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Purpose/Scope

The primary purposes of this policy are to ensure that:

- All stakeholders understand their record-keeping responsibilities,
- Animal Records align with current national and provincial regulations, and
- Access to these records is readily available to those responsible for record-keeping and oversight of animal health and welfare, e.g., research teams, animal health professionals, animal husbandry supervisors and staff, the Animal Care Committee and its designates and external inspectors.

Animal Records referred to in this policy include elements listed in the Table of Contents under Policy Statements.

Rationale

CCAC's Guideline on Animal Husbandry states the following:



Records appropriate to the species and animal-based procedures must be accessible.

Animal records, husbandry records and other records relevant to husbandry activities should be comprehensive and readily accessible to investigators and their research technicians, veterinary personnel, animal care personnel, ACCs, auditors, and inspectors.

Medical and experimental records must be kept onsite for a study and in a format accessible to veterinary personnel.

Retention of records is important for research accountability and requires collaboration between investigators and facility personnel regarding the type of records and length of time they need to be retained. ...Investigators should also be aware of any additional requirements by publishers or granting agencies funding the research regarding record retention, publication, and availability.¹

CCAC Guidelines on Mice and Rats, state:

All procedures should be documented, and records should be kept in close proximity to housing or procedure areas and be accessible to the veterinary team, animal care committee, and the research team.²

Proper record keeping is extremely important to ensure effective and efficient management of breeding colonies, including detection and spread of disease, and the reproducibility of research experiments.³

Policy Statements

General

Animal-Based Scientists, Animal Facility and Animal Health Professional staff must maintain Animal Records in accordance with all regulatory and institutional requirements.

- Animal records pertaining to the administration of hazards must align with the institutional and facility level protocols pertaining to the administration of the specific type of hazard.
- In-room records must be maintained in accordance with AUP requirements and this policy.

All Animal Records must accompany live animals wherever they are held and must be maintained in real-time in a legible and readily accessible format for access by research teams, animal health professionals and designates, animal care personnel, the ACC and its designates as well as external regulators.

- Readily accessible electronic records may be used in place of paper records.

Records for rodents, rabbits, fish, and other small animals may be applied to the cage/tank level.

- Individual records must be kept for any animal where a health or welfare concern or variances from the cohort have been identified.

Except for cage cards and cage labels, all in-room paper-based animal records must be stored within a washable binder or other sleeve that is readily correlated to the animals / cages within the room and accessible to those responsible for animal monitoring / oversight.

- Animal Facility supervisors will specify an acceptable washable cover.

¹ CCAC. CCAC Guidelines on Husbandry of Animals in Science (2017). Section 12.1 P.31 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from <https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC-guidelines-on-husbandry-of-animals-in-science.pdf>

² CCAC. CCAC Guidelines: Rats (2022) P.48 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Guidelines_Rats-Sept2022.pdf and CCAC Guidelines: Mice (2022) P.52 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Guidelines_Mice-Sept2022.pdf

³ CCAC. CCAC Guidelines: Rats (2022) P.28 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Guidelines_Rats-Sept2022.pdf and CCAC Guidelines: Mice (2022) P.30 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Guidelines_Mice-Sept2022.pdf

Where Animal Records do not comply with this policy, the Facility Supervisor and/or animal health professional and/or SAR designate will work with the Record Keeper toward maintaining complete records.

- Situations not readily resolved on-the-floor will be forwarded to the ACC Executive, as per the Concerns Policy (POL-004).

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Animal Use Protocols

An up-to-date version of the approved AUP must be readily accessible within each area where associated live animals are held and/or used.

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Cage Cards

Cage cards must be kept current with the animal or enclosure holding the animal from arrival until experimental or early euthanasia endpoint and must include the following information:

- Cage Card ID #
- AUP#, with expiry year
- AUP Holder
- Emergency Contact Lab Member directly responsible for the cage and their contact #, unless otherwise clearly identified within the room.
- Animal Origin, e.g., vendor, in-house breeding stock
- Date of Arrival (DOA) +/- age estimate at arrival or Birth (DOB)– specify DOA/DOB
- Species
- Breed/stock/strain/genotype
- Sex
- Number of animals per enclosure
 - Animal IDs (optional)

Where software system-generated cage labels with bar codes are used to access electronically stored cage card information, access to the system must be readily available within the room.

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Cage Labels

Washable or disposable, unobstructive cage-level labels should be used to identify animals with serious/potentially serious animal health conditions / onset of disease states, e.g., morbidity, post-operative animals, diabetics, sepsis.

- Each Animal Facility will provide access to re-usable labels using a consistently applied design that meets the needs of the operation and aligns with other policies, e.g., SAR.
- Rack-level labeling may be considered a suitable alternative for situations where a cohort of animals experiences the same animal health condition at the same point in time.

Additional labels may be provided by the Animal Facility to enhance instructional communications between the research team and Animal Care staff, e.g., weaning required, monitor for aggression, NPO, Special Feed/Water, new pups.



Animals administered a hazard must be labeled on the cage or enclosure according to the institutional or facility level SOP or work instruction. The hazard-specific labels must include:

- the hazardous agent's name,
- laboratory contact information,
- the date of administration, and
- any additional information required to align with the hazard-specific SOP or work instruction.

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Daily Animal Health and Welfare Check Logs

Room-level logs must be maintained by those directly responsible for daily animal health checks. Logs should include:

- the date of health check,
 - include time/time of day when more than one health check is required daily, or as required by the AUP-specific medical record
- initial of individual performing the health check, and
- a section for comments.
 - An alternative, readily accessible location for recording comments may be provided by the Facility Supervisor.

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Animal Observations/Treatment/Procedure (OTP) Records

An OTP record must be maintained to provide a **high-level stepwise outline from arrival to endpoint** of all animal observations, experimental procedures, and interventions performed for each animal or animal cohort.

- Where large numbers of animals (rodents, fish) are involved, one record can be used to record activities applied to an animal cohort, except for animals that diverge from the cohort (which require their own record).

OTP records must be readily correlated to:

- the specific live animal or animal cohort, e.g., an Animal's ID, cage-card #,
- the AUP
 - As available, specific Timeline (for AUPs containing multiple Timelines only),
- the date (DD/MM/YYYY) and time (24 hour), and
- the record keeper.

OTP Records must include **a summary** of:

- experimental procedures performed,
- animal health observations, e.g., animals weighed, overall appearance, behavioural and/or physiological changes, SAR activated (reference SAR report date),
 - AUP-specific Medical/Health Monitoring Record may be referenced, e.g., see Record # of date
- medical interventions, e.g., nail trims, subcutaneous fluid administration, tooth trim, soft food
- outcomes, e.g., improved, no change, early/experimental endpoint.

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Sick Animal Response (SAR) Records

SAR Reports must be retained with the animal until the morbidity is resolved.

- SAR records must be retained by the AUP holder for 1 year following the endpoint of the animal.
- For details, follow the *Sick Animal Response Policy* (POL-009) and *Procedures* (PROC-009).
 - SAR records must be readily available for review by Institutional Veterinarians and regulators.
 - All adverse events and the associated interventions involving sick animals must be disclosed within the AUP at annual renewal and an AUP's continuance.

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AUP-Specific Medical/Health Monitoring (AUP MHM) Records

AUP MHM Records should be developed in conjunction with Institutional Veterinarians with the goal of ensuring important information is available to those responsible for overseeing animal care and welfare while reducing unnecessary effort by research personnel responsible for maintaining these records.

- At minimum AUP MHM Records should be developed for procedures involving anesthesia, surgery and disease models involving COI 'D' and 'E' procedures.

AUP-Specific Medical/Health Monitoring Records must be maintained with the associated animal(s) or animal cohort in real time to monitor and record specific health and/or disease model conditions as outlined within the AUP.

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Breeding Records

Breeding records must be maintained by breeding colony managers for all active animal colonies and should include the following information.

- Breeders' Information
 - Parental Strains (using AUP nomenclature/common name)
 - Parent IDs, including DOB
 - Pairing Date (DOM)
- Offspring Information:
 - DOB per litter
 - Estimated number of pups (once litter can be safely observed, actual number can be counted)
 - Disposition with date, e.g., weaned, found dead, euthanized, used experimentally, culled (undesired genotype).
 - Identification method + date
 - Genotyping method + date

Breeding records associated with live animals must be readily associated with the animals within the holding room and easily accessible to those responsible for regular animal health and welfare oversight.

- **Cage-level information** must include Breeders' Information and the first three items under Offspring Information.
- The last two may be recorded within the OTP Record or alternative, readily accessible electronic record.

Cage-level breeding information must remain with the dam, whereas male studs should retain their own cage-level information that records DOM and dam ID.

For more information on mouse breeding colony management procedures, reference *CW-446 Mouse Breeding Colony Management SOP*.

Breeding colony records for the year must be made available, upon request by the ACC, to the ACC at Annual Renewal. Reports should include⁴:

- Breeding system information,
- Reproductive performance, including any sudden changes,
- Morbidity/mortality rates,
- Number of pups born (count as soon as possible without disturbance),
- Number of pups weaned,
- Criteria used for culling animals, and
- Other factors relating to breeding program management that balance research requirements while avoiding over-production of animals.

As available, the animal management software system must be used to record core breeding records.

- Exceptions may be granted if a suitable alternative record-keeping system is in place.

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Animal Morbidity/Mortality (AMM) Logs

Records of animal morbidity (sick animals) and mortality (animals that do not reach experimental endpoint) must be maintained by personnel involved in identification and recording, per the *Sick Animal Response Policy* (POL-009) and Procedures (PROC-009).

As available, the animal management software system must be used to record animal morbidity and mortality.

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Animal Husbandry/Housekeeping (AHH) Records

AHH Records must be maintained for each room (for aquatics, for each tank) and must include the feeding schedule, room maintenance record (including housekeeping and environmental parameters), and the enclosure cleaning/changing record.

- Standard Operating Procedure CW-FAC-001 *Citywide Animal Area Housekeeping* must be followed, including use of room-level logs.
- Facility-specific SOPs should be followed; related Forms should be used.
- For aquatics also include records of water quality parameters, as outlined within Appendix D of CCAC's *guidelines on the care and use of fish in research, teaching, and testing – Water Quality Criteria for Optimum Fish Health*⁵ and records pertaining to the preventive maintenance program for life support systems.

⁴ CCAC. CCAC Guidelines: Rats (2022) Section 5.1 P. 28-29 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Guidelines_Rats-Sept2022.pdf and CCAC Guidelines: Mice (2022) Section 5.1 P. 30-31 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Guidelines_Mice-Sept2022.pdf

⁵ CCAC. CCAC's guidelines on the care and use of fish in research, teaching and testing. Appendix D. Water Quality Criteria for Optimum Fish Health. Retrieved on 24SEP2020 from <https://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/Fish.pdf>

Records of cleaning and sanitation activities should be kept, including testing of the efficacy of related equipment when in use, e.g., cage washer temperature/cycle duration⁶.

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Food, Water and Bedding (FWB) Records

Special food or water requirements must be clearly noted on the animal enclosure and within the AUP.

A record of food supplies must be maintained to ensure adequate quantities of appropriate fresh and highly nutritious food are available for all animals.

- Records must include expiry date.
- Records should include source/supplier, lot number, milling date, acquisition date, feed type (nutrient content) and quantity received.

Records should be kept when water is dispensed.

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Animal Use Data

Records of animal procurement for experimental/teaching and breeding activities must be maintained in the system provided by the Animal Facility and reported on annually (calendar year) to the Office of the Animal Care Committee (OACC) for disclosure to national and provincial regulators.

- Facility supervisors are responsible to collect and provide this information to the OACC by January 15th.
- The OACC is responsible to submit Animal Use Data Forms to OMAFRA by March 1st and to CCAC by March 31st annually.

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Record Retention Requirements

In-room paper records retained within the animal holding room must be associated with live animals only.

Records of deceased animals must be retained by the Principal Investigator for the timeframes identified below:

- Per Ontario's Animals for Research Act, records associated with research animals other than dogs, cats and non-human primates must be retained for a minimum of one year following the last day the animal is in a research facility, and must include:
 - the date of arrival of the animals;
 - the source from whom the animals are purchased or otherwise acquired; and
 - the allocation of the animals.⁷
- Per Ontario's Animals for Research Act, records associated with dogs, cats and non-human primates must be retained for a minimum of two years following the last day the animal is in a research facility, and must include:
 - sex;

⁶ CCAC. CCAC guidelines on the husbandry of animals in science. (2017) Section 12.3.3. P.33. Retrieved 06JUN2024 from <https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC-guidelines-on-husbandry-of-animals-in-science.pdf>

⁷ Government of Ontario. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 24: Research Facilities and Supply Facilities. Sect. 12 (3) retrieved 14JUN2024 from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900024>



- estimated age and weight;
- the colour, markings and any physical abnormalities;
- the breed or type;
- the name of the source from whom the animal was purchased or otherwise acquired and the date thereof where the animal was not born in the research facility;
- any invoice, bill of sale or like record of the purchase of the animal; and
- the allocation.⁸

Per CCAC, health records and records for food, water and bedding should be retained for a period suited to the type of research and institutional requirements; a minimum of one year is required, or as long as necessary to meet the requirements of the government, relevant professional associations and the research.⁹

Per Western's Faculty Collective Agreement (P.3), *Retention of Research and Scholarly Materials Academic Fraud and Misconduct 5.6.6.1* states,

Members shall be responsible for providing the Employer access to their Research and scholarly activity materials in electronic or some other format for seven years from publication or release to the public of the Research results. This Clause shall not apply where destruction of original Research materials or data before the expiration of a seven-year period is a legitimate pre-condition for conducting the Research; where such destruction of original materials is required, the Member shall provide access to secondary materials in which observations of the original data have been recorded.¹⁰

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References

Canadian Council on Animal Care

- CCAC Guidelines on: Husbandry of Animals in Science (2017)
- CCAC Guidelines: Mice (2022)
- CCAC Guidelines: Rats (2022)

Animal Care Committee Policies

- Animal Husbandry (POL-010)
- Sick Animal Response (POL-009)
- Post-Approval Monitoring (POL-005)
- PAM Visits by Animal Health Professionals (POL-020)
- Concerns (POL-004)

⁸ Government of Ontario. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 24: Research Facilities and Supply Facilities. Sect. 12 (2) retrieved 14JUN2024 from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900024>

⁹ CCAC. CCAC Guidelines on Husbandry of Animals in Science (2017). Section 12.1 P.31 Retrieved 06JUN2024 from <https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC-guidelines-on-husbandry-of-animals-in-science.pdf>

¹⁰ Western University. Faculty Collective Agreement between The University of Western Ontario and The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2026 Retrieved 18JUN2024 from https://www.uwo.ca/facultyrelations/pdf/collective_agreements/faculty_collective_agreement_2022-2026.pdf

Revision History

Version	Date <i>dd-mm-yyyy</i>	Description of Changes	Author
00	23-04-2014	New Policy	LT
01	05-05-2016	Ref. new policies, e.g., Concerns; Update format; Add R&R	LT / TDL
02	10-11-2020	Policy Statements: Add detail to 'Animal Records' elements; Update Refs. To other Policies; Definitions: Add samples records; Reformat	ET/LT/KB/SG
03	08-08-2024	Update all sections to align with review of CCAC's Guidelines on Animal Husbandry, Mice, and Rats, and feedback from the Round Table session focused on Animal Records; add new sections	LT
04	12-06-2025	Update General and Cage Labels sections re. in-room paper records storage and add cage-level labels to identify serious / potentially serious animal health cases.	LT, SG