

## **Animal Research at The Neuro**

Everything you need to know about working with animals at the Montreal Neurological Institute.

It is important to understand the process of working with and caring for animals, as well as the individuals who are involved. Use this guide as a resource to help you develop smart and humane practices as you utilize animals for research purposes.

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### *Before You Begin*

Prior to starting animal research, even on an established project in your laboratory, your supervisor must add you to an existing [animal use protocol](#) (AUP). For this to occur, you must first pass an online [animal theory course](#) and take an in-house [animal handling workshop](#). If you plan on carrying out any invasive procedures on animals, make sure to take the ADVANCED level theory exam. There may be additional [safety courses](#) that are required in order to work in your laboratory; ask your supervisor which courses you need. Furthermore, to help provide a safe environment to individuals who work with animals, McGill offers an [Occupational Health Program](#).

If you are creating a new AUP under the guidance of your supervisor, you must have a peer-reviewed funding source and approvals from any supplementary committees prior to submitting to the [Animal Care Committee](#) (ACC) for review. Reference [standard operating procedures](#) to circumvent lengthy descriptions of common procedures included in the AUP. The [ACC Administrator](#) can assist you in drafting and 'pre-screening' the AUP before it is submitted for the full board review.

Once you have acquired all of the necessary training and your name appears on an approved AUP, you should contact the [Animal Care Facility](#) to arrange for access and an orientation session. After that, you are ready to begin!

### *Already Started? What You Should Be Doing...*

It is vital that you read, understand, and strictly follow the procedures listed in your AUP.

Memorize your AUP number! Use this number to identify all animals that are utilized in your experiments. The Animal Care Facility must keep track of hundreds of cages, and it is imperative that they are correctly labeled with the appropriate AUP number and name of the PI to whom they belong. In the event that the animals' welfare becomes compromised, the Animal Care Facility Staff use the AUP number to determine the best way to treat the animals without compromising your experiments.

Regularly check in on your animals. If your AUP states that the animals will be monitored daily, they must be monitored every day, including weekends!

Wear a lab coat and your MNI identification badge in the Animal Care Facility. Staff must be able to easily identify you, as there is always the risk of animal rights' activists gaining access to the facility. Never grant access to the Animal Care Facility to ANYONE, even if they appear to work at the MNI.

### *What You Can Expect*

AUPs must be renewed by the lab head every year. Upon renewal, modifications to the protocol can be made to any necessary sections. If these modifications must be implemented before the AUP is up for renewal, an [amendment](#) should be submitted by the PI for approval.

The ACC is committed to regularly visiting all research groups at the MNI. During these visits, the committee reviews its role with the members of the laboratory. Questions about animal use are encouraged!

The MNI Compliance Officer conducts regular [post approval monitoring](#) visits to ensure that individuals in the laboratory comply with the procedures outlined in the pertinent AUP.

### *Who is Responsible for Animal Care?*

EVERYONE. The animals' welfare is the number one priority for both you and the Animal Care Facility. You need to do everything possible to ensure that the animals are happy and healthy, both mentally and physically, as unhealthy animals may very likely compromise the results of your experiments. The Animal Care Facility assists you in this task, but you are primarily responsible for the animals listed in your AUP.

### *Who is Involved in Animal Care?*

[Canadian Council on Animal Care \(CCAC\)](#)  
[McGill University Animal Care Committee](#)

MNI Animal Care Committee  
Committee Chair  
ACC Administrator  
MNI Compliance Officer

Animal Care Facility Manager  
Animal Care Facility Supervisor  
Animal Care Facility Clinical Veterinarian  
Colony Enrichment/Breeding Manager  
Principle Investigators  
Community Representatives  
Student Representatives

Animal-dependent research is vital to the understanding of complex biological processes; however, not everyone agrees that this type of work is necessary. To learn about the steps that McGill has taken to ensure that this type of research is both justified and humane, refer to the [pamphlet](#) prepared by the University Animal Care Committee.

### *Glossary of Terms*

**Animal Care Committee:** A representative body that ensures all animals used in research, teaching, or testing within the MNI are used and cared for in accordance with all applicable requirements.

**Centre for Neurological Disease Models:** The home base for animal care and maintenance. Staff maintain daily operations and ensure appropriate conditions for animals.

**Animal Use Protocol:** A proposal submitted by a PI for peer-reviewed research that utilizes animals, which is reviewed by the ACC and renewed every year.

**Canadian Council on Animal Care:** A non-profit, non-governmental organization that oversees the ethical use of animals in research by setting regulatory guidelines. Additionally, determines annual use of animals for research purposes, and reports these figures to the general public.

**MNI Compliance Officer:** An individual who, on behalf of and in association with the ACC, is responsible for ensuring compliance of animal use by working with investigators and their laboratories to promote self-correction at the research level.

**[Post Approval Monitoring:](#)** A procedure that is mandated by the CCAC to ensure that animals for teaching and research purposes are well cared for and used appropriately according to the parameters set by approved protocols.

**Standard Operating Procedures:** Detailed descriptions of commonly used procedures that may be referenced in AUPs.

*Contact Information*

MNI Animal Care Committee  
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Centre for Neurological  
Disease Models  
<http://neurocndm.mcgill.ca/>

University Animal Care Committee  
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