Policy: Research Animal Procurement

Category: Compliance Assurance
Subject: Procurement of research animals in accordance with regulatory policies
Approving Authority: University Council on Animal Care
Responsible Office: Animal Care Committee
Related Procedures: Procedures for Research Animal Procurement
Effective Date: May 5, 2016
Revised: April 23, 2014

Purpose

The primary objective of this policy is to ensure the consistent application of published regulatory guidelines for animal procurement by authorized members of Western’s Research Community; to clarify the responsibilities of Principal Investigators (PIs), Animal Care (AC) Supervisors, Animal Procurement Administrators and their staffs; and to prevent a conflict of interest with compliance assurance regarding authorized animal use as outlined within approved AUPs.

Scope

This policy pertains to the procurement of animals for animal-based science and displays by Animal Care Committee-authorized PIs and designates within Western’s Research Community.

Policy

The acquisition of animals – from requisition to arrival at a Western Research Community’s Animal Care Facility - must follow all related federal, provincial and institutional policies and regulations.

Principal Investigators (PI’s) and their designates must only procure animals approved within their own Animal Use Protocol (AUP).

Animal procurement may only take place when an AUP has an ‘approved’ status.

Prior to arranging for animal procurement PI’s and Animal Care (AC) Facility Supervisors must ensure that the facilities and expertise are available to house and care for the animals.

The ACC must ensure that all areas – including Animal Care Facilities, non-arms-length-managed (NALM) sites, and short-term animal holding areas - are appropriate for animal housing prior to procurement and receipt of animals into these areas.
With the exception of wildlife used by Field Researchers, the ACC must pre-approve all sources of animals used in animal-based science to ensure they meet regulatory requirements and provide acceptable care and welfare, including housing, health status, and transportation.

As deemed necessary by the ACC or ACVS Veterinarians, ACVS Veterinarians must inspect non-commercial vendors prior to receipt of animals into areas associated with Western’s Research Community.

ACVS Veterinarians are ultimately responsible for facilitating the procurement of healthy animals.

All live animals procured for the purpose of animal-based science or displays associated with Western’s Research Community must be acquired through ACC-approved Animal Procurement Administrators having no direct reporting accountability to the related animal-based science. This does not apply to Field Researchers who procure wildlife for housing/use within an Animal Care Facility or NALM site.

Animal Procurement Administrators must successfully complete the Basic Care & Use Animal Ethics Course prior to ACC approval to assume this role.

In advance of the housing or use of wildlife within an Animal Care Facility or NALM site, Field Researchers must:

- receive advance approval from the related AC Facility/NALM Supervisor; and
- notify the Animal Procurement Administrator.

AC Facility Supervisors and/or an ACVS Veterinarian must proactively review the health status of incoming animals to ensure alignment with health standards of the recipient area.

At the request of an ACVS Veterinarian, AC Facility Supervisors must forward animal health reports to ACVS Veterinarians in advance of animal deliveries.

An ACVS Veterinarian is responsible for decision-making regarding quarantine requirements: determining when quarantine is required; assessing and approving quarantine areas; ensuring quarantine duration is appropriate to the related risk to the health of both quarantined and general animal population; and liaising with any and all regulators and/or agencies as may be necessary to receive related approvals and/or permits.

In the event that non-invasive behavioural studies are proposed on pets owned by the public, a procurement administrator is not required. Such public member(s) must acknowledge in writing that they have read the associated AUP and agree to the participation of their pet(s) in the study. Additionally, CCAC-mandated safety review and staff health assessment must be completed prior to authorization.

Those overseeing animal transport throughout the procurement process must be knowledgeable about specific container requirements; temperature and ventilation of both the container and the environment during transportation; care of the animals prior to and during transport; the requirements for labeling and documentation; and emergency procedures.
After arrival animals must be acclimatized to the experimental conditions as per SOP 310 – Holding Period Post Admission, unless an exemption has been pre-approved by the ACC.

In the event that a newly arrived animal may be sick, the AC Facility Supervisor and PI must follow the Sick Animal Response Policy and related Procedures.

Animal procurement records must be kept by the institution a minimum of 1 year post-euthanasia, and 2 years for dogs and/or cats.

Any concerns associated with research animal procurement that cannot be readily and appropriately resolved between the concerned individual and the PI must be forwarded to the ACC Executive Team, as per the Concerns Identification, Project Refinement and Corrective Response Policy and procedures.

Definitions

- **Animal-Based Science** – Branches of science where animals are used in research, teaching or testing
- **Animal Care & Veterinary Services** – A department directly accountable to Western’s Senior Administrator for providing specialized veterinary and other administrative services that support the animal care and use program within Western’s Research Community, in consultation with the University Council on Animal Care, the Animal Care Committee, institutional senior administrators and officers and animal-based scientists
- **ACVS Veterinarian** – Animal Care & Veterinary Services department provide veterinary support to Western’s Animal Care and Use program (acvsvet@uwo.ca)
- **Animal Care Committee (ACC)** – A subcommittee of the University Council on Animal Care; the institutional animal care committee “responsible for overseeing all aspects of animal care and use and for working with animal users, animal care personnel and the institutional administration”; responsible to ensure animal ethics and care for animal-based science and animal displays directly associated with Western’s Research Community is in accordance with all regulatory and institutional policies and guidelines
- **Animal Care Committee (ACC) Executive Team** - A subset of the ACC tasked with performing preliminary assessments of concerns and related evidence brought forward to the ACC; developing recommendations for Project Refinements and Action Plans; and assigning a specific PI Rep to incidents as they arise. This subset must include at least one ACC and ACVS leader, an ACVS Veterinarian, ACC Community Rep, an ACC Coordinator, and an experienced animal-based scientist on the ACC, if not represented by the ACC leader
- **Animal Care (AC) Facility** – An ACC-approved space that has been purpose-built and allocated for the housing and/or use of animals and overseen by an individual having no direct reporting accountability to the related animal-based science
- **Animal Care (AC) Facility Supervisor** – A trained, competent individual responsible for the oversight of an area or facility that houses research animals who is accountable to the ACVS Director as regards animal health and welfare related matters
- **Animal Use Protocol (AUP)** – The ACC’s mandatory animal ethics form that contains details of a AUP holder’s intended live vertebrate animal care and use, which must be reviewed and approved by the ACC in advance of animal-based science or public viewing of displayed animals
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- **Animal Procurement** – The acquisition of live animals from either commercial or non-commercial sources, including breeding sources, for use in research, teaching and/or testing associated with ACC-approved AUPs

- **Animal Procurement Administrator** - ACC-approved arms-length individuals having no direct reporting accountability to the related research, including arms-length facility supervisors or designates of Victoria Research Laboratories, St. Joseph’s Animal Facility and Animal Care and Veterinary Services, and others who have received ACC pre-approval

- **Animal Procurement Regulatory Requirements** – Rules relating to procurement of animals used in animal-based science arising from federal, provincial and institutional regulations, e.g. the Animals for Research Act (R.S.O. 1990, Chapter A.22; R.R.O. 1990, Reg.22); Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 (S.O. 1997, Chapter 41)

- **Animal Procurement Sources** – ACC-approved commercial and non-commercial suppliers of animals used in research, teaching or testing

- **Basic Care & Use Animal Ethics Course** – A CCAC-mandated online/lecture-based course provided by ACVS Animal Use Trainers on the ethics of animal use within animal-based science activities

- **Concerns** – Anything communicated to any member regarding animal health and/or welfare, human safety, and AUP-related issues. Concerns that cannot be readily resolved will be reviewed by an ACC Executive Team, as appropriate. Concerns will be communicated to the PI before they are classified as either Incidents or Non-Compliance

- **Concerns Identification, Project Refinement and Corrective Response Policy and Procedures** – A framework for Western’s Animal Care Committee to effectively and collegially assess concerns and then respond to incidents and non-compliance pertaining to animal-based science

- **Designate** – An individual who is adequately trained and appropriately experienced with the animals under his/her care/oversight and who is authorized to act on behalf of his/her direct supervisor

- **Field Researcher** – A researcher whose animal subjects are wildlife that are studied and retained in their natural or semi-natural habitat or whose animal subjects are wild-caught and subsequently housed outside of their natural habitat within an Animal Care Facility or a NALM site

- **NALM Site** – A macro environment where animals are housed beyond 72 hours that is not daily overseen by a facility manager or designate considered to be at arm’s-length from the research group and where animals may live out their experimental life at that site. Animals may or may not be procured directly into the site. NALM sites are primarily assessed for animal procurement, housing suitability, and appropriate husbandry practices. NALM sites do not normally include procedure areas or < 72 hour holding locations. Based upon potential risk to animal health and welfare, other areas not conforming to this definition may be identified by the ACC as NALM sites

- **Non-Field Researcher** – A researcher whose animal subjects are research animals studied outside of their natural or semi-natural habitat (e.g. laboratory)

- **Sick Animal** – Any animal that presents clinical signs reflecting a health and welfare concern – physiological, psychological, and/or behavioural - related or unrelated to experimental design

- **Sick Animal Response Policy and Procedures** – A framework that facilitates a consistent and appropriate response to sick animals by animal health professionals (the lab animal veterinarian) and their designates in accordance with all regulatory standards

- **SOP** – Standard Operating Procedures associated with animal-based science within Western’s Research Community; developed by subject experts; reviewed by ACVS Veterinarians and approved by the Animal Care Committee, as per ADM-500

- **University Council on Animal Care (UCAC)** – Western’s Senate committee ultimately responsible for the Animal Ethics and Care program directly associated with Western’s Research Community
• **Western’s Research Community** – Institutions and their departments involving animal-based scientists having Animal Use Protocols under the jurisdiction of Western’s Animal Care Committee, the ACC

• **Wildlife** – Animals sourced from their natural habitat

## Roles and Responsibilities

The ACC, or its Executive Team, is responsible to:

- With the exception of wildlife used by Field Researchers,
  - Review and pre-approve all sources of animals to be procured for animal-based science
  - Maintain a log of all approved animal sources
- Annually review and approve all *Animal Procurement Administrators* in accordance with this policy;
- Review and approve all requests for animal procurement directly into *NALM* sites;
- Review and approve any AUP requests for exemption from SOP 310 – Animal Holding Post Admission;
- Follow up on any concerns identified by any parties involved in research animal procurement; and
- Ensure compliance with this policy in accordance with federal, provincial and institutional regulations.

Non-Field Researchers are responsible to:

- Include all animal sources in the related AUP;
- Acquire all commercial and non-commercial animals from sources pre-approved by the ACC;
- Ensure procured animals - species/strains/numbers - are in alignment with the approved AUP;
  - If desired, submit a request for exemption from SOP 310 – Holding Period Post Admission within his/her AUP in advance of animal receipt;
- Acquire all approved animals via an *Animal Procurement Administrator*;
- If desired, request ACC approval (auspc@uwo.ca) of an *Animal Procurement Administrator*
- Work directly with the AC Facility Supervisor and ACVS Veterinarian regarding animal health, quarantine, housing or husbandry requirements for incoming animals; and
- Follow up on any newly arrived *sick animal* cases in conjunction with the AC Facility Supervisor and ACVS Veterinarian as per the *Sick Animal Response Policy and Procedures*.

Field Researchers are responsible to:

- In the event that wildlife is to be housed/used within an Animal Care Facility or NALM site,
  - Receive pre-approval from the related AC Facility Supervisor/NALM site Supervisor,
  - Inform the associated *Animal Procurement Administrator*
- Ensure animals are procured in compliance with federal, provincial and institutional policies and regulations;
- Ensure procured animals are identified within the approved AUP;
- Work directly with the AC Facility Supervisor and ACVS Veterinarian regarding animal health, quarantine, housing or husbandry requirements for incoming wildlife;
- Follow up on any newly arrived sick animal cases in conjunction with the AC Facility Supervisor and ACVS Veterinarian as per the Sick Animal Response Policy and Procedures; and
- Accurately record and report animal procurement detail annually by December 31 to the ACC via auspc@uwo.ca for all animals involved in his/her field research (i.e. animals caught and retained in their natural habitat) over the past calendar year.

AC Facility Supervisors are responsible to:

- Ensure adequate containment, quarantine and housing space as well as species-appropriate caging and feed are available in advance of approving animal procurement requests;
- Work directly with PIs and ACVS Veterinarians when attempting to accommodate novel research procurement and housing needs;
- As requested by an ACVS Veterinarian and/or as appropriate, forward animal health reports to ACVS Veterinarians seeking veterinary review and approval of incoming animals prior to their arrival;
- Ensure sources of animals have
  - been pre-approved by the ACC
  - animal health statuses that are appropriate to the intended housing/holding space;
- Submit a form to the ACC regarding delegating an Animal Procurement Administrator to procure animals associated with his/her Animal Care facility; receive ACC approval in advance of delegating this responsibility to an Animal Procurement Administrator;
- Review and approve animal procurement requests in advance of order by an Animal Procurement Administrator;
- Review and pre-approve Field Researcher requests to have wildlife housed/held within the Animal Care Facility; and
- Immediately inform the PI and ACVS Veterinarian of any sick animals received.

Animal Procurement Administrators are responsible to:

- Successfully complete Western’s Basic Care & Use Animal Ethics Course;
- Ensure animals are procured in alignment with federal, provincial and institutional policies and regulations;
- Ensure animal sources have been pre-approved by the ACC and have been included in the AUP
  - If not, inform the researcher and seek direction from the AC Facility Supervisor
- Ensure procured animals are in alignment with the approved AUP having an ‘approved’ status;
- Ensure related AC Facility Supervisor and ACVS Veterinarian, as requested, have approved the health status of all incoming animals in advance of animal deliveries.
- Accurately record and report animal procurement at minimum monthly, including animals sourced through breeding programs and wild-caught animals subsequently housed and/or used within a facility associated with Western’s Research Community, to ACC administration;
• Notify researchers of any discrepancy between their requests and the approved AUP;
• Notify the related AC Facility Supervisor of all requests from Field Researchers for housing wildlife within an Animal Care Facility;
• Notify the AC Facility Supervisor/PI/ACVS Veterinarian of any newly arrived sick animals, as per the Sick Animal Response Policy and Procedures.
• Notify the ACC Executive (ausexec@uwo.ca) of any concerns regarding animal procurement that cannot be readily and appropriately resolved between the procurement administrator and PI.

ACVS Veterinarians, or their designates, are responsible to:

• Provide consultation services to the ACC regarding the alignment of animal sources with regulatory requirements;
• Inspect non-commercial vendors prior to procurement, as deemed necessary by either the ACC or an ACVS veterinarian;
• On behalf of the ACC, assess NALM Sites and other short-term animal holding sites prior to permitting animal procurement directly into these areas;
• Review health reports associated with research animal procurement in advance of animal receipt, as appropriate;
• Work directly with PIs and AC Facility Supervisors regarding animal health and/or specialized housing/husbandry requirements prior to animal procurement;
  o Direct AC Facility Supervisors and PIs regarding quarantine requirements, as appropriate
• Follow up on any newly arrived sick animal cases in conjunction with the AC Facility Supervisor and PI as per the Sick Animal Response Policy & Procedures.

Related Documents/References

• CCAC Guidelines on Procurement of Animals Used in Science (2007)
• Animals for Research Act, Ontario
• Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997
• Research Facilities and Supply Facilities
• Transportation
• SOP #310 Holding Period Post-Admission
• SOP #443 Transporting Rodents – Level 1 Containment
• SOP #432 Transporting Rabbits – Level 1 Containment
• MAPP 7.15 - Post Approval Monitoring Program
• Sick Animal Response Policy and Procedures – UCAC/ACC
• Concerns Identification, Project Refinement and Corrective Response Policy & Procedures – UCAC/ACC