

Name: Policy onScientific Merit Review of Animal Use Protocols for Research, Testing, and Monitoring

Policy Number: 8-1023

Approving Authority: Vice President Academic and Research

Approved: 18-NOV2020

Responsible Office: Faculty of GraduatStudies and Research, Animal Care Committee

Responsibility: Associate Vice President Research

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Supersedes: NA

Next Required Review: 202>M2peM Td 4f55A

- 5.4 Where there are questions about whether proposed research requires scientific merit review, the research administration is responsible for working with the PI to determine if the work is covered within an existing peer-reviewed program. The research administration must then communicate their conclusions to the ACC.
- 5.5 Through the Research Grants Officer (RGO), the ACC receives solicited confirmation (via the ACC Coordinator) that each submitted AUP to the ACC has been found to have scientific merit according to the formal process detailed in Section 6.1 before it is subjected to ethical review by the ACC.
- 5.6 Through the RGO, the research office receives confirmation of AUP approval from the ACC before releasing funds for the associated research activities involving animals. If ACC approval has not yet been received, partial release of funds can be requested by the research office and must include an outline of the use of funds to ensure the funds will not be used for activities that require ACC approval. For more information, contact the RGO.
- 5.7 Scientific merit review requirements

Two independent scientific merit reviews by external expert peer reviewers must be conducted before an associated AUP can undergo ethical review by the ACC. Scientific merit review involves review of the proposed AUP and supporting documents (e.g., standard operating procedures, etc.) and completion of the Scientific Merit Peer Review Form. Reviewers must not be directly involved in the AUP design or implementation and they should have relevant experience and/or knowledge to adequately review the AUP and supporting documents.

Peer reviewers must comply with the [SMB Policy on Conflict of Interest in Research](#) and therefore in relation to the PI they must not:

- be a personal friend or relative;
- be from the same University department or program;
- have been a research supervisor or graduate student of the University Member within the past six years or have plans to collaborate with the PI in the immediate future;
- be an employee of a non-academic organization with which the University Member has had collaboration with in the past six years;
- have any other potential conflict of interest (e.g., personal, financial) with the applicant (PI)

6. Related Policies, Procedures & Documents

6.1 6.

- c) The ACC Coordinator contacts coordinators or equivalent at two selected Canadian universities with a request for names of potential appropriate reviewers providing only the protocol title and indication of a need for relatively quick turnaround time (four week maximum)
- d) Upon receiving names of potential reviewers the AVPR survey associated online research profiles to ensure suitability for the review of the proposed animal work
- e) The ACC Coordinator contacts the potential reviewers and requests their assistance in providing a scientific merit review while providing only the protocol title, indicating the need for a relatively quick turnaround time (four week maximum) and requesting confirmation that they have no conflict of interest in conducting the review.
- f) The ACC Coordinator sends each confirmed reviewer the AUP and supporting documents to conduct the scientific merit review, along with the Scientific Merit Reviewer Comment Form to complete.
- g) In the event of conflicting or inconsistent reviews from the two selected reviewers, a third reviewer will be solicited following the same process outlined in Section 6.1 a-f to provide an arbitrating viewpoint.
- h) The ACC Coordinator reports the results of the scientific merit review to the AVPR and the iC-

the research office that the work described in the AUP is part of a research project or program that has been found to have scientific merit through independent, expert review. Indication of NSERC funding is normally taken by the ACC as evidence of scientific merit for the entire funding period and the proposal is subsequently subjected to ethics review by the ACC. Otherwise, through the RGO, the ACC asks for confirmation from the research office on whether the listed funding source is sufficient evidence of scientific merit.

If the RGO, on behalf of the research office, communicates confirmation to the ACC Coordinator that scientific merit has already been demonstrated through competitive peer review during the funding process for the proposed work, the AUP is subsequently subjected to ethical review by the ACC as described in the [Saint Mary's University Animal Care Committee Terms of Reference](#). Confirmation of scientific merit review from the source remains valid for the entire funding period.

If the RGO, on behalf of the research office, communicates confirmation to the ACC Coordinator that scientific merit has already been demonstrated through competitive peer review during the funding process for the proposed work, the AUP is subsequently subjected to ethical review by the ACC as described in the [Saint Mary's University Animal Care Committee Terms of Reference](#). Confirmation of scientific merit review from the source remains valid for the entire funding period.

upon request. The ACC (via the ACC Coordinator) must receive confirmation from the PI and the research office that the work described in the AIP is part of a research project or program that has been found to have scientific merit through independent, expert review.

Through the RGO,