



Local Animal Care Committee (LACC)

Terms of Reference

Each University of Toronto Local Animal Care Committee (LACC) is charged with reviewing, approving and monitoring animal use protocols associated with its Facility and field research projects conducted by individuals associated with the Facility outside the Facility (collectively, "Protocols"). No animals shall be acquired or used for research or teaching without prior formal approval of a Protocol. Within these Terms of Reference, animals include all vertebrate and cephalopod organisms.

The University affirms that the primary responsibility for regulatory compliance lies with the Principal Investigator using animals in research or teaching.

The LACC reports through the University Animal Care Committee (UACC) to the Associate Vice-President, Research Oversight and Compliance (AVP-ROC), but shall work closely with the Administrative Head (the Facility's Vice-Dean or Vice-Principal, Research) regarding operational issues related to the Facilities it supports.

Each LACC and its membership shall be recognized and supported for the work that they do by the University through the AVP-ROC and the Research Oversight and Compliance Office (ROCO), including dedicated staff responsible for its proper management and coordination.

Functions

The UACC delegates to each LACC the functions, powers and duties required to ensure compliance of the Facility with the requirements of the Animals for Research Act, any other provincial or federal legislation pertaining to the use of animals in research or teaching, the Guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care, and University policies and procedures with respect to animal use and care. Such responsibilities shall include but not be limited to:

1. the review of all new Protocols and annual renewals, including those approved on an interim basis (if adequately justified), by at minimum a faculty member, a veterinarian and a community representative. Any Protocols approved on an interim basis are to be brought to the attention of the full LACC for its formal review and approval;
2. the full or sub-committee review of Protocol amendments;
3. the post-approval monitoring of Protocols and any required followup actions, under such procedures as may be established by the University from time to time;
4. ensuring that all proposed research projects have undergone peer review for scientific merit, as delegated to the University-wide Peer Review Committee in accordance with the Peer Review Committee Terms of Reference;
5. ensuring that all proposed teaching projects have undergone peer review for pedagogical merit, as delegated to the University-wide Pedagogical Merit Review Committee in accordance with the Pedagogical Merit Review Committee Terms of Reference;
6. ensuring that all inter-institutional collaborations are conducted in accordance with CCAC and University policies;
7. ensuring that standard operating procedures (SOPs) are established, reviewed and revised for all activities and procedures that involve the operation of the Facility, apart from University-wide activities and procedures (which are reviewed by the UACC);
8. providing guidance to researchers regarding animal care and use, and policies and procedures relating thereto;
9. ensuring that all persons involved with the care and use of animals have received all required training and have demonstrated competency at the tasks being performed;

10. identifying persons who are not fulfilling their responsibilities with respect to the care and use of animals or who are not complying with University policies and procedures, and responding appropriately;
11. ensuring that all records pertaining to the procurement and use of animals are maintained within the Facility as required by the Animals for Research Act and the University;
12. ensuring the adequacy of security for the Facility and the animals retained therein;
13. identifying and reporting to the appropriate Administrative Head any physical and/or mechanical deficiencies in the Facility;
14. ensuring that all animals are procured, cared for and maintained in general health, to standards consistent with good veterinary practice;
15. ensuring that all animal use, including experimental animal surgery, is conducted in a humane manner with minimized pain and distress, consistent with all applicable standards; and
16. ensuring the use of appropriate procedures for the euthanasia of animals.

The LACC review process for Protocols shall consider, but not be limited to:

1. the ability of the Facility to accommodate the particular species in the numbers and for the time required for the proposed use;
2. the ability of the personnel within the particular Facility to provide appropriate care for the animal species;
3. the ethical aspects of the procedures and the acceptability of the methodologies proposed;
4. the justification for the numbers of animals and the species of animals used, and possible alternatives; and
5. the category of invasiveness of the experiments as proposed by the Principal Investigator.

If the LACC is advised by a University veterinarian, or the LACC believes for any reason, that:

1. unnecessary pain or distress is being experienced by an animal;
2. the appropriate level of care is not being provided; or
3. there are serious breaches of the Animals for Research Act, any other provincial or federal legislation pertaining to the use of animals in research or teaching, the Guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care, or University policies or procedures,

Then the LACC shall:

- a. delegate to the University's veterinary staff the authority to treat, remove from a study or euthanise, if necessary, any animal. If possible, the above should be carried out following consultation with the Principal Investigator, his/her designated alternate for emergencies, and/or the LACC Chair. In the absence of those individuals, the veterinary staff have the authority to proceed with any treatment/emergency measures as deemed necessary. Any measures taken by the veterinary staff should be reported to the Principal Investigator and discussed at the next scheduled meeting of the LACC;
- b. suspend a Protocol, and thereby stop or suspend the research project. Such action shall be confirmed as soon as possible in writing by the LACC Chair to the Principal Investigator, copied to one or more of the following individuals: the University Regulatory Veterinarian, the Associate Vice-President, Research Oversight and Compliance, the Administrative Head, the faculty researcher's Departmental Chair, and the Chair of the UACC, at the discretion of the LACC Chair. All subsequent action shall also be confirmed in writing by the LACC Chair. The project may be resumed when the LACC is satisfied that the situation which led to the stopping or suspension has been corrected;
- c. in consultation with the appropriate Administrative Head, the Chair of the UACC and the University Regulatory Veterinarian, consider closure of the Facility and/or limit uses of the Facility; and
- d. consider whether the situation meets the criteria for research misconduct as set out in the University's 'Framework to Address Allegations of Research Misconduct', and if so, make

such allegation. In these cases, the University Regulatory Veterinarian may serve as the complainant on behalf of the Committee.

The LACC Chair shall make a full written report of any such occurrences in a timely manner, which will be reviewed and minuted at the next LACC meeting.

The Chair of the LACC, Facility Manager and veterinarian(s) must have access at all times to all areas where animals may be held or used.

Independent from the post-approval review program, the LACC or its delegates shall undertake site visits of all animal care facilities and extra-vivarium spaces where animals are held overnight, for survival surgical procedures or for protracted acute procedures at least once per annum, and shall document the visits in the LACC meeting minutes. In addition, the LACC shall undertake regular risk-based site visits of all experimental laboratories where short-lived acute procedures are performed, based on the level of invasiveness, intensity of use, and degree of difficulty of described procedures. Written reports arising from the visits shall be reviewed at the next LACC meeting and forwarded to the relevant researchers and the Quality Assurance Analyst(s) so that any concerns are addressed in a timely manner. These reports are to be made available for the Administrative Head responsible for each Facility.

Membership

The membership of the LACC shall consist of:

1. a minimum of three faculty members associated with the Facility and experienced in the care and use of animals in research and teaching, one of whom shall be appointed as Chair and one as Vice-Chair;
2. at least one community representative from outside the University community who has not been involved in animal use for research, teaching or testing;
3. the University Regulatory Veterinarian (*ex officio*);
4. at least one facility veterinarian (*ex officio*);
5. a member of the University community whose normal activities, past or present, do not depend on or involve animal use for research or teaching;
6. the Animal Ethics and Compliance Manager (*ex officio*);
7. the Facility Director/Manager (*ex officio*); and
8. at least one graduate student or post-doctoral fellow.

Members are appointed to the LACC for terms of not less than two years and not more than four years (renewable) by the AVP-ROC. Excluding *ex officio* members, the total length of continuous LACC service for any particular member should not exceed eight years. New members shall be provided with a letter of appointment from the AVP-ROC, and they must sign a confidentiality agreement and provide a copy of their CV to the ROCO.

The Chair of the LACC shall be nominated by the appropriate Administrative Head and be appointed by the AVP-ROC, and is normally chosen from among the faculty members on the committee who use animals. The Chair should not be directly involved in the management of an animal Facility, nor be an institutional veterinarian, nor be involved in the submission of a significant number of protocols to be reviewed by the LACC.

The duties of the Chair shall include, but are not limited to: providing input on meeting agendas, presiding over meetings, ensuring that Committee records are accurate, ensuring that the Committee carries out its functions as set out in all applicable policies and guidelines and these Terms of Reference, managing compliance issues, and ensuring that new members understand their duties, powers and responsibilities as prescribed in the Regulations and in these Terms of Reference. The Chair acts on behalf of the LACC for the purposes of conducting routine business between scheduled meetings or as required in cases of emergency, as appropriate.

The LACC Vice-Chair is appointed by the AVP-ROC from within the faculty members of the LACC. The Vice-Chair performs the duties of the Chair when necessary.

Resource People and Experts

The LACC may seek input from internal or external experts who have appropriate knowledge regarding the care and use of animals in research and teaching. These individuals may be called upon to attend meetings but do not have voting privileges.

Meetings

The LACC shall normally meet on a monthly basis to ensure full committee review and face-to-face discussion of all Protocols and amendments. A meeting in any particular month may be cancelled if there is an insufficient number of Protocols submitted to the LACC in the month prior. A quorum shall be 50% + 1 of the total committee membership, and must include a veterinarian and a community representative.

Protocol approval decisions are normally made by consensus, but a vote may be taken if consensus cannot be reached after discussion of the outstanding issue(s). In the event of a vote, a simple majority of members are required to approve the Protocol. Dissenting opinions should be recorded in the minutes, along with the rationale for the dissension.

Minutes of each meeting (which should include a summary of LACC site visits of the Facility and extravivari spaces) are prepared by the Animal Ethics and Compliance (AEC) Manager, and LACC Minutes are accessible by the local Administrative Head and the AVP-ROC via the My Research, Animal Protocols online system.

If necessary, Protocols may be reviewed and approved on an interim basis by a subcommittee of the LACC comprised of (at minimum) one faculty member (preferably the Chair of the LACC), one veterinarian and one community representative. Such Protocols must then be submitted for full committee review at the next LACC meeting. Exceptions may be made for amendments deemed to be minor in nature, such as administrative changes.

Should a Protocol be submitted by the LACC Chair, LACC review and approval shall be facilitated by the LACC Vice-Chair.

An individual who is associated with a Protocol (e.g. Principal Investigator, co-investigator or graduate student) who is a member of the LACC or who has been asked to attend an LACC meeting must excuse him/herself from the LACC meeting room during Protocol discussion and while a decision is being made about his/her own Protocol. Additionally, he/she must recuse themselves for any LACC discussions pertaining to their research or any other topic for which his/her presence may pose a conflict of interest, including the Committee review of relevant Post-Approval Review reports.

Reconsideration of Decisions

Decisions of the LACC are normally made by consensus, and efforts shall be made to resolve conflicts between the LACC and a Principal Investigator collegially and informally. If a resolution is not reached informally, a Principal Investigator who disagrees with a decision of the LACC may request reconsideration of the decision in writing to the LACC, providing additional materials in support of the request. The LACC shall review such materials expeditiously and may meet with the Principal Investigator or request such further information as may be necessary to assess the request. The LACC shall notify the Principal Investigator of the outcome of its review in writing.

If the matter has not been resolved through reconsideration by the LACC, the Principal Investigator may, within one month of the LACC's notice of the outcome of its review, request the UACC to review the LACC's decision. The process for UACC review is set out in the UACC's Terms of Reference. The UACC's decision will be final.