

Canadian Council on Animal Care
Conseil canadien de protection des animaux

Good Animal Practice in Science
Bonnes pratiques animales en science

Preparing for an assessment visit

Marie Bédard

CCAC Assessment Director

The ACC: Keystone of the Institutional Program

June 14, 2014



CCAC assessment visit

- Main process through which the CCAC can understand the state of an institution's animal care and use program, using discussions with institutional representatives, relevant documents and site visits, with the goal of certifying the program
- A good time for the institution to directly discuss its questions and concerns with the CCAC



CCAC assessment process

- The CCAC works to provide thorough, consistent and collegial assessments, based on:
 - ◆ the *Animal Care and Use Program Review Form* (PRF) and on CCAC guidelines, policies and recognized standards
 - ◆ adapting the process to the type and size of the institution through:
 - discussions with institutional representatives
 - selection of suitable panel members
 - common sense!

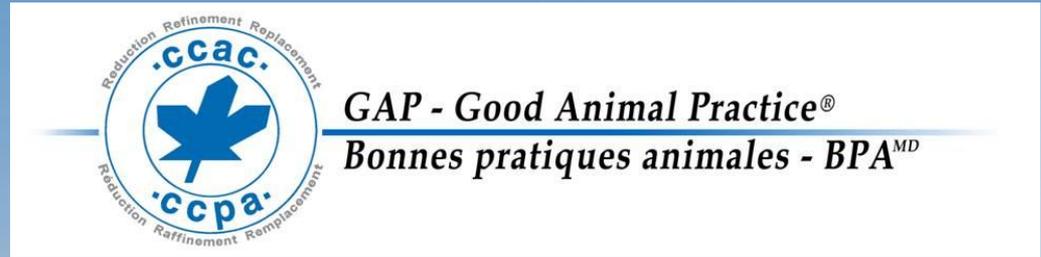


Certification process (about 15 months)

- Institution prepares for assessment visit by completing the CCAC Program Review Form (**PRF**)
- **Assessment visit takes place**
- Institution receives assessment report which usually includes **recommendations**
- **Institution answers recommendations**
- CCAC Assessment and Certification Committee makes a decision on **(re)certification of institution**



CCAC certification (no more statuses)



1. Certification

→ *CCAC Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice[®]*
(valid until the end of the next assessment process)

2. Probation

→ *Probationary Certificate of GAP – Good Animal Practice[®]*
(valid only for one year)

3. Non-compliance

→ removal of CCAC Certificate



Preparing for a visit

- Assessment visits are conducted every three years, so your next visit will most likely be very close to the 3-year mark from the last visit
- CCAC Certificates now indicate year of next visit and that of next certification



Regular or interim visit?

- A **regular assessment visit** is conducted by a panel typically composed of:
 - ◆ a veterinarian
 - ◆ a scientist
 - ◆ a community representative
 - ◆ an assessment directorand the institution is asked to complete the PRF before the visit
- Institutions that have received a regular visit will receive an **interim visit** (3 years after a regular visit and 3 years before the next regular visit)



Interim visits

- Interim visits will therefore take place every 6 years
- Interim visits are conducted by an assessment director alone, and are based on the interim PRF which is a shorter form than the PRF for full visits



Pre-assessment documentation

- See CCAC website, Assessment and Certification, Assessment Visits
- Approximately 5-6 months before the institution's visit, it is provided with:
 - ◆ The name of the assessment director who will visit
 - ◆ The link to the full or interim PRF (according to the type of visit)
 - ◆ The link to the relevant agenda:
 - One-day regular visit
 - Regular visit of more than one day
 - Interim visit



Choosing a date for the visit

- Assessment directors choose a date with each institution (at a time when animals will be present)
- This is a good opportunity to speak with the director about any questions or worries you have, any suggestions for the visit, any changes to your program
- Each assessment visit is a project in itself for the directors, each institution is different and we want to find the best way of structuring and preparing for each visit



Date for visit

- Not very much latitude in choice of date:
 - ◆ Must be close to 3-year mark for recertification process
 - ◆ CCAC has limited resources to cover over 200 institutions and must also group visits by geographical areas
- The institutional representatives available on the day of the visit should include at least:
 - ◆ The senior administrator responsible for the program (or a delegate)
 - ◆ The Chair of the Animal Care Committee (ACC), the veterinarian(s), the community representative(s), the ACC coordinator and as many other ACC members as possible, as well as some animal users
 - ◆ Animal facility directors/managers/animal care staff



Filling out the PRF

- The PRF is useful not only to the CCAC, but also to the institution to define the current state of its program and plan for improvements
 - ◆ We encourage you to keep the full PRF up to date for your own planning
- The PRF needs to be sent to the CCAC panel about 3 weeks before the visit (names and addresses of panel members are sent about 1 month beforehand)
- Institutional members should collaborate to fill out the form to provide as clear and accurate a picture of the program as possible, and the Animal Care Committee and senior administrator should be aware of the final product



Tips for filling out the PRF

- See *How to use the form* instructions
- Don't assume that CCAC panel members know very much about your current program
 - They will only have the assessment report and institutional response from 3 years ago
- Be concise, provide information-filled bullets about each point, avoid long descriptions!
- Try to make sure there are no contradictions in the completed PRF, and that all sections fit well together and provide a complete picture



PRF – Section 1 - General information

- Ensure that a brief but informative description of the overall program is included, along with any significant changes from the previous visit
- Ensure that the agenda and instructions for the first meeting (and for parking!) are clear



PRF – Section 2 – ACC functioning

- Crucial section for all visits – ACC must be at the heart of each program – ensure that information about ACC functioning is clear and detailed
- Include:
 - ◆ Terms of Reference for the ACC, based on CCAC policy on terms of reference for ACCs
 - ◆ ACC minutes that illustrate protocol review discussions and decisions and other ACC duties
 - ◆ Scientific merit review mechanism (research programs)
 - ◆ Lists of current SOPs and of protocols for the past 2 years



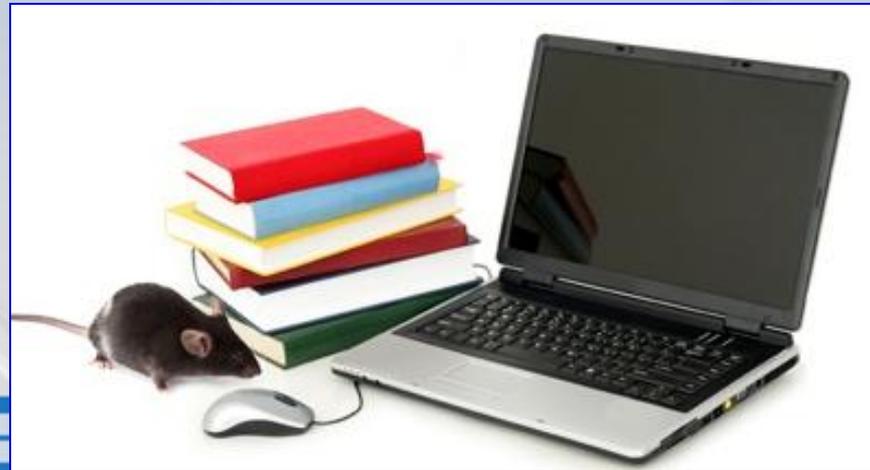
PRF – Section 3 – Protocol forms

- Include all protocol forms
 - ◆ Research/teaching/testing
 - ◆ New protocols/renewals
 - ◆ Lab animal/field/fish
 - ◆ Amendments
- Need not include full protocols, examples of full protocols with relevant exchanges between ACC and protocol authors will be reviewed on site



PRF – Section 4 – Veterinary services and animal care

- Clarify the veterinary services program (for all types of animals and work)
- Clarify the animal care program, including who manages the animal facilities and who provides animal care



PRF – Section 5 – CE & Training

Occupational health and safety

Crisis management

- ◆ Specify recent, relevant continuing education & training for veterinarian(s) and animal care staff
- ◆ Clearly explain theoretical and practical training measures for animal users (researchers & students), competency evaluation and tracking of training
- ◆ Focus on occupational health and safety and crisis management **as related to animal care and use**, with relevant documentation and identification of persons responsible for these measures



PRF – Section 6 – Animal facilities



- Not all programs include facilities
- Where there are animal facilities, there are several choices of “section 6”, see instructions:
 - ◆ **6A Lab animals**
 - 6A1 - Appendix 1 - Aquatic animals in a small scale lab
 - 6A2 – Appendix 2 - Birds in a lab setting
 - ◆ **6B Aquatic facilities**
 - ◆ **6C Farm animal facilities**
 - ◆ **6D Wildlife facilities**



PRF – Section 6 – Animal facilities

- Focus on clarifying the purpose, structure and functioning of each facility (and the links between them, if relevant), including laboratories or other satellite facilities where animals are housed or used
- Indicate who works within the facilities
- Include complete site visit reports from the ACC, with details of any concerns and of measures taken to resolve them



PRF – Section 7 – Summary



- This section is to be filled out by the **institution before the visit**, not by the assessment panel
- Summarize and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional program, based on the points made in the first 6 sections of the PRF
- Suggest recommendations that the institution should make to itself, to improve its program



Practical points

- Provide the printed PRF in as compact a form as possible to panel members
- Provide a complete electronic version to the CCAC Secretariat
- The panel members will normally meet the evening before the visit to prepare for it together, after having read the documentation



Typical agenda

9-11 am

Initial meeting

11 am – 12 pm

Review of protocols & SOPs

12 – 1 pm

In-house lunch

1 – 3 pm

Site visit of facilities

3 – 4 pm

In camera panel meeting

4 – 5 pm

Final meeting



Initial meeting

- The senior administrator(s), full ACC, any interested animal users, and those responsible for training, occupational health and safety and crisis management should meet with the panel during the initial meeting (2-3 hours)
- The initial meeting may be structured with senior administrator issues first, followed by a discussion of the ACC's functioning
- The main purpose of this meeting is for panel member questions on the institution's program and discussion of ideas and concerns



Presentations during the initial meeting

- The assessment director will provide a brief (10 min) verbal or PowerPoint presentation on the CCAC's work over the past three years
- The institution is also encouraged to provide a brief presentation on its own work and animal care and use program, highlighting improvements, other changes and plans for the future, but the institution's presentation(s) should not last more than about 15 min



Review of documentation

- **Full protocol files** (with complete protocols and all exchanges between the ACC and protocol authors - comments, amendments and protocol renewals) for all protocols, as well as all current **standard operating procedures (SOPs)** should be available to the panel
- The panel will select a few protocols and SOPs for review
- At least the ACC chair, coordinator and veterinarian should remain with the panel in order to be able to answer questions about protocols, SOPs, and the protocol and SOP review and approval process



Site visit of facilities

- The panel's purpose is not to examine each inch of every facility but to understand:
 - ◆ the purpose of each facility and its general state
 - ◆ how institutional members function within the facilities (SOPs), and how animal care and use and facility conditions are documented on a daily basis
 - ◆ how problems related to the facilities are prevented/identified/corrected, and how this process is documented



Site visit of facilities (cont'd)

- The panel should be informed of, and will respect all biosecurity and biosafety measures, as well as any precautions to avoid disturbing animals and work in progress
- The visit should begin with the cleanest areas and end with the 'dirty' areas
- The panel will decide which rooms to visit (will typically visit examples of the different types of rooms)



Laboratories & other satellite facilities

- The panel should:
 - ◆ be informed of all areas in which animals are housed or used (even infrequently), including laboratories or other satellite facilities
 - ◆ have the opportunity to visit these facilities and be informed with regard to their operations
 - ◆ be informed with regard to animal care and ACC oversight of these facilities



Records – an essential part of the visit

The panel will need to be able to link groups of animals with relevant records, including:

- ◆ daily checklists of animal husbandry and environmental conditions
- ◆ completed cage/pen/tank cards for a variety of protocols
- ◆ records of procedures conducted on animals: summaries on cage cards, surgical or breeding records if relevant, etc.
- ◆ records identifying animal health or welfare issues and relevant (veterinary) follow-up
- ◆ water quality and other more specialized records, depending on the nature of the work



Other information

The panel will be seeking to gain a thorough understanding of the institution's program through:

- ◆ the pre-assessment documentation
- ◆ discussions with institutional members
- ◆ review of protocols, SOPs, facilities and records

The panel may ask for additional information if needed



In camera panel meeting

- The panel needs to meet on its own for about 1 hour (or more for larger institutions) to analyze and summarize all relevant information and discuss any recommendations and commendations that should be made
- These (or at least the most important ones among them) will be drafted for the final meeting



Final meeting

- The assessment director summarizes next steps for the institution:
 - ◆ Most assessment reports are sent within 10 weeks
 - ◆ Serious recommendations must be answered within 3 months, and Regular recommendations within 6 months of receipt of the assessment report
- Commendations and recommendations are presented verbally to the institutional representatives
- A question and discussion period is then held



Assessment report

- The recommendations and commendations are provided to the institution in the context of a complete, formal assessment report, as authorized by the CCAC Assessment and Certification Committee
- This report will mainly focus on what was seen and discussed at the time of the visit, but may sometimes include some new information if relevant information comes to light after the visit and before the report is finalized

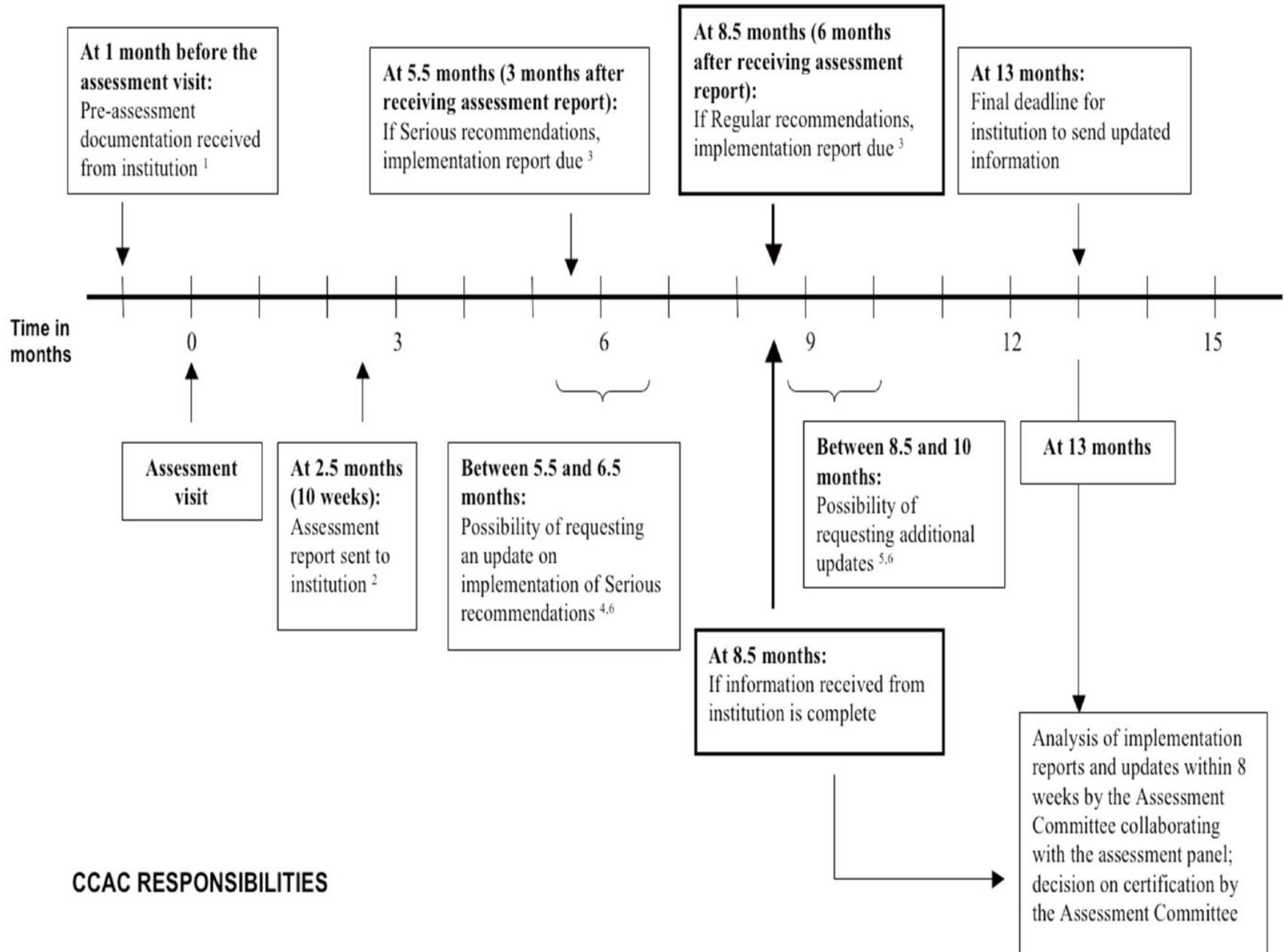


Follow up

- Institutions are invited to contact the CCAC at any time to clarify any part of the process, including any points in their assessment report or recommendations
- Once an institution has provided its implementation report(s) to the CCAC, the CCAC may ask for additional information or send the report(s) directly to the CCAC assessment panel and the Assessment and Certification Committee



INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES



Certification

The CCAC Assessment and Certification Committee will decide on (re)certification of the institution, based on its implementation of CCAC recommendations



GAP - Good Animal Practice®

Bonnes pratiques animales - BPA^{MD}

Conclusion

- CCAC assessments are meant to be thorough and collegial evaluations of animal care and use programs for the purpose of program certification
- You are invited to:
 - ◆ work with the assessment director assigned to your assessment to make your visit a success
 - ◆ make comments, suggestions or ask questions at any point in the process

