

RESPONSIBILITY

The University Animal Care Committee (UACC) Animal Research Ethics Board (AREB) provides ethical review of Animal Use Protocols (AUP) but cannot deliberate on the scientific merit of animal-based research according to [Canadian Council on Animal Care policy](#) (CCAC). AUPs associated with approved funding from peer-reviewed funding sources satisfy the scientific merit review requirement (see [peer reviewed funding agencies](#)). All other AUPs require an independent peer review for scientific merit prior to or in parallel with an ethical review. Scientific merit review must occur independent from the UACC; hence, the University of Saskatchewan Scientific Merit Review Committee for Animal-Based Research (SMRCABR) under the Office of Vice-President Research (OVPR) is tasked with this review. The procedure below outlines the steps Principal Investigators (PI) must take to facilitate independent peer review for scientific merit prior to AREB ethical review of an AUP when animal-based research is not associated with approved peer-reviewed funding sources.

PROCEDURE

1. Determine whether the animal use falls under the following categories which exempt the AUP from the requirement for scientific merit review by the SMRCABR. Exemptions include:
 - AUP or four year renewal AUP is associated with a funding agency that employs an acceptable scientific merit review process.
 - Four year renewal AUP previously reviewed by the SMRCABR where the duration of the project was clearly identified in the original AUP. In these cases, scientific merit remains valid for the entire funding period.
 - The animal use is only for educational purposes (these are subject to pedagogical merit review).
2. If none of the exemption categories apply, complete the *SMRCABR Scientific Merit Review Form for Principal Investigators* (maximum 2-4 pages) for the work identified in the AUP that clearly highlights:
 - **Objectives, hypothesis, research design and methodology, significance and potential contributions of the research (scientific merit is established on these criteria).**
3. Submit electronically the research proposal along with a complete AUP to the Research Ethics Specialist at the Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) Office (uacc.office@usask.ca) and clearly indicate in the e-mail subject line the need for scientific merit review.
4. Upon receipt, the Research Ethics Specialist will forward the documentation to the SMRCABR Chair who will subsequently assign 3 committee members for internal review. The SMRCABR Chair will communicate the outcome of the internal review to the Research Ethics Specialist. This process is managed through SharePoint.
5. If concerns arise during the internal review, the SMRCABR Chair will notify the Research Ethics Specialist who will subsequently forward the concerns to the Principal Investigator. Return your response to the Research Ethics Specialist AND include a revised AUP (if necessary) with the response.
6. The Research Ethics Specialist will inform the AREB when scientific merit is confirmed.

ASSISTANCE

1. If assistance is required, contact the Research Ethics Specialist (amanda.plante@usask.ca).