



Contents

Purpose / Scope..... 1

Rationale 1

Policy 2

 AWA Reviewing 3

 Reporting 3

References..... 3

Revision History 3

Glossary..... 4

Purpose / Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate assessment of animal welfare.

Goals of Animal Welfare Assessments (AWAs) include:

- reducing ‘negative’ and enhancing long-term ‘positive’ affective states,
- improving identification of subclinical animal welfare concerns,
- ensuring suitability of animal condition with study outcomes and strengthening scientific data collection from animals,
- ensuring AUP (Animal Use Protocol) alignment, including category of invasiveness level, and
- optimizing animal housing and husbandry practices.¹

See App1 for Glossary.

[Return to TOC](#)

Rationale

CCAC (Canadian Council on Animal Care) states:

...welfare assessments must be performed on all animals while they are owned, held, used, or interacted with by members of a certified institution.²

¹ CCAC. CCAC guidelines: Animal Welfare Assessment. Section 1.2 Reasons for Assessing Animal Welfare. P. 8
https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_guidelines-Animal_welfare_assessment.pdf

² CCAC. CCAC guidelines: Animal Welfare Assessment. Section 1.2 Reasons for Assessing Animal Welfare. P. 8
https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_guidelines-Animal_welfare_assessment.pdf



Welfare assessment should be performed throughout an animal's life and assess the lifetime experiences of the animal, considering physical condition, psychological and behavioural well-being, environment, and experimental procedures.³

[Return to TOC](#)

Policy

The welfare of animals must always be prioritized over considerations of cost and convenience while maintaining human safety.⁴

AWAs must consider the lifetime experiences of the animal and account for its physical condition, psychological and behavioural well-being, environment, and the experimental procedures it has been and will be subjected to.

AWAs must be undertaken by teams involving AUP (Animal Use Protocol) Holders and their delegates as well as veterinary and animal husbandry staff.

AWAs must be undertaken for animals at a frequency proportional to potential animal welfare impact, and should include animals:

- identified as 'Directed' that are held longer term (greater than or equal to one year)
- associated with Categories of Invasiveness level 'D' or 'E'
- involved in a Pilot Study per the *PAM Visits by Animal Health Professionals Policy (POL-020)*
- re-enrolled / used in more than one study, and/or
- associated with a 'Concern' per the *Concerns Policy (POL-004)*.

At minimum and with reference to the species-specific aide memoire (or alternative AUP-specific aide memoire), AWAs must be undertaken when animal welfare has been identified as severe and/or unacceptable and was not expected, per the approved AUP.

For animals involved in more than one study, after finishing a study and before entry into another study, Institutional Veterinarians must be directly involved in undertaking an AWA, to include:

- a comprehensive history of what has been performed previously, e.g., previous procedural invasiveness, frequency, sequelae,
- the procedures involved in the new study and their potential consequences, and
- the animal's physical and emotional health/wellness.

[Return to TOC](#)

³ CCAC. FAQs Nonhuman Primates

<https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC-FAQs-on-nonhuman-primates.pdf>

⁴ CCAC. CCAC guidelines – Animal Welfare Assessments (April 2021). Retrieved from

https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_guidelines-Animal_welfare_assessment.pdf.



AWA Reviewing

All AWA data must be readily available for Veterinary Services professionals, Facility Supervisors and ACC Executive members for reference in support of ongoing animal husbandry, sick animal response and post approval monitoring programs.

AWA data for each Animal Use Protocol must be reviewed by an Institutional Veterinarian at Annual Renewal.

[Return to TOC](#)

Reporting

All AWA reports must be documented and stored centrally in a readily retrievable format for internal and external regulators.

The ACC Executive via the Office of the ACC must be notified via email (acc@uwo.ca) in real-time of AWAs that identify unexpected animal welfare statuses of 3 (Severe) or 4 (Unacceptable) per the associated species-specific aide memoire and the approved AUP.

Associated AWA information that identifies unexpected severity must be made available to the Executive minimum monthly.

[Return to TOC](#)

References

Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC)

- CCAC guidelines: Animal Welfare Assessment (April 2021)
- *Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals, Volume 1*. 2nd ed.
- *CCAC guidelines on: animal use protocol review (1997). Section 9. Invasive Stressful Procedures*
- *FAQs - Nonhuman Primates*

Animals for Research Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.22, ss. 16(1), 16(2).

Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine (CALAM). *CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care (2020)*

[Return to TOC](#)

Revision History

Version	Date <i>dd/mm/yyyy</i>	Description of Changes	Authors
00	11-07-2024	New Policy	LT, SG, ET, JSN

Glossary

Aide Memoire – Species- strain- and disease-model specific animal-based measures to include specific criteria that define each measure used and associated scoring rubric that addresses expected developmental changes of an animal with age.

Animal Welfare – Per CCAC’s definition: Animal welfare is a concept used to characterize the physical and mental state of an individual animal and how this animal is experiencing the conditions in which it lives. Affective states are considered the primary determinant of animal welfare.

Animal Welfare Assessment – The formal assessment of Animal Welfare by an AWA Team using the AWA Tool that infers affective states based upon validated changes in physiology and behaviour. Assessments should be undertaken using minimally invasive approaches by competent personnel directly involved in the care of animals.

Animal Welfare Assessment Team – Personnel assigned to oversee the care of animals to include veterinary, animal husbandry and research personnel.

Directed Species – Species - Pigs, sheep, dogs, cats, non-human primates, guinea pigs, and rabbits

Expected Severity – Animal impact is clearly identified within the AUP, e.g., COI (Category of Invasiveness), procedural consequences; animal outcomes and monitoring regime are aligned with AUP parameters and current veterinary standards of care.

Unexpected Severity – Animal impact is outside of AUP parameters; animal outcomes and monitoring regime are not aligned with AUP parameters, and current veterinary standards of care.

[Return to TOC](#)