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#### SOP: RS 102.2- Pedagogical Merit Peer Review

**Version Date**: 11-2016

**Review By:** 11-2019

**Subject:** To describe the procedure for submitting Animal Use Protocols for independent peer review of the research for pedagogical merit prior to the review of ethical acceptability by the AREB.

**Related Documents:** Pedagogical Merit Review Form; SOPs RS 101, 111.

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**Background**

In accordance with CCAC policy, the AREB continually works with instructors and their departments to replace animal use for teaching when possible, and to reduce and refine animal use to the greatest extent when it is not possible to replace it.

The need to use live animals to meet teaching objectives may be examined during departmental curriculum reviews. When an instructor plans to integrate a new project involving animal use in a course, the instructor must approach the Department Chair for a decision on whether the proposal will be reviewed by a departmental review committee.

**Pedagogical Merit Review Process**

1. Following the CCAC policy on pedagogical merit, the Office of Research Services, in consultation with the Department Chair, will organize the review process by soliciting two (2) independent referees (internal or external to MacEwan) who do not serve on MacEwan University’s AREB, who have the appropriate knowledge and expertise, and who are not in conflict of interest regarding the protocol to be reviewed.
2. Research Services contacts the indicated individual(s) and requests their assessment of the proposal within five (5) business days using the Pedagogical Merit Review Form provided. Reviewers may be solicited from University affiliates, provided they meet the criteria described in Step 1. If no suitable internal reviewers are available, external pedagogical merit reviewers proposed by the applicant as part of the proposal, or other external reviewers identified by Research Services, may be asked to complete the peer review form.
3. Once the pedagogical peer review process is complete and if merit is approved, the Office of Research Services provides an approval letter, with associated review comments, to the PI or research team, and may then be submitted to the AREB for ethical review.
   * If the review process finds that merit is not acceptable, revisions to the AUP may be required prior to ethical review.
   * The Office may send the results of the peer review to the PI or research team, with the exception of items that may identify the reviewers.
   * The Office may submit the accompanying information verifying that peer review for pedagogical merit has been completed, along with reviewer comments as relating to animal-based methods, to the AREB.

**Roles and Responsibilities of the Peer Reviewer(s)**

1. Reviewers will have knowledge of pedagogy, alternatives to animal use, and must not currently sit on the AREB, in order to determine whether or not the animal use is essential to the learning outcomes.
2. Reviews for sound pedagogical merit should comment on the objectives and potential contribution(s) that the use of animals will make to teaching scientific knowledge, the appropriateness of the model to demonstrate the concepts indicated, and number and type of animals used, and the absence of appropriate non-animal-based methods.

**Pedagogical Reviewer Recommendations**

After review of the scientific merit for the proposed study, the reviewers may recommend one of the following options to the Office of Research Services:

Approval

Excellent scientific merit – no revisions to the research design or methodology required

Approve with minor revisions

Very good scientific merit – minor changes are requested before final approval is granted

Needs Major Revisions

Poor scientific merit – major revisions to study protocol must be submitted for further

review

Rejected

No scientific merit – study will not be approved due to poor research design or

methodology

**Previous Versions**

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| **SOP Number** | **Date Effective** | **Summary of Changes** |
| 102.0 | 06-2010 |  |
| 102.1 | 09-2011 |  |
| 102.2 (current) | 11-2016 | Clarified how peer review is conducted. |
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