

SOP:	107.6	Site Visits
Version Date:	10-2024	
Review By:	10-2027	
Subject:	To describe the process by which AREB conducts visits of animal facilities to assess animal housing conditions, procedures, environmental conditions, animal care and management practices such as health monitoring, environmental enrichment, biosafety procedures and animal care and use records."	
Related Documents	SOPs 106; 108; 109; RS 111; 114	

Roles and Responsibilities

AREB Chair: responsible for participating in site visits, compiling initial reporting information for Site Visit Liaison, making decisions on the acceptability of non-compliance responses, and calling necessary AREB subcommittee and full committee meetings.

AREB Members: responsible for attending a minimum of one (1) site visit per year, discussing the Site Visit Checklist form, and participating in any elements of the site visit process deemed necessary by the AREB Chair.

AREB Site Visit Subcommittee: consists of the AREB Chair, Consulting Veterinarian, one (1) community member, and one (1) AREB member with appropriate expertise; is responsible for visiting each animal use area or facility each year and for participating in meetings called by the AREB Chair to address non-compliance issues. The Site Visit Subcommittee is a rotating committee, depending on availability and membership.

Senior Administrator Responsible for Animal Care and Use Program (Senior administrator): coordinates efforts and ensures that all organizational/institutional responsibilities are met. They ensure that appropriate animal care and use operations are in place to meet the institution's scientific goals of research, teaching, testing or production and that all animal care and use is conducted appropriately, according to institutional and CCAC policies and guidelines.

Site Visit Liaison: responsible for acting as a respectful liaison between the AREB and the Principal Investigator/animal users, and for assisting the AREB Chair in resolving site visit concerns. The Site Visit Liaison is typically either the Research Ethics Officer, or the Animal Care Coordinator (Animal Care & Ethics Staff).

Principal Investigator(s) (PI)/Animal User(s): responsible for providing all relevant documentation to the AREB prior to a site visit, informing all animal care staff of upcoming site visits (when announced), participating in the site visit, providing written follow-up reports to the AREB and complying with AREB decisions.

Consulting Veterinarian: responsible for attending all site visits, providing training to animal users as deemed necessary by the AREB Chair, and intervening on all ethical non-compliance issues.

AREB Site Visits

1. All University animal facilities are subject to a minimum of one (1) AREB site visit per year. More frequent site visits may be conducted on facilities related to protocols identified as presenting higher risks to animal care and welfare.
2. Initiation of a site visit may also occur at any time if a report of non-compliance with animal procedures has been received.
3. All PI(s) should be present for the site visit.
4. Site visits include, but are not limited to, relevant inspections of animal housing conditions, study-related procedures (e.g., feeding, breeding, cleaning, etc.), environmental conditions, animal care and management practices such as welfare monitoring, environmental enrichment, biosafety procedures and animal care and use records.
5. Site visits are typically conducted in-person. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as remote locations), site visits may be conducted virtually and asynchronously.

Notification of AREB Site Visits

1. When coordinating a site visit, the Site Visit Liaison will:
 - a. Contact the PI(s)/animal user(s) at least ten (10) days in advance and provide them with all related documentation (e.g., site visit checklist) that will be used, so that they may organize the attendance of research staff, and
 - b. Arrange site visit subcommittee members' attendance and provide them with the necessary documentation (e.g., past veterinary and site visit information, relevant AUPs and SOPs).

Following the AREB Site Visit

1. The site visit liaison will provide a written report, including commendations and non-compliance issues, to the PI and to the senior administrator within ten (10) business days.

Consulting Veterinarian Site Visits

1. The Consulting Veterinarian has unlimited access to animal facilities and makes planned site visits at least twice a year.
2. The Consulting Veterinarian has the authority to ensure the provision of comprehensive care, oversee all aspects of animal care, and work with the AREB to protect animal welfare, including the authority to initiate treatment or to euthanize animals in distress.

3. Veterinarian site visits include: an inspection on the maintenance of environmental conditions, animal care and management practices such as welfare monitoring, environmental enrichment, biosafety procedures, and the review of animal care and use records.
4. Veterinarian site visits also involve a meeting with Animal Care & Ethics Staff to discuss any ongoing issues, or items that may have arisen since the last visit.

Notification of Consulting Veterinarian Site Visits

1. Consulting Veterinarian site visits may occur by arrangement with the PI(s)/animal user(s) or may be unannounced.
2. In cases where the site visit has been arranged with the PI(s)/animal user(s), the Consulting Veterinarian will contact the PI/animal user(s) directly.

Following the Consulting Veterinarian Site Visit

1. The Consulting Veterinarian will provide the AREB Chair and the senior administrator with a written report of any visit recommendations, commendations, and non-compliance issues.

Non-Compliance Response Process (refer to SOP 109)

1. All compliance concerns should be undertaken in a collaborative and collegial manner that is supportive of animal-based research while ensuring appropriate and timely issue resolution. Communication must be professional and based on mutual respect.
2. Compliance concerns will be addressed according to their classification (procedural or ethical).
3. A PI/animal user(s) may appeal, in writing, to the AREB on areas of the site visit report or follow-up requirements they disagree with. If unresolved, the PI may contact the Associate Vice President, Research, to justify why they are unable to meet follow-up requirements.

Off-Site Facilities

Other Institutions

1. All site visits are performed by the host institution.
2. The ACCs of collaborating institutions will agree in advance, on a case-by-case basis, about how site visits will be conducted.

Field Studies

MacEwan University Researcher as PI

1. Where appropriate, site visits should be conducted by an AREB subcommittee consisting of the AREB Chair or Designate, the Consulting Veterinarian, one (1) community member, and one (1)

AREB member with relevant expertise. In cases where a subcommittee site visit is not possible, the site visit may be completed minimally by the Consulting Veterinarian.

2. For field studies in areas where site visits are not possible, PIs are required to submit yearly status reports, including a visual presentation (pictures and/or video), along with a written document describing any animal welfare issues or other problems encountered that could lead to non-compliance.

Other Institution's Researcher as PI

1. The ACCs of collaborating institutions will agree in advance about how a site visit will be conducted.

Previous Versions

SOP Number	Date Effective	Summary of Changes
107.0	09-2011	
107.1	01-2014	
107.2	11-2016	Minor administrative edits
107.3	10-2019	Minor procedural updates
107.4	02-2021	Refined purpose of SOPs
107.5	10-2021	Staff position terms updated
107.6	10-2024	Reviewed, minor updates.