



CCAC
CCPA

The Essentials:

CCAC's Ethics Principles for Animal Use in Science



March 2026

If the Goal Can Be Achieved without the Use of an Animal, It Is Not Ethical to Use an Animal

- First and foremost, animals are to be used only as a last resort
- Whenever the use of animals is deemed to be **necessary**, the animals used in the studies will be accorded respect and will receive optimal care in compliance with the CCAC program
- Good welfare is characterized by maximizing animals' positive experiences while minimizing their negative ones

CCAC's Ethics Principles for Animal Use in Science



- Essential for animal care committees when considering the ethical acceptability of animal-based scientific activities
- Outline the values and ethics expected of institutions and individuals that intend to use animals in science
- These ethics principles have a four-year implementation period and take effect in January 2030, to coincide with the CCAC's categories of welfare impact and the revised animal use data reporting system

Three Fundamental Ethics Principles



Fundamental Principle 1: **Respect for Animals**

Animals are valued as individuals with fundamental needs and interests.



Fundamental Principle 2: **Sufficient Benefit**

Any use of animals provides sufficient benefit to humans, animals, or the environment.



Fundamental Principle 3: **Not Causing Harm**

The intentional or avoidable harming of animals is morally wrong.

Fundamental Ethics Principles

- Presuppose that the scientific goals in question are worthy of consideration and cannot be achieved ethically by any other means than with the use of an animal
- If the goal can be achieved without the use of an animal, it is not ethical to use an animal to carry out the activity in question
- There is an ethical obligation to act in a manner that balances the principles of respect for animals, sufficient benefit, and not causing harm

Principles of application assist in meeting the CCAC's three fundamental ethics principles

Principle of Application 1

Sentience is to be used as the basis for decision-making concerning any potential animal-based scientific activity.

- intended to provide the moral basis on which decisions will be made concerning the use of animals and aims to put in place safeguards to minimize harms

Principle of Application 2

Certain activities are not to be permitted either because of the extreme level of harm likely to be experienced by the animal, or the lack of sufficient benefit.

- intended to ensure that animals are not used for scientific activities that violate the three fundamental ethics principles

Principle of Application 3

Animals are only to be used when there are no valid non-animal means of achieving approved research, educational, or regulatory goals.

- intended to ensure that the use of animals is necessary

If the use of animals is necessary...

Principles of Application 4, 5, and 6 are intended to ensure that there is sufficient benefit to be gained from the proposed animal use.

Principle of Application 4

The expected outcomes of any scientific activity involving animals are to be sufficiently beneficial to humans, animals, or the environment.

Principle of Application 5

The most relevant and reliable models or model systems are to be selected to achieve the approved research, educational, or regulatory goals, based on evidence of their validity for the intended purpose.

Principle of Application 6

Rigorous scientific principles, and research, teaching and training, and testing practices are to be implemented to ensure high-quality animal-based scientific activities.

If there is a good prospect of sufficient benefit to be gained...

Principles of Application 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 provide an animal-centric focus aimed at minimizing harms and encouraging positive welfare for the animals.

Principle of Application 7

Potential negative welfare impacts are to be minimized, and positive welfare states are to be ensured.

Principle of Application 8

Captive environments are to provide animals with the opportunity to experience a life worth living.

Principle of Application 9

Animals are to be trained to cooperate with procedures in a manner that respects their welfare

Principle of Application 10

Animals are to be given the opportunity to enjoy a life after their scientific use.

Principle of Application 11

Killing an animal, even using a humane killing method not intended to have any negative welfare impact, is to be considered as a harm to that animal.

Connect with us



Email

ccac@ccac.ca



LinkedIn

[@canadian-council-on-animal-care](https://www.linkedin.com/company/canadian-council-on-animal-care)



Call us

613-238-4031

