

AC501: Animal Care and Use Complaints

Policy Title:	Animal Care and Use Complaints
Policy Number:	AC501
Owner:	Sr. Vice-President, Academic
Approved by:	College Executive Team
Effective Date:	March 2024
Reference:	ACC Terms of Reference Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC)
Links to Other Policy:	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources usable by all people, whatever their abilities or disabilities. This document will be made available in alternative format upon request.

BACKGROUND

Definitions:

CCAC – The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) provides national oversight of animal-based scientific activities in Canada through a rigorous process of assessment and certification, and standards development.

ACC – The St. Lawrence College Animal Care Committee (ACC) ensures that the welfare of the animals used for teaching purposes is maintained at the highest ethical standards, as defined by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC).

RAWI – Reportable Animal Welfare Incidence (RAWI). Can include but not limited to any event that leads to significant mortality levels, disregard of, or unintended failure (human error) to follow practices or procedures, disregard of, or unintended failure (human error) to follow practices or procedures or a serious or continuous noncompliance with CCAC standards that leads to the suspension by the ACC or the institution of an animal-based activity threatening animal health or welfare.

Purpose:

To outline the processes that Senior Administration and the ACC must follow to:

- a) Investigate and report welfare incidences following the Reportable Animal Welfare policy as described by the CCAC.
- b) Investigate and respond to complaints or concerns about inappropriate animal care or use.

Scope:

This policy applies to the care and use of animals as part of the Veterinary Technology, Veterinary Assistant and Biotechnology programs at St. Lawrence College, as well as any animals used in teaching or research at any campus and off-campus facilities hosting such activities.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. St. Lawrence College is committed to the ethical care and use of animals for teaching and research purposes. Animal welfare is maintained at the highest ethical standards as defined by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).
2. All complaints about animal care or use are taken seriously, investigated and responded to in a timely manner.
3. An employee or student who makes a complaint in good faith, on the basis of a reasonable and honest belief that the information is true, is protected from retaliation.
4. If a person makes a complaint under this policy in bad faith or maliciously provides false or inaccurate information, they will be subject to disciplinary sanctions including reprimand, suspension, demotion, expulsion, or termination according to the applicable Student Code of Conduct or Human Resource policies.
5. St. Lawrence College has a duty to report significant animal welfare incidents to the appropriate animal welfare regulator and cooperate with any subsequent investigations.

MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed every five years.

POLICY REVISION DATE

September 2029

SPECIFIC LINKS

CCAC Reportable Animal Welfare Incidents

<https://ccac.ca/en/certification/reportable-animal-welfare-incidents.html>

CCAC frequently asked questions: CCAC reportable animal welfare incidents

https://ccac.ca/Documents/Assessment/CCAC_frequently_asked_questions_CCAC_reportable_animal_welfare_incidents.pdf

CCAC Reportable Animal Welfare Incident Form

https://ccac.ca/Documents/Assessment/CCAC_Reportable_Animal_Welfare_Incident_Initial_Reporting_Form.pdf

APPENDIX A AND ATTACHMENTS

RAWI Reporting Procedure:

Certified institutions must report major animal welfare incidents to the CCAC within 14 days of the event (*CCAC Policy: Certification of Animal Ethics and Care Programs*). If an animal welfare incident has occurred, the observer should take the following steps:

- P1.** Prioritize animal welfare and provide immediate care.

P2. Notify the designated veterinarian responsible animal health and welfare oversight. The observer should provide detailed observations, including date, time, location, description, and contributing factors. Any photographs or video should also be included if possible.

P3. The veterinarian will communicate with the Associate Dean of Applied Science and Computing, and Dean, Applied Science, Technology and Trades of the RAWI.

P4. The Veterinarian, in collaboration with the ACC Chair, will submit the RAWI report as described within the CCAC policy on Reportable Animal Welfare Incidence.

P5. Copies sent to the Associate Dean of Applied Science and Computing, and Dean, Applied Science, Technology and Trades.

Complaints and concerns regarding internal animal care and use:

P1. Contact information for the St. Lawrence College Animal Care Committee (ACC) Chair, ACC Coordinator and Associate Dean, School of Applied Science and Computing is posted in animal holding areas and classrooms/labs where animal handling takes place.

P2. Complaints are recorded on the Animal Care and Use Complaint Form, obtained on request through the ACC Chair or the Associate Dean, School of Applied Science and Computing. The form can be ~~completed~~ by the complainant or by any employee receiving the complaint.

P3. The complaint form is forwarded to the ACC Chair and copied to the ACC Coordinator and Associate Dean for the School of Applied Science and Computing within one business day of receiving the complaint.

P4. The ACC chair will consult with the ACC Coordinator and Associate Dean for the School of Applied Science and Computing to briefly discuss the complaint and decide whether the complaint is of minor or major concern to determine the investigation process as follows:

- a) Minor concerns will be handled by a sub-committee of the ACC
 - o A meeting with the people involved will be scheduled as soon as is practical and the complaint will be addressed.
 - o The sub-committee will provide a plan to rectify the situation, if warranted.
 - o The remaining ACC will be briefed on the complaint and any corrective action at the next ACC meeting.
- b) Major concerns will require immediate notification of the Director of the Animal Care Facility (Dean, Faculty of Applied Science, Technology and Trades)
 - o Based on the seriousness and nature of the concern, the Director of the Animal Care Facility will determine the appropriate process and person to lead the investigation. Typically, this will be led by the ACC Chair, but some circumstances may warrant an alternate, such as if the complaint was made about a member of the ACC or about procedures of the ACC.
 - o The ACC and the Director of the Animal Care Facility both have the authority to suspend the procedure that is the subject of the complaint if deemed necessary until the investigation is complete.

- A formal investigation process will take place by the appointed lead.
- The validity of the complaint will be determined by interviewing and taking meeting minutes:
 - i. Person(s) making the complaint.
 - ii. The person(s) which the complaint is against
 - iii. Faculty, expert witnesses, technologists, students, employees who work in the area, etc.
 - iv. A summary of the findings will be shared with the ACC and the committee will make arecommendation for corrective action.

P5. The lead of the investigation will submit a formal written report to the person(s) about whom the complaint was made, the direct supervisor of that person, the ACC and to the Director of the Animal Care Facility which will include a summary of:

- a) Validity of the complaint
- b) Violation of specific regulations and/or breach of ethics
- c) Recommended courses of action, which may include, for example:
 - Discontinuation of procedure.
 - Requiring Veterinary Sciences to adopt new rules, regulations and/or guidelines and suggestions, mechanisms for enforcement; or
 - No further action required.

P6. The Director of the Animal Care Facility or Designate will respond to the report recommendations in writing and direct the corrective action, if any, to be implemented.

- a) Disciplinary action may be taken if the complaint was malicious or intentionally dishonest.
- b) Disciplinary action may be taken if the outcome of the investigation reveals, for example, intentional harm or abuse of an animal.

P7. The complaint form, the formal written report and the Director's response will be filed in the "ACC Complaint" folder in the "KingstonVTVA Faculty" folder on the Shared Drive (S-Drive).