

BACKGROUND

The University of Saskatchewan's UCACS Education and Training program provides training components designed to meet the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines on institutional animal user training (1999). These CCAC guidelines mandate that "*All personnel involved with the use of animals in research, teaching and testing must be adequately trained in the principles of laboratory animal science and the ethical issues involved in animal use.*" "*All personnel*" includes principal investigators, graduate students, research technical staff, post-doctoral fellows, animal care staff, etc. The training components provided by UCACS include:

- ❑ The UCACS Non-Credit Experimental Animal Care and Use Core Course (UCACS Animal Care Course). Four modules are available through the U of S Blackboard system: laboratory animals, fish, wildlife, and farm animals. A shortened "Basic Principles of Ethics and Welfare of animal Use in Science" module is available for veterinarians and Principal Investigators delegating animal work to a knowledgeable co-investigator.
- ❑ GSR 962 Course – Ethics Integrity Animal Research (for graduate students)
- ❑ Practical skills training including: experimental animal handling and basic manipulations; anaesthesia; basic surgical skills, advanced procedures, and an aquatic animal care training course.
- ❑ One-on-one training as requested
- ❑ Documentation of skills training through the Animal Use Protocol (AUP). The AUP documents the education, training, and procedures performed by individuals listed on the AUP.
- ❑ Monitoring of procedures through the Post-Approval Review (PAR) Program

PROCEDURE

Approval of an AUP by the UCACS Animal Research Ethics Board (AREB) requires (or is conditional upon) successful completion of all training requirements by ALL personnel listed on an AUP. Any new persons beginning work under a currently approved AUP must complete their training requirements before beginning any work with animals. The AREB will approve new AUPs that involve undergraduate students under the condition that students complete their training requirements within one month of protocol approval/commencing their research program using animals. The principal investigator is responsible for adequate supervision of the student during the time preceding completion of the training requirements. Similarly, graduate students must complete their training requirements within two months of protocol approval/commencing their research program using animals, and adequate supervision is expected as above.

USER CATEGORIES, REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAINING, AND EXPLANATIONS

User Category 1

This category includes principal investigators, co-investigators, research staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, postdoctoral fellows, visiting scientists, and animal facility care staff directly involved in animal work. Animal users, other than graduate students, must complete the UCACS Animal Care Course and any necessary practical skills training. Graduate students must complete the GSR 962 Course – Ethics Integrity Animal Research – and any necessary practical skills training. GSR 962 is identical in content to the UCACS Animal Care Course and is a required course for all graduate students using animals in their research. Graduate students who have completed the UCACS Animal Care Course prior to commencing their program are advised to register for GSR 962 in order to allow credit transfer to the College of Graduate Studies & Research for the student’s transcript.

Principal investigators on a research grant/contract (that requires animal use) must complete the UCACS Animal Care Course before AREB can grant approval of their AUP (new or annual review) and Research Services grant release of research grant/contract funding.

Principal investigators who are veterinarians licensed through the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association (SVMA) can choose to complete the “Basic Principles of Ethics and Welfare of Animal Use in Science” module of the UCACS Animal Care Course.

Co-investigators from an institution other than the University of Saskatchewan who are listed on an AUP are not required to complete the UCACS Animal Care Course provided that their home institution can verify to the UCACS that they have completed all required CCAC training or equivalent training.

Co-investigators on a research grant/contract not directly involved in the animal work should not be listed on AUPs. Trainees such as graduate and undergraduate students, or persons participating in special workshops, do not need to be listed on animal use protocols for teaching.

User Category 2

This category includes grant/contract holders who are not involved with any direct hands-on work with animals but who must be listed as the principal investigator (or as an authorized investigator) on the AUP because they are *ultimately responsible for the use of the grant/contract funds that are supporting the animal work (research or teaching)*. Examples include situations where a co-investigator is directing the animal research or a graduate student is performing all the procedures involving animals. Animal users in this category must complete the “Basic Principles of Ethics and Welfare of Animal Use in Science” module of the UCACS Animal Care Course.

User Category 3

This category includes individuals who do not have a primary role in the animal use but who are listed on an AUP for the purposes of providing specific services such as clinical veterinary care or technical support. Examples include private veterinarians hired to assist with research conducted at commercial facilities or technicians assisting with teaching laboratories as part of their job description. Animal users do not have to fulfill any training requirements but will receive a letter outlining the university’s position on the use of animals in science and the roles and responsibilities of people who conduct animal-based research under the umbrella of the university, along with information about the university’s animal care and use program.

User Category 4: Undergraduate Courses

This category includes undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in University of Saskatchewan undergraduate or graduate courses that include laboratory sessions involving live animal use or the use of animal blood/tissues/carcasses.

Students who directly participate in live animal handling must complete, at a minimum, the “Basic Principles of Ethics and Welfare of Animal Use in Science” module of the UCACS Animal Care Course. Course instructors may ask students to complete other online UCACS Animal Care Course modules most applicable to the course: laboratory animals, farm, fish, and/or wildlife.

Students must complete the “Basic Principles of Ethics and Welfare of Animal Use in Science” module of the UCACS Animal Care Course if:

- (i) They only observe live animal demonstrations or procedures performed by instructors;
- (ii) They use animal blood/tissues/carcasses during the laboratory session.

The Course Director must provide a student list to the Research Ethics Office in advance of the course. The REO staff will enrol students in the online course, and students must complete the required modules prior to commencing laboratory sessions. The REO will e-mail registered students a one page summary sheet that indicates pedagogical and ethical merit approval of the AUP and a list of procedures/demonstrations approved by the AREB. The UCACS recommends that completion of the online course be a mandatory component of the course and Course Directors are encouraged not to issue a passing grade until the student completes this component.

Access to Training Modules and Request for Practical Training

The UCACS Animal Care Course is readily available through the U of S Blackboard system. Information concerning the registration and login process for this course can be downloaded from the Research Ethics Office website:

http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/animalcare/education.php.

The UCACS offers several practical skills training workshops on a regular basis, including Basic Rodent Handling, Introduction to Rodent Anesthesia, Basic Surgical Skills, Advanced Rodent Techniques, Cattle Handling, and Aquatic Animal Care. Basic animal handling is required by animal users who intend to work with live animals. Training requirements will be identified through departmental/college/school graduate program administrative personnel or principal investigator upon admission to the respective programs. Workshop registration requires completion and submission of a registration form to the Research Ethics Office. Further information regarding these practical skills courses is provided on the Research Ethics Office website:

http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/animalcare/education.php.

One-on-one training can be arranged by contacting the Research Ethics Office. Training information can be found on the Research Ethics Office website:

http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/animalcare/education.php.

Compliance

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through the work of the Research Ethics Office and the UCACS AREB during regular committee meetings.

Approved by the UCACS, 30 May 2014