



VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

Policy ACC-002 - Reporting of Animal Welfare Concerns

PURPOSE

1. Vancouver Island University (VIU) is committed to the humane and ethical care of animals in research and teaching and therefore provides an avenue whereby VIU Persons can report Animal Welfare Concerns without fear of retaliation. The purpose of this Policy is to communicate the process for reporting an Animal Welfare Concern.

SCOPE

2. This Policy applies to all VIU Persons.

DEFINITIONS

3. “Animal Welfare Concern”: For the purposes of this Policy, an Animal Welfare Concern is any action of abuse, neglect or mistreatment of animals or a potential violation of an approved Animal Use Protocol (AUP), any Animal Care Committee (ACC) Policy, or VIU Policy 31.07 (Animal Care).

POLICY STATEMENTS

4. Any report by a VIU Person(s) with direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion of any Animal Welfare Concern or mistreatment of animals associated with research, teaching or testing at VIU will be dealt with promptly without fear of retaliation.

PROCESS

5. Reporting Animal Welfare Concerns
 - a) Any concern relating to Animal Welfare can be reported, in good faith, to any of the following: ACC Chair, Animal Care Officer, University Veterinarian, or any member of the ACC.

- b) In order for the ACC to undertake a competent investigation of an Animal Welfare Concern, the reporting individual should be able to provide specific details such as event, time, location, and people involved.
- c) A report may be made either orally or in writing, and may be made openly, confidentially, or anonymously. If a report is confidential, the anonymity of the individual providing the information will be maintained, to the extent allowable, within collective agreements and VIU policies and procedures.
- d) All concerns disclosed will be considered by the ACC Chair in an objective, timely, and fair manner, respecting the rights of individuals.
- e) If the Animal Welfare Concern is deemed to be an act that is in non-compliance with the Policy ACC-001 on Compliance, then that Policy will be activated.

6. Animal Care Committee Investigation

- a) All individuals involved in an Animal Welfare Concern investigation must keep the details and results confidential, to the extent allowable within collective agreements and VIU policies and procedures.
- b) Investigations must be conducted in accordance with the processes established by VIU under Policy 31.10 (Integrity and Conduct in Research and Scholarly Activity), Policy 32.05 (Student Conduct Code), VIU Policy 21.05 (Personal Harassment Policy), or Policy ACC-001 on Compliance.
- c) The ACC Chair, Animal Care Officer and University Veterinarian will evaluate the details of any report provided and determine whether the allegation of Animal Welfare Concern is false, unfounded, frivolous, vexatious, or disclosed in bad faith; or further investigation is required by the ACC.
- d) An evaluation under this Policy has two possible outcomes:
 - i. Dismissal of the allegation; or
 - ii. Activation of Policy ACC-001 on Compliance.

7. Consequences

- a) Any VIU Persons found to have been involved in an Animal Welfare Concern, may be subject to the actions outlined in Policy ACC-001 on Compliance.
- b) VIU Persons found to have made a frivolous, vexatious, or bad faith allegation of Animal Welfare Concern may be subject to disciplinary action.

8. Acts of Retaliation

- a) VIU will not tolerate any acts of intimidation, harassment, discipline, or retaliation against a VIU Person (collectively, referred to herein as an “Act of Retaliation”) who reports an Animal Welfare Concern in good faith in accordance with Section 5 of this Policy.
- b) Any VIU Person who is subject to any Act of Retaliation is encouraged to report it.