

Animal Care: Ethical Use of Animals in Research and Teaching

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Policy Statement

In all its teaching, research, and other activities, the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) is committed to the humane care and treatment of animals. To that end, BCIT follows all current policies and guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), a national organization setting standards for the ethical use and care of animals in science.

CCAC guidelines establish the basic requirements that all institutional animal care programs in Canada must follow as part of animal ethics and care. The use of animals in teaching and research is considered acceptable only if it promises to contribute to the understanding of fundamental biological principles or the development of knowledge that can reasonably be expected to benefit humans or animals. Animals should only be used in teaching or research when best efforts to find an alternative have failed, as outlined by the “3R” tenets of “Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement”.

Purpose of Policy

This policy and associated procedures describe how BCIT complies with the requirements set out in the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research. The Framework describes the responsibilities of Institutions, Researchers and Agencies in respect of the conduct of research, and related professional norms, values, and ethical principles. It also refers to procedures to be followed in the event of a breach or alleged breach of an Agency requirement.

If an Institution uses animals in any of its research, whether in its own or any other facilities, or in the field, it must:

- maintain a valid Certificate of Good Animal Practice® (GAP) from the CCAC and ensure that research funded by an Agency complies fully with CCAC standards; and,
- ensure that the Institution’s animal care committee has approved any research projects involving animals before research activities begin, and that approval is maintained while the research activities are carried out. (However, with appropriate controls in place, grant funds may be released pending Animal Care Committee [ACC] approval.)

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Who This Policy Applies To

All persons using animals in research or teaching while under the control or supervision of BCIT or using its facilities are subject to this policy.

Related Documents and Legislation

Legislation

Criminal Code of Canada, R.S.C. 1985, c C-46, (Sections 444-447)

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 372

Health of Animals Act, S.C. 1990, c. 21

Agreements

Agreement on the Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions
(Government of Canada)

BCIT Policies

1500, Code of Conduct

5102, Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic)

5104, Student Code of Academic Integrity

5701, Academic Freedom

6600, Integrity in Research

6700, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

7512, Occupational Health and Safety

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy and its associated procedures.

“Animal” is defined as a vertebrate or cephalopod organism that is covered under the mandate of the CCAC. This includes eggs, embryos, fetuses, and larvae in research, teaching, or testing.

“Tri-Agencies” include the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), collectively.

Scope of Animal Use Requiring Review

All research and teaching activities associated with BCIT that involve animals or animal biological materials require review and written approval by the Animal Care Committee.

Duties and Responsibilities

BCIT shall maintain an Animal Care Committee governed by Terms of Reference and any relevant Institute policies. The Committee exercises authority delegated by the President to the Provost and Vice President Academic, who acts as the senior administrator for matters concerning animal care. The Provost and VP Academic is accountable to the President in all matters concerning animals within the scope of this policy and is responsible for maintaining the BCIT GAP Certificate to meet certain research funding eligibility requirements. The Provost and VP Academic is also responsible for all formal liaison and communications with the CCAC.

BCIT follows all current policies and guidelines of the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC). This includes ensuring and providing that:

- mechanisms are in place to evaluate the merit of all animal use activities in accordance with CCAC guidelines;
- an Animal Care Committee is in place with qualified staff and resources sufficient to function effectively and ensure compliance with all relevant animal care and use standards, and that accords with the current CCAC policy statement on Terms of Reference for Animal Care Committees; and,
- appropriate and sufficient animal facilities and staffing are in place wherever animals will be held within the Institute, in accordance with CCAC guidelines.

When using animals, all those working under the aegis of BCIT or using BCIT facilities must:

- minimize the number of animals used and their pain and suffering and ensure appropriate care at all stages of animals' lives;
- adhere to an Animal Use Protocol (or “AUP”) approved by the Institute Animal Care Committee that is in place before acquiring animals and/or beginning research, teaching, or other related activity involving animals;
- apply an Animal Use Protocol to all projects wherever they occur and regardless of special financial support or if an ethical review is required by another Agency;

- notify the Animal Care Committee of any proposed change to an Animal Use Protocol as soon as possible and submit a new Protocol for approval if the Committee decides that the change is substantial enough to warrant review; and,
- comply with all government legislation and directives of the Animal Care Committee and be familiar with and guided by current professional standards and ethical guidelines, including all current CCAC guidelines relevant to the species being used.

Special Situations

Any course, research project, or other activity using animals that begins without the required approval or deviates from an approved Protocol is in violation of this Policy.

Violations of the policy are dealt with in accordance with the Animal Care Procedures. The Animal Care Committee, its Chair, or the institutional veterinarian, acting on behalf of the President can impose penalties including, but not limited to, suspension of the animal use activity.

Serious, flagrant, or persistent violations are grounds for disciplinary action, including limitations on teaching responsibilities and suspension of research privileges. Penalties for students can include suspension from studies and/or other sanctions in accordance with BCIT Policy 5102, Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) and BCIT Policy 5104, Student Code of Academic Integrity.

Teaching, research, and other activities that follow Animal Use Protocols approved by the Animal Care Committee are covered under the insurance policy of BCIT, subject to standard exclusions. Failure to obtain Committee approval or to follow its post-approval procedures and regulations may result in personal liability to the instructor or researcher.

Procedures Associated with This Policy

6505-PR1, Procedure for the Ethical Use of Animals in Research and Teaching

Forms Associated with This Policy

Refer to Procedure 6505-PR1, Procedure for the Ethical Use of Animals in Research and Teaching.

Amendment History

		<u>Approval Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
Created:	6505 (v1)	2025 Feb 25	In Force

Scheduled Review Date

25 February 2030 - or earlier for reasons of regulatory or operational changes affecting the policy or procedure.