

# ANIMAL RESEARCH RULES AND REGULATIONS

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RESEARCH OVERSIGHT AND COMPLIANCE OFFICE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## CANADIAN REGULATIONS

- Research and teaching involving animals is heavily regulated in Canada. The regulations that the University must abide by come from two principal regulatory bodies:
  - [Canadian Council on Animal Care \(CCAC\)](#)
  - [The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs \(OMAFRA\)](#)

## CCAC

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- The CCAC is an arms-length regulatory body that receives funding from NSERC and CIHR, as well as fees charged to regulated institutions
- The Tri-Agency granting bodies (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) all require compliance with CCAC policies and guidelines as a requirement for an institution receiving Tri-Agency funds for research
- This requirement is enforced by the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) that each university signs as a condition of receiving Tri-Agency funds

## CCAC ASSESSMENTS

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- The University of Toronto is assessed every three years by CCAC assessment panels which are comprised of at least one of each of the following: peer scientist, veterinarian, community representative, and CCAC assessment director
- At least 6 months in advance of the assessment the University starts to prepare extensive mandatory pre-assessment documentation, including information on all animal use protocols, University policies and guidelines, SOPs, ACC review processes and vivarium operations
- The assessment visits are usually a week in length and involve a detailed tri-campus audit of the University's vivaria, ACC operations, and research oversight and compliance measures

## CCAC GAP CERTIFICATION

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- Post-assessment the University is provided with a detailed list of recommendations that must be addressed, which can relate to anything from vivarium operations to policies and guidelines
  - All recommendations are based on CCAC policies that the University has agreed to abide by through the Tri-Agency MOU
- Once the recommendations are addressed to the satisfaction of the CCAC, a certificate of Good Animal Practice (GAP) is granted
- A valid GAP certificate is required by the Tri-Agencies in order to receive any funding for animal research
- The entire University is covered under a single GAP certificate
  - Any local noncompliance can jeopardize the entire University's ability to conduct animal-based research or teaching

## CCAC POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

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- Key policies and guidelines that are required by the CCAC and which must be enforced by the University to maintain its GAP certificate include:
  - Annual ethical review of all animal use protocols (AUPs)
  - Peer review of scientific merit of research projects
  - Review of pedagogical merit for teaching projects
  - Enforcement of minimum standards for animal care, husbandry, transport, infrastructure, etc.
  - Review of policies, guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SOPs)
  - Adherence to the 3 Rs (replacement, reduction, refinement)
  - Assurance of training and competency for all animal handlers
  - Post-approval monitoring
  - Annual site visits and extravivarium lab-managed space visits
  - Annual submission of animal use data information

## OMAFRA

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- Animal research in Ontario is governed by a provincial law known as the Animals for Research Act (ARA)
  - Ontario is one of the only provinces that regulates animal research
- The ARA has several requirements, including that an ACC review all proposed research or teaching involving animals and that all animal research facilities be licensed
- The University holds licenses that cover all University facilities where animals are used for research or teaching

## ANIMALS FOR RESEARCH ACT ENFORCEMENT

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- The ARA is enforced by a provincial veterinary inspector, who makes unannounced inspections of animal research facilities to ensure compliance with the ARA
- Non-compliance with the ARA can result in revocation of a University's animal research license, which may lead to a cessation of **all** animal research and teaching at that facility if there is an ARA compliance issue
- It is important to note that noncompliance with either CCAC or OMAFRA regulations and policies can have negative University-wide impacts on all research or teaching with animal subjects

## THE ROLE OF ROCO

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- The Research Oversight and Compliance Office (ROCO) is tasked with ensuring that the University maintains its ability to conduct animal research by ensuring compliance with CCAC and OMAFRA regulations, policies and guidelines
- Feedback or comments on the animal research regulatory framework at U of T are welcome and can be directed to [roco@utoronto.ca](mailto:roco@utoronto.ca)