

## Purpose / Scope

To establish a framework in responding to Sick Animals involved in animal-based science activities and associated with approved Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) under the authority of Western's Animal Care Committee (ACC).

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## Rationale

Institutional Veterinarians are mandated by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) via the *Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions*, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) via the *Animals for Research Act*, and the Animal Care Committee (ACC) via Western University's policies to apply their expertise in veterinary animal medicine in establishing and maintaining the animal health program. Sick Animal Response (SAR) requires a consistent approach that aligns with regulatory standards by ensuring an appropriate response to sick animals by competent and accountable persons.

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## Policy

### *Sick Animal Identification*

Individuals responsible for daily animal health observations must be competent in assessing the well-being of animals under their care.

Facility Supervisors and AUP Holders, or their designates, must promptly notify Institutional Veterinarians on concerns regarding an animal's health, behaviour and/or well-being and provide updates on the status of animals undergoing veterinary treatment.

AUP Holders, Facility Supervisors and their designates must ensure up-to-date emergency contact information is readily available within the animal room at all times.

### *Diagnosis and Intervention Planning*

Institutional Veterinarians are ultimately responsible for conducting diagnoses and determining appropriate treatments for Sick Animals.

At the discretion of the Institutional Veterinarian, a Veterinary Designate (SAR Designate) has the authority to provide care on the Veterinarian's behalf, according to Veterinary instructions. Institutional Veterinarians may authorize SAR Designates to administer treatments and follow-up on clinical cases in a timely manner.

AC Facility Supervisors and/or AUP Holders must directly involve an Institutional Veterinarian (and/or SAR Designate) in diagnosis, treatment planning and follow-up.

- Directed Animals must involve an Institutional Veterinarian
- Designated Animals may involve a SAR Designate on behalf of the Institutional Veterinarian

Institutional Veterinarians (and/or SAR Designate) must make reasonable effort to discuss any animal health and welfare concerns with the AUP Holder to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Diagnostic laboratory services must be available and used as determined by the Institutional Veterinarian.<sup>1</sup>

### *Intervention*

Institutional Veterinarians have been granted authority by the ACC to treat, remove from a study, or euthanize any animal if deemed necessary based on the professional judgment of the veterinarian.<sup>2</sup> Institutional Veterinarians can delegate their authority to treat, remove from study, or euthanize any animal to SAR Designates who have been approved to act under the direction of an Institutional Veterinarian.

Sick Animals must undergo a treatment regime commensurate with their condition as outlined by CALAM's *Standards of Veterinary Care* (2007).

For Critical Animals, an Institutional Veterinarian must ensure immediate intervention by treating or euthanizing an animal based on his/her professional judgment.

Facility Supervisors, AUP Holders and SAR Designates must follow Institutional Veterinarian-approved SAR Algorithms when intervening on behalf of an Institutional Veterinarian.

### *Follow-Up*

Sick Animal identification, diagnosis, treatments and all associated Animal Records must be documented as per the *Animal Care and Use Records Policy (POL-003)* and made readily available for review by Institutional Veterinarians and regulators.

All adverse events to animals and associated interventions involving Sick Animals, as noted above, must be disclosed within the *Animal Use Protocol* at Annual Protocol Renewal and at an AUP's Continuance.

AUP Holders, Facility Supervisors and/or their designate(s) must immediately inform an Institutional Veterinarian of all instances of animal morbidity and animal mortality; must record all animal mortalities and morbidities in distinct logs to be made available at all times to Institutional Veterinarians, ACC members, and regulatory inspectors; and must submit these logs to the ACC monthly.

All bodies relating to animal morbidity and mortality must be held for post-mortem examination by an Institutional Veterinarian or their SAR Designate, unless directed otherwise by an Institutional Veterinarian.

Any animal with ongoing non-critical health concerns that cannot be readily resolved through collaborative interactions between an Institutional Veterinarian, the AUP Holder, and/or an Facility Supervisor must be forwarded to the ACC Executive as per the *Concerns Policy (POL-004)*.

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## References

- Tri-Agency – Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) —Animals for Research Act
- Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine - CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care (2007)
- University Senate
  - MAPP 7.12 – Animal Ethics and Care Program
- Animal Care Committee
  - Post Approval Monitoring Policy – POL-005
  - Animal Use Protocols Policies - POL-002

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<sup>1</sup> CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care (2007). P. 9

<sup>2</sup> See CALAM Standards of Veterinary Care (2007) P.5 <http://calam-acmal.org/pdfs/StandardsVetCare.pdf>

- Animal Care and Use Records Policy – POL-003
- Concerns Policy - POL-004

## Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
00	18-03-15	New Policy	LT
01	07-10-15	Updated terms and definitions	LT
02	05-05-2016	Highlight authority of ACVS Vets to lead SAR program, e.g. 'treat, remove from study, euthanize', use diagnostic services; vet response to 'Critical Animals;' reqmt for emergency contact info within room; competence for animal assessment; add ref. to reqmts for morbidity/mortality records; Add expand Rationale; Update multiple Definitions, e.g. 'Sick' 'Critical' animals; and Roles & Responsibilities	LT
03	30-05-2018	Add 'SAR Designate' Roles & Responsibilities; group policy statements under sub-headings; Remove definitions	LT
04	11-03-2021	Format updates; remove 'Roles & Responsibilities' section; add/update Glossary	ET / LT

**Animal Morbidity** – Any sick animal whose condition warrants humane intervention.

**Animal Mortality** – Any animal that has died under any circumstance or condition, with the exception of one that has reached its experimental endpoint as outlined within the related AUP. Includes animals found dead and morbid animals requiring immediate early euthanasia as their humane intervention.

**AUP Holder** – A AUP Holder and/or teacher and/or trainer whose Animal Use Protocol (AUP) has been approved by Western’s Animal Care Committee, and who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that practice aligns with the approved AUP

**Critical Animal** – A Sick Animal having serious to severe health concerns, as determined by an Institutional Veterinarian that requires immediate intervention in order to relieve unnecessary or unacceptable pain or suffering

**Designated Animals** – All other animals than those identified as Directed Animals whose initial diagnosis and treatment have been designated to Sick Animal Response (SAR) Designates, e.g. Veterinary Technicians, Animal Care Supervisors, trained and competent PIs, and their staff. Includes:

- All species not listed as directed, e.g. rodents, birds and fish
- Non-critical health concerns
- Non-critical sick animals associated with experimental groups with no known history of increased morbidity
- Non-critical animals not identified by an Institutional Veterinarian or the Animal Care Committee (ACC) to require his/her direct involvement

#### **Directed Animals**

- Species - Pigs, sheep, dogs, cats, non-human primates, and rabbits
- Conditions as determined by the Animal Care Committee (ACC) or an Institutional Veterinarian
- Any sick animals associated with experimental groups experiencing increased morbidity
- Any animal identified by an Institutional Veterinarian or the ACC to require his/her direct involvement on a case-by-case basis

**Early Euthanasia** – any illness or welfare condition that requires an animal be sacrificed before its expected experimental endpoint as defined on the approved AUP.

**Humane Intervention** – any illness or welfare concern that requires Veterinary-directed treatment(s) to attempt to relieve the animals current condition (e.g., fluid therapy, topical medications, antibiotics, analgesics, increased health monitoring, etc.)

**Institutional Veterinarian** – A veterinarian within the Department of Animal Care and Veterinary Services (ACVS) that, under the direction of the University Veterinarian, provides veterinary support for the Animal Ethics and Care Program (AECF) in alignment with the Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Medicine’s (CALAM) Standards of Veterinary Care as well as external and internal regulators’ laws, policies and guidelines

**Morbidity / Mortality Logs** - For morbidity and mortality log recording purposes, sick animals must be placed into one of three categories: (i) **mortality** is any animal found dead or any sick animal whose humane intervention is immediate early euthanasia; (ii) **morbidity** is any sick animal who responds to humane interventions and meets expected experimental endpoint; (iii) **continued morbidity** is any sick animal who does not respond to Veterinary-directed humane interventions and whose declining health requires early euthanasia and does not meet experimental endpoint.

**Sick Animal** – Any animal that presents clinical signs reflecting all health concerns – physiological, psychological, and/or behavioural - related or unrelated to experimental procedures

**Sick Animal Response (SAR) Designate** – An Institutional-Veterinarian-approved competent individual who is designated to follow the Sick Animal Response Policy (POL-009) and veterinarian SAR Algorithms and act under the instruction of, and report accordingly to, an Institutional Veterinarian regarding Sick Animal interventions