

Complete Policy Title:

Policy Number (if applicable):

**Policy on the Care and Use of Animals
in Research and Teaching**

Approved by:
Senate

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Responsible Executive:
Vice-President (Research)

Enquiries:
[University Secretariat](#)

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1. Introduction

1. McMaster University maintains a policy supporting the ethical use of animals in research for the purpose of obtaining new scientific knowledge, knowledge essential to understanding, preventing, treating and curing human and animal disease, eliminating pain and suffering, and in teaching for the purpose of scientific and technical education where no alternative exists.
2. McMaster University co-operates and complies with all agencies regulating the use of animals including the [Canadian Council on Animal Care \(CCAC\)](#) and the [Animals for Research Act](#) of the [Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs \(OMAFRA\)](#).
3. McMaster University is proactively committed to the reduction and replacement of animal use and the refinement of procedures in teaching and research wherever possible (the 3Rs—replace, reduce, refine).

2. Principles of Animal Care

- 2.1 The provision of humane care of animals in research and teaching will be assured by adherence to the following principles:
 - 2.1.1 All projects and teaching involving the use of animals must hold a valid Animal Utilization Protocol (AUP) approved by the [Animal Research Ethics Board \(AREB\)](#) in accordance with the regulations of the Animals for Research Act of OMAFRA

and the guidelines of the CCAC. AREB reports to the Vice-President, Research. It is comprised of animal researchers, non-animal researchers, community members not associated with McMaster University, animal health technicians, graduate students and laboratory animal veterinarians. AREB meets 9 to 12 times per year.

- 2.1.2 Animals will only be used when alternative procedures are not feasible.
 - 2.1.3 The species will be carefully selected to ensure the most effective use of animals.
 - 2.1.4 The least invasive techniques possible will be employed.
 - 2.1.5 The number of animals used will be the minimum required to achieve the objectives of the research/teaching program.
 - 2.1.6 Alleviation/reduction of pain and distress will be of prime concern during and following all procedures. Anaesthesia and analgesia are properly and effectively used.
 - 2.1.7 All chronic studies will have established humane endpoints.
 - 2.1.8 All protocols receive annual review. Any changes to approved protocols must receive prior approval.
 - 2.1.9 All animals will be cared for according to current CCAC Guidelines, Animals for Research Act and [Canadian Association of Laboratory Animal Medicine \(CALAM\)](#) standards.
 - 2.1.10 Animal use areas are monitored through regular inspections to ensure compliance with guidelines.
 - 2.1.11 All due consideration is given to animal welfare, including environmental refinement
 - 2.1.12 The University Veterinarian has the ultimate authority to treat or euthanize an animal in pain or distress. The University Veterinarian is responsible to ensure that the Animals for Research Act and CCAC guidelines are followed in all McMaster University animal facilities. He/she will also notify McMaster University and Health Canada of all reportable diseases as outlined in the [Health of Animals Act](#) and [Reportable Diseases Regulations](#).
- 2.2 Animals or animal tissues may be required for teaching purposes. In these instances, instructors and departments should first ensure that no appropriate alternative to the use of animals/tissues exists (i.e., computer simulation). In situations where no alternative exists and the animals/tissues are required for classroom teaching purposes, it should be handled professionally, respectfully and ethically. There is an expectation that all students follow McMaster University's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Failure to handle animals/tissues appropriately will be treated as a serious breach of this policy and may result in significant disciplinary sanctions being applied. The procedure for handling any misconduct is described in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. This also would be addressed by AREB and could result in the AUP being revoked.

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- 2.3 AREB is responsible and committed to assisting researchers in identifying, considering and addressing the issues of animal well-being inherent in their research, recognizing that all members of the McMaster University community share a common commitment to maintaining high standards in research with animals. McMaster University endorses the importance of the ethics review and approval processes as a mechanism to facilitate and ensure the conduct of ethical and responsible research with animals. In addition, AREB is responsible for developing guidelines and procedures for the ethics review process. These guidelines/procedures are reviewed regularly and revisions made where appropriate, taking into account changing societal values, evolution in the area of animal research ethics and evolving provincial, federal and professional ethics requirements.
- 2.4 McMaster University also recognizes the important role animals have played in the past, and the valuable contribution they will continue to make, to the advancement of science. Thus, McMaster University is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards in the care, well-being, quality of life and use of its animals.

3. Official Policy on Institutional Use of Animals

- 3.1 We are a research intensive institution involving extensive use of animals in biological and medical research. This policy has two main purposes:
- 3.1.1 **Internal**
To enable AREB and the University Veterinarian to ensure compliance with the regulations of OMAFRA (necessary for maintaining provincial licensing under the Animals for Research Act of an animal facility) and the guidelines of the CCAC (necessary for compliance and awarding of grants) with the researchers/users.
- 3.1.2 **External**
To promote positive public relations with the community at large regarding our concerns for appropriate care of animals and use for scientific research and teaching, and to respond to potential challenges from animal activists/welfare groups.