

Purpose / Scope

The objective of this policy is to outline criteria for the generation, review and approval of within-year changes ('Modification') to the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) to ensure alignment with current National, Provincial and Institutional regulatory policies and guidelines.

Rationale

Our national, Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and provincial, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) regulators require that all animal-based science activities be disclosed within an AUP and pre-approved by the Animal Care Committee (ACC) before it is undertaken in practice. In both its *Terms of Reference* and *Guidelines for Protocol Review*, the CCAC states: "All modifications must be approved and documented by the ACC before being initiated by the investigator."¹

Policy Statements

Any changes to an approved AUP must be submitted and approved by the ACC prior to their implementation. Changes to approved AUPs (hereto referred as 'Modifications') must be submitted using the ACC's protocol software system.

Protocol Modification Scope

Where a Modification involves a significant change(s) in animal utilization or the direction of the animal-based science activity, a full AUP must be submitted; this includes conditions identified under 'Animal Use Protocol Scope' within the *Animal Use Protocols-A* policy.

Modification scope must be limited to plans for the current AUP year only, or at Annual Renewal if changes are projected for the upcoming year, e.g. animal numbers, new procedures, new personnel.

Protocol Modification Review & Approval Determination

The ACC must review Modifications with respect to whether animal use is acceptable "ethically and in practice and must decide whether the animal-based methods are appropriate for the proposed work, with careful consideration of the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use)."²

¹ Canadian Council on Animal Care. CCAC Guidelines on Animal Use Protocol Review (1997) - Sect. 1 and ACC ToFR P.8, Sect.3 f)

² CCAC. CCAC policy statement on: scientific merit and ethical review of animal based research. Sect.2. Retrieved 26MAR2019 from https://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Scientific_merit_and_ethical_review_of_animal-based_research.pdf

Final approval of Modifications by the ACC must only be granted following confirmation of associated approvals, e.g., Scientific or Pedagogical Merit, institutional OHS.

On a monthly basis, all Modifications that have been approved via the Delegated process during the previous month must be made available to the full ACC.

ACC decisions must align with the criteria outlined within the *Animal Use Protocols Policy (A)*.

Modifications Requiring Full ACC Review

Proposed changes to an AUP that may be considered more invasive than the original AUP and may have a negative impact on animal welfare and/or a significant increase in animal numbers must undergo Full ACC Review, as outlined within *Procedures for Full ACC Review (PROC-002-A)*, to include but not limited to:

- Animal Number Increases
 - any increase involving 'species' identified as 'Directed Animals'
 - animal increases beyond 25% of the annual authorized number for species identified as 'Designated Animals,' e.g. rodents, avians, fish
- Procedures
 - addition to an established experimental timeline
 - new and/or an increase in intensity of invasive procedures that may negatively impact an animal's welfare
 - not including items identified under POL-002-A 'Animal Use Protocol Scope'
 - addition of a new experimental agent that changes the experimental timeline
- any Modifications, as requested by any ACC member

Major modifications, the nature of the invasive procedure(s), or significant changes in the use of anesthetics/analgesics must be subjected to the same level of review and information requirements as a new AUP.

The ACC Executive may be engaged in the review process, as applicable to the situation.

Modifications Eligible for Delegated ACC Review

Proposed changes to an AUP that are either administrative in nature, neither deleteriously impact the animal(s), nor require new skills, may be reviewed via the Delegated Review process, as outlined within *Procedures for Delegated Review (PROC-002-B)*, may include:

- AUP title change
- granting information
- changes in staff, e.g. training requirements, new staff
- a change to a less invasive, distressful, or painful procedure
- change in anesthetic or analgesic usage which represents a refinement
- euthanasia method changes (CCAC Acceptable only)

- addition of a new experimental agent that does not change the experimental timeline or category of invasiveness
- animal number increases up to 25% of the annual authorized number for species identified as 'Designated Animals,' e.g. rodents, avians, fish
- addition of a strain with the exception of those that increase the category of invasiveness
- transfer of animals between AUPs (AUP Transfers involving previous animal use, excluding breeders, dams & surplus animals)
- animal source
- housing or use location changes

Proposed changes to an AUP that may be considered requiring Delegated Review must be approved by ACC members competent to make an informed decision, e.g. Institutional Veterinarian, ACC Chair, ACC Officer, ACC Manager. The AUP Review Working Group or ACC Executive may be engaged, as applicable.

References

- OMAFRA's Animals for Research Act, R.S.O. 1990
- Canadian Council on Animal Care
 - Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees (2006)
 - Requirement for submitting an animal protocol (2020)
 - Frequently Asked Questions (2020)
 - CCAC guidelines on: animal use protocol review (1997)
 - Ethics of Animal Investigation (1989)
 - Categories of Invasiveness in Animal Experiments
- Animal Care Committee policies and procedures

Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
00	07-10-2015	New Policy	LT / LC
01	11-04-2017	Updates to definitions for Major & Minor Protocol Modifications, and Protocol Review Types to align with CCAC recommendations (2015)	LT / LC
02	08-10-20	Split POL-002 into three distinct policies: AUPs (A), Annual Renewals (B) & Protocol Modifications (C); Allocate Modification types to the two review types: Full ACC & Delegated; Update References; update formatting; Remove Roles & Responsibilities	LT / LC / EB

- **AUP Review Working Group** – This standing working group of the ACC reviews AUP forms with the exception of those reviewed by the full ACC or designates. The AUP Review Working Group consists of six roles to include Animal-Based Scientist, Community Representative, Institutional Veterinarian, Technical Representative, Non-Animal User, and the ACC Officer as per the Terms of Reference for ACC Working Groups. Participation is on a rotational basis for roles represented by more than one individual.
- **Categories of Invasiveness** – Levels assigned to AUPs in accordance with CCAC policy. Experiments involving:
 - **A** – Most invertebrates or live isolates
 - **B** – Little or no discomfort or stress
 - **C** – Minor stress or pain of short duration
 - **D** – Moderate to severe distress or discomfort
 - **E** – Procedures causing severe pain at or above the pain tolerance threshold of unanaesthetized conscious animals