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| **SOP:** | **107.3** | **Site Visits** |
| **Version Date:** | 10-2019 | |
| **Review By:** | 10-2022 | |
| **Subject:** | To describe the process by which approved projects are monitored through site visits for ethical and CCAC compliance. | |
| **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 PAM 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, completing 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.  
  
***Facility Manager:*** oversees the daily operations, logistics and administration of the facility where animals are held for the purpose of research or teaching.  
  
***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 Technician.  
  
***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 classified as CCAC Categories of Invasiveness C, D and E.
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 health monitoring, environmental enrichment, biosafety procedures and animal care and use records.

*Notification of AREB Site Visits*

1. When coordinating a site visit, the PAM Liaison will:  
   1. 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;
   2. 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 AREB Chair will gather all information and feedback from the AREB subcommittee, and provide points of commendation and non-compliance to the site visit liaison within five (5) business days.
2. The site visit liaison will provide a written report, including commendations and non-compliance issues, to the PI and to the facility manager within three (3) business days.

**Consulting Veterinarian Site Visits**

1. The Consulting Veterinarian has unlimited access to animal facilities and makes 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 health monitoring, environmental enrichment, biosafety procedures, and the review of animal care and use records.
4. Veterinarian site visits also involve a meeting with the Research Ethics Officer and the Animal Care Technician 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 Associate Vice President, Research, 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 by minimally 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**

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| **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 |