

Document Name	<b>Policy on Animal Care and Ethics Training for Researchers</b>
Document Number	ACC.POL.012
Origin	Research Office   Committee on Animal Use and Welfare (CAUW)
Authority	Vice-President Academic and Provost
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Review/Retirement Date	2026
Responsibility for Revision	Research Ethics and Compliance Officer
Responsibility for Implementation	Associate Vice-President Research

### 1) Purpose & Responsibilities

As a certified institution of the [Canadian Council on Animal Care](#) (CCAC), Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) is required to have training programs for faculty, staff and students who use animals in their research, whether under laboratory and controlled environments/facilities or in the field.

The Policy on Animal Care and Ethics Training for Researchers is ultimately the responsibility of the Vice-President Academic and Provost (VPAP) and has been adapted from Saint Mary's University (SMU) to ensure consistency. The VPAP has designated day-to-day responsibility for the Policy and the training program to the Associate Vice-President Research (AVPR). The AVPR has authorized the SMU Animal Care Committee, and the Animal Care Coordinator in particular, to manage the training program, to review it annually, and make recommendations on any changes to the AVPR.

All faculty, staff, and students at MSVU wishing to pursue research using animals are required to undergo training, testing and certification on Animal Care and Ethics before

using animals in their research.

## 2) Definitions

<b>ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE (ACC)</b>	The local representative of the CCAC responsible for ensuring that all animals used in teaching, research or testing at SMU are treated ethically and in accordance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care's (CCAC) policies and guidelines.
<b>ANIMAL USER</b>	Any faculty, staff, or student who use animals for research or teaching.
<b>PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR (PI)</b>	The faculty member who holds an approved Animal Use Protocol (AUP) and associated funding.

## 3) Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the required training program for all animal users at MSVU.

## 4) Scope

This policy applies to all animal users at MSVU.

## 5) Roles and Responsibilities

### Principal Investigator:

The detailed training of research team members in the handling and care of individual species or categories of animals is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator(s) of a study. As per CCAC guidelines, all Principal Investigator(s) of a study must ensure that:

- all animal users must have the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to be competent to perform their required tasks. When practical skills need to be acquired, the training should be timed in relation to when performance of the skills is required;
- access to training must be offered on a regular basis to ensure that all personnel working with animals possess the necessary knowledge, skills and competency to perform their required tasks prior to commencement of any work involving animals.

In addition to these CCAC guidelines, the MSVU [Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research](#) requires that Principal Investigator(s) of a study must ensure “that the highest standards of scholarly integrity are to be understood and practiced” and that all research “have a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of scholarship which include such components as:

- careful planning of research protocols, ensuring that methods of data collection and storage, and methods of analysis are appropriate;
- using scholarly and scientific rigour and integrity in obtaining, recording, and analyzing data, and in reporting and publishing results;
- following the policies and procedures defined by the University’s Animal Care Committee and consistent with the Canadian Council on Animal Care’s “Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals.”

### **Animal Care Committee (ACC)**

It is the responsibility of the ACC to ensure that all personnel listed on Animal Use Protocols have completed the required training. It is the responsibility of the ACC Coordinator to coordinate and track training activities, inform the ACC on the training status of animal users, and make recommendations for the training program on a continual basis and in accordance with the latest CCAC policies and guidelines.

## **6) Policy**

- a) All faculty, staff, and students at MSVU wishing to pursue research using animals are required to undergo training, testing, and certification on Animal Care and Ethics before using animals in their research.
- b) The training of researchers (faculty, staff, and students) under this Policy is oriented to the ethical framework of the use of animals in research; it is not detailed training in the handling and care of individual species or categories of animals.
- c) The ACC Policy on Animal Care Training for Animal Users is consistent with the [CCAC guidelines on: training of personnel working with animals in science](#), which include:

- i) All personnel working with animals in science must be knowledgeable about the principles of humane experimental science and ethical issues associated with the use of those animals, including the Three Rs tenet (replacement, reduction, and refinement).
- ii) Institutions must strive to sustain an institutional culture of respect for animal life.
- iii) Institutions should ensure appropriate resource materials are available to support the delivery of comprehensive, up-to-date training programs.
- iv) Training programs must be designed to be consistent with the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement).
- v) Institutions are responsible for providing evidence that all personnel working with animals have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and competency to perform their required tasks.
- vi) Institutions are responsible for providing evidence that all personnel working with animals have the appropriate knowledge, skills and competency to perform their required tasks.
- vii) All animal users must have the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to be competent to perform their required tasks. When practical skills need to be acquired, the training should be timed in relation to when performance of the skills is required.

## 7) Training Program for Researchers

### **Mandatory Training for researchers using fish:**

All researchers using fish must take the [Introduction to the Care and Use of Fish](#) course offered through Dalhousie University. Successful completion of this course meets both the CCAC's Core stream and Fish Knowledge stream training requirements. Only upon successful completion of this course will researchers be considered to be properly certified by the Animal Care Committee. Only researchers (including students) who have successfully completed the course (certified) shall be able to be listed on animal care protocols and work with fish in the facility.

Per CCAC guidelines, training of researchers using animals falls into two categories:

- a) CCAC's three "[Core Areas](#)" of:

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- Ethics in Animal Experimentation;
  - Occupational Health and Safety;
  - The Three Rs of Humane Animal Experimentation (i.e., reduction, replacement, and refinement).
- b) “Knowledge Streams” associated with the specific kind of animals used in research. At the present time, only one Knowledge Stream of animal research is being pursued at MSVU:
- Fish Stream (see [CCAC - Canadian Council on Animal Care: Fish Stream](#))

All users of animals in research at MSVU will undergo training in CCAC’s three “Core Areas.” Each CoreArea and the training modules for each are listed here:

- [Ethics in Animals Experimentation](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety](#)
- [Three Rs of Humane Animal Experimentation](#)

In addition, researchers must take training in “Knowledge Streams” associated with the specific kind of animals used in their research. At MSVU, our animal-based research falls under only one of these Knowledge Streams: Fish (wild or captive fish).

## 8) Compliance

The ACC, the ACC Coordinator, and the Principal Investigator in particular, are responsible to coordinate the training, certification and tracking of researchers using animals at MSVU. The ACC Coordinator will make regular reports to the ACC on the status of training of researchers and make any recommendations on changes or updating to the training over time.

Failure of researchers to acquire the required training before using animals in their research is a serious breach of MSVU [Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Allegations of faculty, students or staff using animals in research without the required training may be investigated according to the [Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and, if found not to be in compliance, will face the outcomes as described in

the Policy.

## 9) Relevant Policies and Guidelines

- [CCAC Policy: Certification of Ethical Animal Care and Use Programs](#)
- [CCAC Guidelines On: Training of Personnel Working With Animals in Science](#)

## 10)References

The following documents have been used extensively in the formulation of this policy.

- Saint Mary's University *Policy on Animal Care and Ethics Training for Animal Users at Saint Mary's University* (2023) – (Retrieved October 2021)

## 11)Document Modification History

Policy Number	Key Changes	Effective Date
ACC.POL.012	Review for content; minor revisions to synchronize with SMU; update to hyperlinks; formatting for accessibility	October 2023
ACC.POL.012	Original Version	October 2021