



Animal-Based Projects Involving Two or More Institutions

Animal care and use for experimental purposes in Canadian institutions is subject to the policies and guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and is overseen, at the local level, by institutional animal care committees (ACCs), whose functioning is based on the *CCAC Policy on: Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees*. Most animal use is undertaken by investigators and teachers working within their own 'home' institutions and overseen by their local ACC(s). However, in certain cases, investigators and teachers undertake animal use in one or several 'host' institutions. In other cases, various parts of an animal-based project are carried out by several institutions. The following policy is intended to provide guidance on how collaborative animal-based projects should be prepared by investigators and teachers and overseen by institutional ACCs.

A. Investigators and teachers carrying out animal-based work in host institutions

An institutional ACC is responsible for overseeing the work carried out by all members of the institution who use animals for research, teaching or testing. Therefore, a member of an institution who wishes to carry out animal-based work within a host institution's facilities must first submit a written animal use protocol describing the project to the ACC of his or her home institution. This ACC must review the project to ensure that it meets the committee's normal standards and does not

contravene any institutional policies on animal care and use. The home institution's ACC can then approve the protocol in principle, conditional to the approval of the protocol by the host institution's ACC.

The host institution's ACC, having received the approval in principle of the protocol from the home institution's ACC, can then review the protocol focussing primarily on whether the animals can be housed, cared for and used appropriately according to CCAC guidelines and policies, given the host institution's facilities and resources. The host institution's ACC must approve the protocol before the protocol can begin, and normally before animals are acquired. It must also take responsibility, with the collaboration of the animal care and veterinary staff of the host institution, for oversight of the protocol and of the welfare of the animals to be used. The host institution's ACC must inform the home institution's ACC of its decision and of any relevant conditions or details accompanying the decision.

To facilitate this process for all of those involved, it is suggested that the use of a single protocol form be agreed upon by the ACCs and the investigator, and that **the chairs of each ACC communicate directly with each other to discuss any questions that either committee may have**. This will minimize delays in the review process while ensuring that each committee is clearly informed and that each can make the most appropriate decision in light of this information.

B. Animal-based projects undertaken in two or more institutions

Investigators from two or more institutions may choose to undertake a collaborative project in which the animal-based work is to be divided between the animal facilities of the various institutions. For these projects, the ACC of each institution involved must receive a written animal use protocol detailing the animal-based work to be undertaken within the facilities for which it is responsible. This protocol must also provide a brief description of the project as a whole. Any interactions between the institutions relative to the animal-based work (e.g., transfer of animals from one institution to another, special requirements to ensure the health and welfare of the transferred animals, etc.) must be understood and accepted by the ACCs of each of the institutions involved.

Once again, **clear and direct communication between ACCs is strongly recommended to facilitate the process** and to ensure that CCAC guidelines and policies are applied, and animal care and use is appropriately overseen throughout all phases of a collaborative project. The ACC of the home institution of the principal investigator should normally take the lead in providing an ethical review of the most comprehensive protocol, and should coordinate and address questions and comments from the other ACCs involved.

C. Field studies

Field studies often involve more than one institution or agency and, when this is the case, section B.3.1.2 of the CCAC *guidelines on: the care and use of wildlife* are the guidelines to be followed:

“When multiple research partners are involved in a project, the ACC of the prin-

cipal investigator should normally take the lead in providing an ethical review of the protocol. Co-operating investigators should be responsible for provision of the reviewed protocol to their home institution, indicating that approval has already been given by the lead ACC. Any questions concerning the reviewed procedures from the home ACCs of the co-operators should be directed to the lead ACC for resolution. Home institutions or agencies should be aware of all projects being conducted by their investigators and should ensure that the procedures to be used are ethically acceptable and comply with all legislative and other applicable standards.

“Where more than one ACC is involved in the review of a protocol (e.g., when research is conducted outside of the jurisdiction of the home institution), a well-defined arrangement between the ACC of the home institution and the host organization, for monitoring the proposed project and the welfare of the animals, should be agreed upon before the project begins. ACCs need to be aware of the protocols and progress of projects which are being carried out locally. The local ACC is often the point of contact for the public and should be able to answer questions concerning wildlife studies in their area.”

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