



HELPING CANADIAN INSTITUTIONS JOIN THE CCAC PROGRAM



Canadian Council on Animal Care
Conseil canadien de protection des animaux

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INTRODUCTION

Holding a Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® tangibly demonstrates that your institution adheres to the CCAC’s high, internationally-recognized standards of animal ethics and care, and participates fully in the CCAC Assessment and Certification program.

There are significant advantages and benefits for CCAC-certified institutions. Whether a private or government organization, small college or large university, the CCAC Assessment and Certification program helps all institutions achieve high standards of animal welfare.

For more information on the advantages of acquiring a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®, visit the “[Program Features](#)” section of the CCAC website.

CATEGORIES OF INSTITUTIONS AND AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Institutions wishing to become CCAC-certified fall into two categories:

- **Category 1:** The institution has not started working with animals in research or testing, and is seeking its first certificate
- **Category 2:** The institution is already working with animals in research or testing

For both categories, an institution may wish to acquire the services of an animal care committee from a CCAC-certified institution to partially, or fully, oversee its animal ethics and care program (see the “[Guidance for Institutions Wishing to Acquire the Services of an Animal Care Committee from a CCAC-Certified Institution to Partially or Fully Oversee Their Animal Ethics and Care Program](#)” section).

Category 1: The Institution Has Not Started Working with Animals in Research or Testing, and Is Seeking Its First Certificate

This would include academic institutions that are seeking funding from certain organizations, such as the federal granting agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and

Engineering Research Council, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council), which require institutions they fund to have a CCAC certificate prior to undertaking animal-based research.

To obtain their certification, institutions in this category can choose between the following two options.

Option 1: The Institution Acquires a CCAC Probationary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Your institution could become certified through a CCAC Probationary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® within six weeks of an interim assessment visit. Institutions choosing Option 1 will be revisited by the CCAC approximately nine months after their first visit and recertified before their probationary certificate expires (the certificate is valid for one year).

Option 2: The Institution Acquires a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Once your institution is certified, the certificate is valid for three years. The initial assessment visit requires more preparation, however, and the certification process takes longer (6 to 15 months).

Category 2: The Institution Is Already Working with Animals in Research or Testing

This would primarily apply to non-academic institutions that do not have to comply with the requirements of funders, including the federal granting agencies, that they be CCAC-certified before conducting animal-based research.

In this case, the institution would acquire a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®. The initial assessment visit is undertaken by a full assessment panel, and the certification process can take 6 to 15 months. The certificate is valid for three years.

DESCRIPTION OF OPTIONS

For a timeline comparison of the two options, please see Appendix I, “Summary of Options with Approximate Timelines”.

Option 1: The Institution Acquires a CCAC Probationary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Summary of Process

	KEY STEPS	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	APPROXIMATE TIMELINES (MONTHS)
1	Institution establishes an animal ethics and care program	Senior administrator of the institution	
2	Institution completes the <i>CCAC Animal Care and Use Program Review Form for Interim Visits</i> and submits it to the CCAC	Senior administrator of the institution	
3	CCAC conducts an interim assessment visit	CCAC associate director of assessment	0
4	CCAC sends assessment report and CCAC Probationary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to institution (valid for one year)	CCAC	1.5
5	Institution completes <i>CCAC Animal Care and Use Program Review Form</i> and submits it to the CCAC	Senior administrator of the institution	8
6	CCAC conducts a regular assessment visit	CCAC assessment panel	9
7	CCAC sends a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to the institution (valid for three years) after receiving the appropriate implementation report(s) describing how the institution has, or is planning to, address CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit	CCAC	13.5

Detailed Steps

- 1) Your institution must establish an animal ethics and care program (see the *CCAC policy statement for: senior administrators responsible for animal care and use programs*, and Appendix I, “Requirements for Obtaining a First CCAC Certificate”, of the *CCAC policy: Certification of animal ethics and care programs*. Such a program includes:
 - an animal care committee;
 - scientific merit review;
 - pedagogical merit review;
 - a comprehensive veterinary program;
 - a continuing education program for the veterinarian(s) and animal care staff;
 - a training program for researchers and instructors;
 - a crisis management program;
 - an occupational health and safety program; and
 - appropriate animal facilities, if animals are held (see guidelines on [laboratory animals](#), [farm animals](#), [fish](#), [marine mammals](#), and [wildlife](#)).

The CCAC offers an orientation visit service, either on-site or by teleconference, which can be used by institutions with limited knowledge of the CCAC program. The visit or call provides an opportunity to explain the CCAC program, help institutions identify their strengths and weaknesses, and prepare for their first formal assessment visit. Institutions can also hire a knowledgeable consultant to help them through the process. For more information on the orientation service, [contact the CCAC](#).

- 2) Your institution must download and complete the *CCAC Animal Care and Use Program Review Form for Interim Visits* (PRF) and submit it to the CCAC. The interim PRF is a self-assessment document that addresses important elements of an animal ethics and care program and helps institutions identify their strengths and weaknesses. Assessment panels use your completed interim PRF to better understand your program.
- 3) Shortly after receiving your interim PRF, an associate director of assessment will contact your institution and schedule a visit at a mutually convenient time, usually within four to six weeks of receiving your interim PRF (see [sample assessment visit agendas](#)). A visit will be undertaken to assess your processes and evaluate your facilities (if relevant).
- 4) Within five weeks of the visit, the associate director of assessment will write a brief report for your institution and provide it to the Assessment and Certification Committee for review and approval.

The CCAC will award a CCAC Probationary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to your institution based on the associate director of assessment’s brief report and recommenda-

tion regarding whether or not to certify your institution. If no serious issue is identified during the interim visit, the institution will be certified within six to seven weeks of the visit. If serious issues are identified, the institution must address these concerns appropriately in an implementation report (describing how the institution has, or is planning to, address CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit) before certification is awarded. This delays the process.

- 5) Approximately eight months after the initial assessment visit, your institution must complete the CCAC *Animal Care and Use Program Review Form* and submit it to the CCAC. This PRF is more comprehensive than the interim PRF.
- 6) A regular visit with an assessment panel of peers and an associate director of assessment will be conducted about four weeks after receiving your completed PRF (see [sample assessment visit agendas](#)).
- 7) The associate director of assessment will write a report for the institution and provide it to the panel members and the Assessment and Certification Committee for review and approval. Issues identified in the report will have to be appropriately addressed by the institution in an implementation report prior to CCAC certification. The certification process, which includes appropriately addressing issues identified in the assessment report to the satisfaction of the CCAC, and receiving a certification letter and a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice[®], must be completed by the expiry date of the probationary certificate (one year).

Option 2: The Institution Acquires a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Summary of Process

	KEY STEPS	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	APPROXIMATE TIMELINES (MONTHS)
1	Institution establishes a functional animal ethics and care program	Senior administrator	
2	Institution completes a CCAC <i>Animal Care and Use Program Review Form</i> and submits it to the CCAC	Senior administrator	
3	CCAC conducts a regular assessment visit	CCAC assessment panel	0
4	CCAC sends assessment report and any recommendations to the institution	CCAC Assessment and Certification Committee	2.5
5	Institution responds appropriately to recommendations in an implementation report describing how the institution has, or is planning to, address the CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit or in the assessment report	Senior administrator	5.5 to 8.5
6	CCAC sends a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to the institution (valid for three years)	CCAC	6 to 15

Detailed Steps

- 1) Your institution must establish an appropriate animal ethics and care program (see Appendix I, “Requirements for Obtaining a First CCAC Certificate”, of the *CCAC policy: Certification of animal ethics and care programs*). Such a program includes:
 - a functional [animal care committee](#);
 - [scientific merit review](#);
 - [pedagogical merit review](#);
 - a comprehensive [veterinary program](#);
 - a [continuing education program](#) for the veterinarian(s) and animal care staff;
 - a [training program](#) for researchers and instructors;

- a [crisis management program](#);
- an [occupational health and safety program](#); and
- appropriate animal facilities, if animals are held (see guidelines on [laboratory animals](#); [farm animals](#); [fish](#); [marine mammals](#); and [wildlife](#)).

The CCAC offers an orientation visit service, either on-site or by teleconference, which can be used by institutions with limited knowledge of the CCAC program. The visit or call provides an opportunity to explain the CCAC program, help institutions identify their strengths and weaknesses, and prepare for their first formal assessment visit. Institutions can also hire a knowledgeable consultant to help them through the process. For more information on the orientation service, [contact the CCAC](#).

- 2) Your institution must download and complete the CCAC *Animal Care and Use Program Review Form* (PRF) and submit it to the CCAC. The PRF is a self-assessment document that addresses important elements of an animal ethics and care program and helps institutions identify strengths and weaknesses. Assessment panels use your completed PRF to better understand your program.
- 3) Shortly after receiving your PRF, an associate director of assessment will contact your institution and schedule a visit at a mutually convenient time. An assessment panel of peers and the associate director of assessment will conduct the visit to assess your entire animal ethics and care program (see [sample assessment visit agendas](#)). Strengths and weaknesses will be identified and preliminary recommendations to help improve your program will be presented to you verbally during the assessment visit.
- 4) Within 10 weeks of the visit, after review and approval by the assessment panel and members of the Assessment and Certification Committee, your institution will receive an assessment report containing recommendations (see the *CCAC policy: Recommendations made in CCAC assessment reports*). Timelines to respond to the recommendations in an implementation report (describing how the institution has, or is planning to, address CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit) will be provided.
- 5) Complete implementation reports are forwarded to the Assessment and Certification Committee and the assessment panel for their evaluation.
- 6) Meritorious programs that meet CCAC standards are given a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice[®], valid for three years.

GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONS WISHING TO ACQUIRE THE SERVICES OF AN ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE FROM A CCAC-CERTIFIED INSTITUTION TO PARTIALLY OR FULLY OVERSEE THEIR ANIMAL ETHICS AND CARE PROGRAM

Institutions with small scale animal ethics and care programs that do not wish to put their own animal care committee in place can contract the services of an animal care committee from a CCAC-certified institution to partially or fully oversee their program. A formal agreement should be signed by both parties, detailing which institution and which senior administrator is responsible for which elements of the new animal ethics and care program. Clear lines of authority and communication between the chair of the animal care committee and the contracting senior administrator must be established. In addition, close communication between the animal care committee and the office of research services (or equivalent) at the new institution will need to be in place to ensure that funds are advanced, animals are acquired, and work begins only if there is an approved protocol on file.

This agreement should also address management, maintenance, and staffing of animal facilities, if these are to be the responsibility of the institution whose animal care committee is being contracted.

Animal care committee terms of reference should be developed, based largely on the *CCAC policy statement on: terms of reference for animal care committees* and the contracted animal care committee's terms of reference, but modified accordingly and adapted to reflect the animal care committee's authority, roles, and responsibilities within the new institutional animal ethics and care program.

Many institutions will adapt the contracted animal care committee's documentation and resources to their own needs and the CCAC strongly encourages institutions to share this documentation and expertise.

In order to avoid any duplication of effort when reviewing common elements of both animal ethics and care programs, the CCAC will attempt to conduct assessment visits to your institution either on the same day that the contracted institution is assessed, or the day after (for geographically distant institutions).

For more information on acquiring the services of an animal care committee from a CCAC-certified institution, [contact the CCAC](#).

APPENDIX I SUMMARY OF OPTIONS WITH APPROXIMATE TIMELINES

