

Policy: Veterinary Visits

Category: Compliance Assurance

Subject: Veterinary visits of any areas in which animals are held and/or used for research, teaching or testing at Western and affiliated institutions

Approving Authority: University Council on Animal Care

Responsible Office: Animal Care & Veterinary Services

Related Procedures: Procedures for Veterinary Visits

Effective Date: April 23, 2014

Revised:

Purpose

The purpose is to ensure regularly scheduled onsite presence of institutional veterinarians is delivered at all sites under the authority of Western’s Animal Care and Use program. Veterinary visits are an informal process whereby an Animal Care & Veterinary Services (ACVS) Veterinarian visits the various sites and procedure areas across campus and institutional affiliates to identify and discuss best practices, and to engage with research and animal care staff in a collegial proactive problem solving approach.

Rationale

Regularly scheduled veterinary presence is required to ensure that animal health and welfare issues do not arise or are promptly addressed; *Animal Use Protocol* (AUP) drift is identified; facility concerns are identified; and questions from facility staff and researchers are addressed. Regular onsite presence facilitates a proactive rather than reactive approach to compliance, and fosters a collaborative approach to regulatory compliance.

Scope

This policy applies to all areas at Western University and its affiliates where animals are held and/or used.

Policy

In conjunction with veterinary rounds and Animal Use Subcommittee (AUS) site visits, ACVS veterinarians must undertake veterinary visits to ensure that animal holding and use areas, including procedure rooms, are visited with a frequency proportional to risks to animal health and welfare.

In conjunction with veterinary rounds and AUS site visits, ACVS veterinarians must visit animal holding and use areas associated with high risk *Animal Use Protocols* (AUPs) at minimum once per month, or as directed by the AUS.

Veterinary visits must be documented, and reports made available to the AUS.

Definitions

1. **ACVS** – The Department of Animal Care and Veterinary Services accountable to Western’s Vice-President Research, Western’s Animal Care and Use Program senior administrator.



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2. **Affiliated Institutions** – Institutions where live animal-based research, teaching and/or testing *Animal Use Protocols* are under the jurisdiction of the Animal Use Subcommittee (e.g. Lawson Health Research Institute, St. Joseph's, Huron College).
 3. **Animal Use Protocol (AUP)** – The AUS's mandatory animal ethics form that contains details of a researcher's intended live animal use, which must be reviewed and approved by the AUS in advance of animal use.
 4. **Animal Use Subcommittee (AUS)** – A subcommittee of the University Council on Animal Care, the working Animal Care Committee responsible to ensure that the care and use of live animals used for research, teaching or testing at Western and/or its affiliated institutions is in accordance with all regulatory policies and guidelines.
 5. **AUS Rounds** - Formal site visits undertaken by members of the AUS. The intent is to assess the animal care and use program annually at each of the animal facilities and approved labs across campus and institutional affiliates
 6. **High Risk AUPs** – AUPs with assigned Categories of Invasiveness D and/or E, as defined by the Canadian Council on Animal Care, phylogenetically higher species, and/or history of AUP non-compliance.
 7. **PI** - Principle Investigator responsible to ensure that his/her own animal-based research aligns with his/her approved AUP.
 8. **Protocol Drift** – Animal-based research, teaching or testing involving elements not currently specified within an approved AUP.
 9. **Regulatory Compliance** – Alignment of Animal Care and Use program with federal, provincial and institutional bodies whose laws and policies govern animals used in research, teaching and testing, e.g. Canadian Council on Animal Care, Tri-Council, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.
 10. **Veterinary Rounds** - Formal post-approval AUP assessment undertaken by the ACVS compliance assurance team on behalf of the AUS. The intent is to assess procedures and identify Protocol drift.