ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (ACC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(adapted from the CCAC *policy statement: Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees,* 2006)

PREAMBLE:

1. The Canadian Council on Animal Care ("**CCAC**") requires that institutions conducting animal-based research, teaching or testing establish an animal care committee ("**ACC**"), and that it be functionally active.

2. Cape Breton University ("**CBU**") is committed to the principle that the use of animals in research and teaching is acceptable only if it promises to further our knowledge of natural processes, diseases and conservation, or to the development of knowledge that can reasonably be expected to benefit humans or animals. Furthermore, all proposed animal use must first be examined with a view to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals whenever possible.

3. To ensure that this commitment is carried out, CBU has established an ACC to facilitate research and teaching practices that comply with the Canadian Council on Animal Care Guidelines and Policies (the "**CCAC Guidelines**").

4. Overall, the ACC is responsible for:

   a. ensuring that animal care and use procedures at CBU comply with CCAC guidelines,

   b. evaluating animal use protocols (or AUPs) to determine their ethical acceptability, and

   c. ensuring that due consideration is given to the ethics of animal experimentation by all those involved.

5. In order to support the ACC in its mandate, CBU is responsible for:

   a. appointing an ACC coordinator and a consulting veterinarian,

   b. providing training opportunities to ACC members to help them understand their role and work, including a formal orientation session that introduces ACC members to CBU's animal care and use program, and CCAC guidelines,

   c. providing ongoing professional development opportunities for ACC members such as access to relevant journals and materials, meetings and workshops related to animal care and use, and

d. ensuring that the ACC is well respected within the institution, and that all ACC members and the ACC Chair are valued and recognized.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SECTION I: Committee Membership and Procedures

1.1. The ACC reports to the Vice-President Academic and Professional Studies (Provost) and to Senate through the Senate Research Committee.

1.2. With the exception of ex-officio members, the term of office for members of the ACC is two (2) years and appointments are renewable for up to eight (8) consecutive years of service.

1.3. The composition of the ACC membership must include at least:

a. two members chosen from CBU's full-time faculty, and full-time lab instructors with experience in animal care and use;

b. one member chosen from CBU's full-time faculty, and full-time lab instructors whose normal activities do not depend on or involve animal use for research or teaching;

c. one non-CBU member representing the community's interests and concerns;

d. one full-time CBU student member;

e. the consulting veterinarian (ex-officio member); and

f. the ACC coordinator (ex-officio member), a staff member of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS).

1.4. The Chair of the ACC will be chosen from among the members (with the exception of the ex-officio members). If possible, the Chair should be an individual who is notdirectly involved in the preparation of a significant number of AUPs to be reviewed by the ACC. Provisions shall be made to co-opt other persons to the ACC as the need arises.

1.5. The ACC coordinator supports the ACC by coordinating meetings and activities of the ACC, and ensuring that committee agendas, minutes and reports are promptly produced and distributed to ACC members, that all exchanges between the ACC, the VP Academics and Professional Studies (Provost), and animal users are documented and filed in a timely manner, and that animal users and the ACC members are provided with necessary information.

1.6. Animal use protocols (AUPs) will be distributed to all ACC members at least five (5) working days prior to the ACC meeting at which they will be discussed. All applications must be reviewed by the consulting veterinarian. In the event that the veterinarian is unable to attend the meeting, s/he will provide written comments in time for distribution at the meeting. After discussion of the protocol, the committee will decide, by majority vote, whether to approve the protocol. If the committee decides to recommend revisions, or to request additional information, before a final decision is made, that will be communicated to the applicant in writing. If the changes or additional information requested are considered minor, the Chair of the ACC will be authorized to approve the protocol if the applicant agrees to the changes or provides satisfactory information, in writing. If more major revisions are required, the committee will decide, by majority vote, either through a face-to-face meeting or through correspondence, whether the revised protocol will be approved. If the AUP is not approved, either the applicant or the ACC may request a meeting between them for discussion. The ACC and the applicant should try to find a satisfactory resolution that both meets animal care guidelines and allows the research to proceed.

1.7. In the event that a resolution has not been reached through discussion, as outlined above, the researcher can refer the matter to the Research Appeals Committee for opinion and resolution. The Research Appeals Committee will review documentation provided by the CBU ACC and the applicant and will consult with others as required, including but not limited to members of the CBU ACC, the researcher and the CCAC. Subsequently, the Research Appeals Committee will issue a decision on the matter in writing with copies to the applicant and the CBU ACC. This decision will be final.

SECTION II. Authority

2.1. The ACC has the authority, on behalf of the Vice-President Academic and Professional Studies (Provost), to:

a. stop any objectionable procedure if it considers that unnecessary distress or pain is being experienced by an animal,

b. stop immediately any use of animals which deviates from the approved use, any non-approved procedure, or any procedure causing unforeseen pain or distress to animals, and

c. have an animal killed humanely if pain or distress to the animal is not part of the approved protocol and cannot be alleviated.

2.2. The Chair of the ACC and the consulting veterinarian must have access at all times to all areas where animals are or may be held or used.

2.3. The ACC will conduct annual PAM visits to animal use areas listed in approved AUPs following the guidelines described in the CBU ACC SOP on Post Approval Monitoring.

Section III. Responsibility

3.1. It is the responsibility of the ACC to:

a. Ensure that no research project or teaching program (including field studies) involving animals be commenced without prior ACC approval of a written animal use protocol ("AUP"); further to this, that no animals be acquired or used before such approval. This includes internally-funded projects.

b. Ensure that no animals be held for display or breeding purposes, or for eventual use in research or teaching projects, without prior ACC approval of a written AUP.

c. Require all animal users to complete an AUP form and ensure that the information therein includes the following points, clearly presented in a form that all members of the ACC can readily understand (supplemental information can be found in the CCAC *guidelines on: animal use protocol review,* 1997):

i. project title and descriptive keywords or brief protocol description, as defined in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form*;

ii. principal investigators/teachers, and all personnel (post-doctoral fellows, research staff, graduate and undergraduate students) who will handle animals, along with their training and qualifications with respect to animal handling (see point n(iii) below); in the case of undergraduate students, who may have very little training, close supervision is required;

iii. departmental affiliation;

iv. proposed start date, proposed end date;

v. for research projects, funding source(s) and status of funding approval;

vi. for research projects, an indication of whether the project has received peer review for scientific merit;

vii. for teaching programs, a course number and an indication of assessment of the pedagogical merit of using live animals;

viii. lay summary;

ix. an indication of the use of biohazardous, infectious, biological, or chemical or radioactive agents in living animals; and, if so, an indication of institutional approval of this use;

x. category(ies) of invasiveness as defined in the *CCAC policy statement on: categories of invasiveness in animal experiments*, and *Purpose of Animal Use* (PAU) as defined in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form*;

xi. an indication of whether the study is acute or chronic;

xii. species and numbers of animals to be used and justification thereof;

xiii. a description of possible replacement, refinement and reduction alternatives, and justification if these are not to be employed, or a description of the applicant's efforts to find such alternatives;

xiv. anesthesia and analgesia, including dosages and methods of use; justification for not using anesthesia or analgesia, if relevant;

xv. a description detailing the procedures that are carried out on the animals (referring to appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as much as possible);

xvi. a description of the endpoint(s) of the experimentation, selected according to the CCAC guidelines on: *choosing an appropriate endpoint in experiments using animals for research, teaching and testing, 1998;*

xvii. a description of capture, restraint, transportation and/or housing of animals used in field studies, as well as any other information pertinent to field studies, such as capture of non-target species and potential injuries or mortality during capture or transportation, if relevant;

xviii. the method or euthanasia, if used; justification for any physical euthanasia methods, or for any methods that deviate from those described in the most recent CCAC guidance on euthanasia;

xix. a description of how the animals will be disposed of if they are not to be euthanized;

xx. any other information considered important or necessary and pertinent, including information or results derived from any relevant previous protocols.

d. Ensure that, for research projects, a peer review of scientific merit is carried out; if the review is not carried out by an external, peer review agency, the ACC should require that it be obtained according to the *CCAC policy*

statement on: the importance of independent peer review of the scientific merit of animal based research projects, 2000. The institution should work with the ACC to ensure that an appropriate mechanism for the peer review of scientific merit is in place.

e. Review and assess all AUPs, with particular emphasis on the CCAC *policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation* and the CCAC guidelines on: *animal use protocol review* as well as on all relevant CCAC guidelines and policy statements and, where necessary, require further supportive information from the investigator/teacher or meet with the investigator/teacher to ensure that all members of the committee understand the procedures to be used on the animal. The committee must also ensure that all procedures comply with CCAC *guidelines*, and, if at variance with those guidelines, require justification for the variance on scientific grounds. ACCs should both discuss protocols and make decisions on them during full committee meetings, rather than through individual reviews, and should attempt to reach decisions by consensus. An ACC may delegate the responsibility of interim approvals to a protocol review subcommittee, which must include at least one scientific member, one veterinarian and one community representative, one of which should preferably be the chair of the ACC. However, such interim approvals must be subject to discussion and final approval at a full meeting of the committee. The ACC should define its protocol review process, with or without (a) protocol review subcommittee(s), in its Terms of Reference.

f. Ensure that animal users update their protocols with any modifications they intend to make, and approve any modifications to a protocol before they are implemented. Minor modifications, such as changes up to 2 animal users, and addition of a small number of animals) can be approved the Chair of the ACC or a delegate. For any major changes to a protocol (such as addition of a considerable number of animals relative to the number originally approved, change of species, change in category of invasiveness), a new AUP submission is required. Also ensure that animal users report any unanticipated problems or complications, as well as on the steps they have taken to address the problem(s), to the ACC.

g. Review all protocols annually, i.e., within a year of commencement of the project, and approve any modifications to a protocol before they are implemented; annual renewals should be approved by at least a scientist, a veterinarian and a community representative. Require the submission of a new protocol after three consecutive renewals.

h. Document all ACC discussions and decisions in the committee minutes and on attachments to the protocol forms.

i. Facilitate the appeal process by forwarding relevant documentation to the Research Appeals Committee in cases where an AUP is not approved by the ACC and the decision is appealed by the AUP's author.The CCAC may

be called upon for information purposes; however, appeals cannot be directed to the CCAC. This provision supersedes all previous CCAC policies on appeals.

j. Ensure that all ACC members and animal users have the opportunity to become familiar with the CCAC Guide and CCAC *policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation* and all other CCAC guidelines and policy statements, federal, provincial or municipal statutes that may apply, as well as institutional requirements.

k. Ensure that animal users update their protocols with any modifications they intend to make.

l. Ensure appropriate care of animals in all stages of their life and in all experimental situations. Veterinary care must be available. Formal arrangements should be made to obtain the services of a veterinarian, at least on a consultative basis, if they are not readily available within the institution.

m. Establish procedures, commensurate with current veterinary standards, to ensure that:

    i. unnecessary pain or distress is avoided;

    ii. anesthesia and analgesia are properly and effectively used; the only exception to this may be when agents must be withheld as a scientifically-justified requirement of the study, and that this has been approved by the ACC. Painful studies requiring exemption from the use of either anesthetics or analgesia must be subject to particular scrutiny, not only prior to approval, but also during the experiment;

    iii. appropriate post-operative care is provided;

    iv. all due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental enrichment.

n. Ensure that policies to provide for a system of animal care that will meet the needs of the institution are established and implemented, and include:

    i. the requirement that all animal care and animal experimentation are conducted according to CCAC *guidelines and policies*, and to any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect;

    ii. ensuring adequate animal care and management of the animal facilities, in particular by verifying that there is a person clearly designated to be in charge of animal care and management of the animal facilities, who should be a member of the ACC (see Section I), and who should keep the other ACC members updated on the activities within the animal facilities;

iii. the training and qualifications of animal users and animal care personnel; the consulting veterinarian must receive continuing education in their field; animal users should receive appropriate training according to the CCAC *guidelines on: institutional animal user training, 1999*, either within the institution or through the programs of other institutions;

iv. the occupational health and safety program for those involved in animal care and use;

v. standards of husbandry and equipment;

vi. standard operating procedures for all activities and procedures that involve animals;

vii. procedures for euthanasia.

o. Encourage the use of pilot studies with few animals when new approaches, methods or products are being tried, before approving new, large scale protocols.

p. In the case of projects involving proprietary or patentable research or testing insist on close monitoring of animals in order to respect the elements outlined in 3.1 (m).

Section IV. Meetings

4.1. The ACC should meet generally four (4) times per year (minimum twice per year) and as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.

4.2. Before each meeting, minutes detailing ACC discussions and decisions from the previous meeting and agendas must be circulated via email to all ACC members in a timely fashion.

4.3. Quorum for ACC meetings is the majority of the members.

4.4. Meetings are scheduled at times that are convenient for all members.

4.5. The ACC may perform Interim Approvals of AUPs via electronic polls or email voting of the majority of its members, with the understanding that such AUPs Interim Approvals are temporary and need to receive Final Approval by majority vote at a subsequently scheduled ACC meeting.

4.6. Members of the ACC should visit animal use areas at least once a year as part of the ACC PAM process (see 2.3 for more details).

Section V. General

It is the responsibility of the ACC to:

5.1. Review at least every three (3) year:

a. its Terms of Reference to meet new CCAC guidelines or policies and changing needs within the institution, the scientific community, the animal welfare community and society as a whole;

b. the security of the animals and the animal use areas within the institution;

c. SOPs and institutional animal care and use policies; SOPs should be accessible to all ACC members, and the full ACC should review all SOPs that involve procedures that may result in deleterious effects to animal health or welfare; and

d. policies and procedures for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures within the institution, including the identification of the persons responsible for monitoring animal health and welfare, and the procedures carried out by the ACC to conduct PAM;

5.2. Maintain liaison with with the CCAC Secretariat, and inform the Secretariat of any changes to their program;

5.3. Submit complete and and accurate animal use information in the *CCAC Animal Use Data Form* (AUDF) format for all AUPs annually (animal use information for each calendar year must be submitted by **March 31** of the following year) and also in pre-assessment documentation;

5.4. Promote and follow any institutional crisis management plan(s) as they pertain to the care and use of animals for institutional research, testing and teaching;

5.5. Sponsor, from time to time, seminars or workshops on the use of animals in science and the ethics of animal experimentation, and encourage as many animal users, students, ACC members and other interested parties to attend as possible;

5.6. Try to achieve and maintain high profile within CBU and in the community in order to demonstrate CBU's efforts in promoting animal welfare and to allay some of the public concerns regarding animal experimentation; and

5.7. Be open to developing and maintaining communication with animal welfare organizations.