HELPING CANADIAN INSTITUTIONS JOIN THE CCAC PROGRAM

Canadian Council on Animal Care
Conseil canadien de protection des animaux

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JOIN THE CCAC PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

Holding a Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® tangibly demonstrates that your institution adheres to the CCAC's high, internationally recognized standards of ethical animal care and use, and participates fully in the CCAC program.

There are significant advantages and benefits for CCAC-certified institutions. Whether a private or government organization, small college or large university, the CCAC helps all institutions achieve high standards of animal welfare.

For more information on the advantages of acquiring a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®, visit the "Program Features" section of the CCAC website.

CATEGORIES OF INSTITUTIONS AND AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Institutions wishing to become CCAC-certified fall into two categories:

- **Category 1:** The institution has not started working with animals in research or testing, and is seeking its first certificate

- **Category 2:** The institution is already working with animals in research or testing

For both categories, an institution may wish to acquire the services of an animal care committee from a CCAC-certified institution to partially, or fully, oversee its ethical animal care and use program (see the "Guidance for Partnered Programs" section).

Category 1:   The Institution Has Not Started Working with Animals in Research or Testing, and Is Seeking Its First Certificate

This would include academic institutions that are seeking funding from certain organizations, such as the federal granting agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council), which require institutions they fund to have a CCAC certificate prior to undertaking animal-based research.

To obtain their certification, institutions in this category can choose between the following two options.

Option 1:   The Institution Acquires a CCAC Preliminary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

A CCAC Preliminary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® (valid for 18 months) can be obtained following an interim assessment visit. This option requires a second assessment visit before the expiration of the preliminary certificate in order to obtain a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®.

Option 2:   The Institution Acquires a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Once your institution is certified, the certificate is valid for three years. The initial assessment visit requires more preparation, however, and the certification process takes longer.

Category 2:   The Institution Is Already Working with Animals in Research or Testing

This would primarily apply to non-academic institutions that do not have to comply with the requirements of funders, including the federal granting agencies, that they be CCAC-certified before conducting animal-based research or testing.

In this case, the institution would acquire a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® that will be valid for three years. This option requires one regular assessment visit by a full assessment panel.

DESCRIPTION OF OPTIONS

Option 1:   The Institution Acquires a CCAC Preliminary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Summary of Process

The following is a process calendar with approximate timelines.

	KEY STEPS	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	APPROXIMATE TIMELINES (MONTHS)
1	Institution establishes an ethical animal care and use program	Senior administrator of the institution	
2	Submission of the CCAC animal care and use program review form for interim visits	Senior administrator of the institution	
3	CCAC interim assessment visit	CCAC associate director of assessment	0
4	CCAC sends assessment report and CCAC Preliminary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to the institution (valid for up to 18 months)	CCAC	1.5
5	Submission of the CCAC animal care and use program review form for regular visits	Senior administrator of the institution	10
6	CCAC regular assessment visit	CCAC assessment panel	12
7	CCAC sends a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to the institution (valid for three years) after receiving the appropriate implementation reports describing how the institution has addressed, or is planning to address, CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit	CCAC	19.5

Detailed Steps

1) The institution must establish an ethical animal care and use program (see the *CCAC policy statement for: senior administrators responsible for animal care and use programs*, and Appendix I, "Requirements for Obtaining a First CCAC Certificate", of the *CCAC policy: Certification of ethical animal care and use programs*.

2) This program must include:

   - an animal care committee;

   - scientific merit review;

   - pedagogical merit review;

   - a comprehensive veterinary program;

   - a continuing education program for the veterinarian(s) and animal care staff;

   - a training program for researchers and instructors;

   - a crisis management program;

   - an occupational health and safety program;

   - appropriate animal facilities, if animals are held (see guidelines on laboratory animals, farm animals, fish, marine mammals, and wildlife); and

   - integration of CCAC guidelines into the ethical animal care and use program.

   The CCAC offers an orientation visit service, either on-site or by videoconference, which allows institutions to get information on the CCAC program and get help in identifying their strengths and weaknesses of their ethical care and use of animals program and prepare for their first formal assessment visit. Institutions can also hire a knowledgeable consultant to help them through the process. For more information on the orientation service, contact the CCAC.

3) The CCAC *Animal Care and Use Program Review Form (Interim Assessment Visit)* must be completed and submitted to the CCAC. This self-assessment tool addresses important elements of an ethical animal care and use program and helps institutions identify their strengths and weaknesses. Assessment panels use this form to better understand the institution's program.

4) Shortly after receiving the review form, an associate director of assessment contacts the institution and schedules a visit at a mutually convenient time (see sample assessment visit agendas). The goal of the visit is to evaluate the institution's processes and facilities (if relevant).

5) In the weeks following the interim assessment visit, the associate director of assessment will submit a brief report to the Assessment and Certification Committee for review and approval.

The CCAC reviews the recommendations submitted in the report and decides whether or not to award a CCAC Preliminary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to the institution. If no serious issue is identified during the interim assessment visit, the institution will be certified a few weeks after the visit. If serious issues are identified, the institution must address these concerns appropriately in an implementation report (describing how the institution has, or is planning to, address CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit) before certification is awarded.

6) After the interim assessment visit, the CCAC *Animal Care and Use Program Review Form (Regular Assessment Visit)* (more comprehensive than the interim visit form) must be completed and submitted to the CCAC.

7) An assessment panel will conduct a regular assessment visit after receiving the completed form (see sample assessment visit agendas).

8) The associate director of assessment will write a report and submits it to the panel members and the Assessment and Certification Committee for review and approval. In order to be certified by the CCAC, the institution must have appropriately addressed the issues identified in the report and implemented the recommendations to the CCAC's satisfaction. Furthermore, the institution must be awarded a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® before the expiry date of its preliminary certificate.

Option 2: The Institution Acquires a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®

Summary of Process

The following is a process calendar with approximate timelines.

	KEY STEPS	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL	APPROXIMATE TIMELINES (MONTHS)
1	Institution establishes a functional ethical animal care and use program	Senior administrator	
2	Submission of the CCAC animal care and use program review form for regular visits	Senior administrator	
3	CCAC regular assessment visit	CCAC assessment panel	0
4	CCAC sends assessment report and any recommendations to the institution	CCAC Assessment and Certification Committee	2.5
5	Submission of follow-up report or reports describing how the institution has, or is planning to, address the CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit or in the CCAC's assessment report	Senior administrator	5.5 to 8.5
6	CCAC sends a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice® to the institution (valid for three years)	CCAC	6 to 15

Detailed Steps

1) Your institution must establish an appropriate ethical animal care and use program (see Appendix I, "Requirements for Obtaining a First CCAC Certificate", of the *CCAC policy: Certification of ethical animal care and use programs*).

2) This program must include:

- a functional animal care committee;

- scientific merit review;

- pedagogical merit review;

- a comprehensive veterinary program;

- a continuing education program for the veterinarian(s) and animal care staff;

- a training program for researchers and instructors;

- a crisis management program;

- an occupational health and safety program; and

- appropriate animal facilities, if animals are held (see guidelines on laboratory animals; farm animals; fish; marine mammals; and wildlife); and

- integration of CCAC guidelines into the ethical animal care and use program.

The CCAC offers an orientation visit service, either on-site or by videoconference, which can be used by institutions with limited knowledge of the CCAC program. The visit or call provides an opportunity to explain the CCAC program, help institutions identify their strengths and weaknesses, and prepare for their first formal assessment visit. Institutions can also hire a knowledgeable consultant to help them through the process. For more information on the orientation service, contact the CCAC.

3) The CCAC *Animal Care and Use Program Review Form (Regular Assessment Visit)* must be completed and submitted it to the CCAC. This self-assessment tool addresses important elements of an ethical animal care and use program and helps institutions identify their strengths and weaknesses. Assessment panels use this form to better understand the institutions program.

4) Shortly after receiving your PRF (Regular Assessment Visit), an associate director of assessment will contact your institution and schedule a visit at a mutually convenient time. An assessment panel of peers and the associate director of assessment will conduct the visit to assess your entire ethical animal care and use program (see sample assessment visit agendas). Strengths and weaknesses will be identified and preliminary recommendations to help improve your program will be presented to you verbally during the assessment visit.

5) In the weeks following the visit, after the review and approval by the assessment panel and members of the Assessment and Certification Committee, the institution receives an assessment report containing recommendations (see the *CCAC policy: Recommendations made in CCAC assessment reports*). The institution must respond to the recommendations in an implementation report describing how has addressed, or is planning to address, the CCAC recommendations made at the time of the visit.

6) Complete implementation reports are forwarded to the Assessment and Certification Committee and the assessment panel for their evaluation.

7) Meritorious programs that meet CCAC standards are given a CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice®, valid for three years.

GUIDANCE FOR PARTNERED PROGRAMS

Institutions can acquire the services of an animal care committee from a CCAC-certified institution to partially or fully oversee their ethical animal care and use program. Institutions with small scale ethical animal care and use programs that do not wish to put their own animal care committee in place, for example, can partner with a certified institution to oversee their program. A formal agreement should be signed by both parties, detailing which institution and which senior administrator is responsible for which elements of the new ethical animal care and use program. Clear lines of authority and communication between the chair of the animal care committee and the contracting senior administrator must be established. In addition, close communication between the animal care committee and the office of research services (or equivalent) at the new institution will need to be in place to ensure that funds are advanced, animals are acquired, and work begins only if there is an approved protocol on file.

This agreement should also address management, maintenance, and staffing of animal facilities, if these are to be the responsibility of the institution whose animal care committee is being contracted.

Animal care committee terms of reference should be developed, based largely on the _CCAC policy statement on: terms of reference for animal care committees_ and the contracted animal care committee's terms of reference, but modified accordingly and adapted to reflect the animal care committee's authority, roles, and responsibilities within the new institutional ethical animal care and use program.

Many institutions will adapt the contracted animal care committee's documentation and resources to their own needs and the CCAC strongly encourages institutions to share this documentation and expertise.

In order to avoid any duplication of effort when reviewing common elements of both ethical animal care and use programs, the CCAC will attempt to conduct assessment visits to your institution either on the same day that the contracted institution is assessed, or the day after (for geographically distant institutions).

For more information on acquiring the services of an animal care committee from a CCAC-certified institution, contact the CCAC.