


STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

	Subject: Handling Complaints Concerning Animal Care and Use	No: IACC.2.2	
	Prepared by: Nancy Goudreault, RVT	Date effective: September 1, 2022	
	Revised by: Angela Arbour, RVT	Supercedes: IACC.2.1 (2011)	Retraining necessary: No
Approved by ACC: July 20/2022 ACC Chair Signature: Date:		Veterinarian's Signature: Date:	

PURPOSE: To outline the steps taken when animal care and use complaints are brought forward.

SCOPE: To ensure that all animal use and care complaints are taken seriously and addressed appropriately and in a timely fashion.

RESPONSIBILITIES: All Animal Care Committee members.

MATERIALS: Complaint form

PROCEDURE:

- The telephone numbers of all Animal Care Committee members are posted in animal holding areas and classrooms where animal handling takes place.
- Those bringing forward a complaint shall be free of reprisal and not be subject to any retaliation, penalties, discrimination, confrontation, or any other type of consequences for making a report.
- When a complaint is made, the member receiving the complaint will fill out a “complaint form”. Appendix I
- The individual receiving the complaint must inform the ACC chair in a timely manner.
- The ACC chair will schedule a sub-committee meeting. The gravity of the complaint will be taken into consideration when scheduling this meeting.
- The sub-committee will discuss the complaint and decide the severity of the complaint.
- Minor concerns will be handled by the sub-committee and the clinical Veterinarian, only in exceptional cases.

- A meeting with the persons involved will be scheduled and the complaint will be addressed.
- The sub-committee will provide a plan to rectify the situation.
- The remaining ACC will be briefed of the complaint and its corrective action at the next ACC meeting.
- Major concerns will require an Emergency ACC meeting.
 - A formal investigation process by the ACC will take place.
 - The ACC may stop that procedure (reason for complaint) until the investigation is complete.
 - A plan of action and a schedule for completion of investigation will be created.
 - Determine the validity of the charges by interviewing and taking meeting minutes:
 - i. Person(s) making the charges
 - ii. The person(s) in which the complaint is against
 - iii. Expert witnesses, technicians, students, ACF personnel, etc.
- Was complaint against procedures approved by ACC?
- The person(s) immediate supervisor will be notified in writing of the complaint.
- The ACC will provide a corrective plan.
- Submit a formal written report to the person(s) in which the complaint was made against, and their direct supervisor (usually no more than one month) to include:
 - 1. Validity of the charges
 - 2. Violation of specific regulations and/or breach of ethics
 - 3. Recommended courses of action, which may include:
 - a. Discontinuation of procedure
 - b. Requiring Veterinary Sciences to adopt new rules, regulations and/or guidelines and suggestions, mechanisms for enforcement
 - c. No further action required.
- Disciplinary action may be taken if charges are found to be malicious or intentionally dishonest.
- The complaint form and a copy of the formal written report will be filed in the ACC Complaint folder in the Veterinary Sciences Coordinators office.
- If the ACC is not pleased with management response or receives non-compliance from the person(s) in which the complaint is against or the direct supervisor, the ACC may request a meeting with the President of Northern College.

Note: While we do not discourage anyone from bringing concerns forward to the Animal Care Committee, a general first step as to not overburden the ACC with matters that may be resolved more quickly and directly, would be to discuss with the Coordinator of the Animal Care Committee and/or the student's Professor or Kennel Staff to get further explanation or understanding of our processes.

APPENDIX I

ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

Please complete this form as completely as possible. Use extra sheets of paper if needed to answer the questions fully.

Name (optional): _____

Date of concern/complaint filed: _____

Date(s) of the incident of concern: _____

Please describe the nature of your concern/complaint including any witnesses, species involved, name of the animal(s) and number of animals involved.

Who within Northern College veterinary sciences staff have you spoken to regarding this concern/complaint?

Why are you bringing this concern to the ACC for further review and/or investigation?