



SMU ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM: Quarterly Newsletter

September 2025

We hope that as researchers involved in animal use you find the following newsletter helpful in navigating the changing landscape of animal welfare and ethics guidelines. Questions and further discussion are always welcome via animalcare@smu.ca

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- CCAC certification awarded
- AGM October 24, 2025
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CCAC certification awarded

The SMU Animal Care and Use program has received CCAC Certification in Good Animal Practice. Our program assessment took place in May 2024, and we received the assessment report in December 2024. The implementation report addressing the panel recommendations was submitted to the CCAC in June 2025. The implementation plan was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

A huge thank you to researchers, students, and the Animal Care Committee members for your collaboration and adherence to our policies and guidelines. Your hard work ensures that research is conducted with animal welfare at the forefront.

Annual General Meeting

The SMU ACC AGM will take place on Friday, October 24 at 12:00pm. Lunch provided.

Our Facilitated discussion will focus on changes to amendment tracking. The goal is to implement a method that integrates the amendment into the original AUPF. This will make any changes to procedures, animal numbers, personnel, etc. more cohesive over the life of the protocol.

Of note in the CCAC assessment implementation report

- **SOP review and tracking**

One of the CCAC's recommendations was: that "the animal care committee continues to review and approve policies and standard operating procedures impacting animal health and welfare at least every three years..."

While our policies are reviewed every three years, review of standard operating procedures (SOPs) has been less consistent without a proper system in place.

SOPs are housed by PI in the [SOP Library](#), and updated as new versions are submitted and approved. The title page of each SOP indicates approval date. An SOP tracker is also in this OneDrive folder.



The SOP tracker has a tab for each PI (and 1 for the SMU Aquatic Facility). It tracks revision and review dates of all SOPs. It is helpful to check the tracker when you are preparing a new AUPF to see if any SOPs referenced also need to be updated and submitted. The committee can recommend changes to SOPs, or recommend a new SOP for specific procedures in the protocol.

- **Categories of welfare impact to replace categories of invasiveness by 2030**

In 2024, the CCAC introduced a new way to categorize the impact of using animals in research, teaching, and testing. This approach is called [Categories of Welfare Impact \(COWI\)](#), and it will replace Categories of Invasiveness (CoI) by 2030. Individual animals can experience procedures differently, and COWI acknowledges that the welfare of animals is affected by elements other than the experimental procedures.

These elements are broken into 3 factors:

Environmental	Attributes of the animal	Attributes of the scientific procedure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Husbandry and housing • Transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species, strain, sex • Age and developmental stage • Domesticated or non-domesticated • Inherent welfare status • Energy and body condition • Social disruption • Cumulative lifetime experiences • Known temperament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific procedure • Monitoring • Method of euthanasia • Setting • Skill and experience of personnel • Whether animal has been habituated or trained

Each factor is assigned a score (A-E) as described in the table below from the guidelines:

Table 1 Defining Categories of Welfare Impact Based on the Severity and Frequency or Duration of the Impact

Severity	Frequency or Duration	Category of Welfare Impact
Positive	Any	A – Positive impact
Low	Low or Short	B – Mild negative impact
Low	Medium	C – Moderate negative impact
Low	High or Long	
Medium	Low or Short	
Medium	Medium	
Medium	High or Long	D – High negative impact
High	Low or Short	E – Severe negative impact
High	Medium	
High	High or Long	

An implementation plan for the COWI guidelines must be in place by 2027. There will be more information on this, but it would be helpful to start thinking about how you might categorize procedures/species/housing etc. that are standard to your protocol(s).



Thank you for taking the time to read the SMU ACC Newsletter!