, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and research technicians) must receive appropriate training according to the *CCAC guidelines on: training of personnel working with animals in science, 2015*, either within UCN or through the programs of other institutions.
- An occupational health and safety program for those involved 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 (see Chapter VIII of Volume 1 (2nd Edn, 1993) of the CCAC Guide or the most recent CCAC guidance on occupational health and safety).
- Standards of husbandry, facilities and equipment.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all activities and procedures that involve animals, including animal care and facility management SOPs (typically produced by the veterinary and animal care staff), and animal use SOPs (typically produced by animal users, in collaboration with veterinary/animal care staff as needed); the ACC should receive all SOPs and ensure that all necessary SOPs are produced and regularly reviewed.
- Procedures for euthanasia.

5.13.3. Encourage the use of pilot studies with few animals when new approaches, methods or products are being tried, before approving new, large scale protocols. Ensure that animal users report on the results of any pilot studies, no matter whether they wish to pursue the study immediately or not, in order to preserve important data on various approaches to animal-based studies, whether they work well or not.

5.13.4. In the case of projects involving proprietary or patentable research or testing, ensure that as much information as possible is provided to the ACC in terms of what effects to expect on animal health and welfare, and insist on close monitoring of animals.

- 5.13.5. Establish a comprehensive Post-Approval Monitoring program appropriately situated to the location(s) where the research or teaching activities outlined in the approved protocol(s) will be taking place.
- 5.13.6. Ensure that this ACC ToR are reviewed at least every three (3) years in order to ensure continuity with CCAC guidelines or policies, and congruence with changing institutional needs.
- 5.13.7. Maintain liaison with the CCAC Secretariat, and must submit, annually, a summary of all animal use information in the CCAC Animal Use Data Form (AUDF) by March 31 of the following year.
- 5.13.8. Review the portion of UCN's crisis management program that deals with animal care and use activities, including plans to address public and media inquiries on concerns related to animal use.
- 5.13.9. Sponsor workshops or seminars, from time to time, on the use of animals in science and on cultural and ethical considerations.
- 5.13.10. Strive to maintain a high profile within the institution and the community with respect to promoting animal welfare.

6. DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF ACC MEMBERS

- 6.1. Members are expected to attend all meetings of the Committee. Where attendance is not possible, members are required to provide their notice of absence in advance of meetings to the ACC Coordinator or ACC Chairperson. Members absent for two (2) consecutive meetings will have their membership terminated unless determined otherwise by the Committee. ACC members could be removed from the Committee before their term expires due to non-attendance or through mutual agreement (e.g. moving away, illness, too busy, conflict of interest, resignation, etc.). This could be accomplished through the authority of the ACC Chair or ACC Coordinator.
- 6.2. Members will properly review and consider materials submitted for the Committee review.
- 6.3. Members will familiarize themselves with the ACC ToR, their Committee responsibilities, and any materials circulated for review, discussion and decision.
- 6.4. Members may bring to bear, during deliberations, the perspective, interests and concerns of the discipline or constituency they represent; however, they do not champion any particular perspective, interest or concern. Rather, they are members whose primary obligations are to fulfill their Committee responsibilities in the context of its ToR, the UCN Policy on Use of Animals in Research, Teaching and Testing, the CCAC Guidelines and other applicable criteria that articulate or inform ACC review, deliberation and decision-making.
- 6.5. Members will demonstrate exemplary conduct in all matters concerning the care and use of animals and will lead by example.
- 6.6. Members will undertake to educate colleagues or constituents about the process of ACC review, the principles which inform ethics deliberation and decision-making and changes in practice, policy and values which may have a bearing on deliberations and decision-making.

7. MEETINGS

- 7.1. Meetings will be called by the Chairperson in consultation with the ACC Coordinator, if applicable.
- 7.2. Meetings are to be scheduled at times that are convenient for all members, particularly community and veterinary representatives.
- 7.3. The ACC shall meet at least twice (2 times) a year and as often as necessary to fulfill its ToR and to be satisfied that all animal care and use is in conformity with UCN and provincial regulations and CCAC Guidelines. All meetings will be minuted and ancillary documentation will be entered on file as directed by the Committee.
- 7.4. Quorum will consist of 50% of all members, plus one. *Ex-officio* members shall be counted as part of quorum. Quorum must include the veterinary representative and at least one community representative.
- 7.5. Decisions will be made by consensus.
- 7.6. All deliberations, discussions and decisions of the Committee are confidential and may not be disclosed by a member to a third party or by a Member to an applicant to the ACC subject to the permission of the Chair. The formal process for the communication of the outcomes of Committee deliberation, which is through the ACC Coordinator, must be respected.
- 7.7. *Ad hoc* subcommittees may, from time to time, be established by the Committee for the execution of a particular finite task. Conditions for the expiry of *ad hoc* subcommittees will be specified by the Committee at the time the subcommittee is constituted.