



UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

Standard Operating Procedure: AD04

Revised: October 2011

Assessment of Research Protocols in Absence of Peer Reviews

Purpose:

To ensure research which is not funded by an established funding agency which applies a peer review process must undergo more intensive scrutiny prior to consideration by the Animal Care Committee (ACC). Research funded by such organizations as NSERC or CIHR is assumed to have been peer reviewed

Responsibility:

Vice-President Research (VPR), Animal Care Committee (ACC) and Animal Care Coordinator

Teaching Protocols:

The use of animals for educational purposes is markedly different in its objectives than the use of animals in research or testing. Animals used for educational purposes are not being used to discover, prove or develop new ideas or techniques, but rather to demonstrate principles which are already well-known or to learn manual skills and techniques. The repetitive use of animals in this manner should be based on sound ethical justification and proven educational objectives.

There should be justification provided for the use of animals over the use of alternatives such as models, videos, computer simulations and emulations, etc. The level and type of training of the students (graduate/postgraduate, specialized/non-specialized) are important considerations in ascertaining the need to use animals.

Teaching protocols are subject to the relevant aforementioned review considerations, as well as to the factors of student inexperience and "group" projects. Thus, the description should include the number of students per animal, and the student/teacher ratio. The level of experience and competence of the instructors and/or teaching assistants must be adequate to assure successful preparations and procedures. The disposition of the animals at the end of the teaching session must be clearly described.

Painful experiments or multiple invasive procedures on an individual animal, conducted solely for the instruction of students in the classroom, or for the demonstration of established scientific knowledge, cannot be justified. Honours thesis projects and all other research undertaken as part of an undergraduate course (including honours thesis courses) do not require external review for scientific merit. Since the primary purpose of such projects is the teaching and/or training of

undergraduate students, proposals for work of this nature shall be reviewed by the ACC primarily on the basis of their pedagogical value. However, honours thesis projects which are deemed (by their thesis committee) to require ACC approval should be examined for scientific merit by at least two thesis advisors prior to submission to the ACC.

Research Protocols:

Research projects, other than those which constitute part of an undergraduate course, must be reviewed for scientific merit unless they are direct extensions or applications of ongoing peer-reviewed work by the principal investigator. Scientific review is considered adequate if it is performed by a granting agency or by an industry that obtains the opinions of external referees, sets scientific standards, and awards funds on a competitive basis. An investigator who receives funding from a granting agency must have an approved AUPP before funds will be released by the university to that researcher for expenditures. In general, the ACC will review research proposals (other than undergraduate projects) from the viewpoint of the ethical aspects and the acceptability of the proposed procedures.

Research proposals that are not funded by an agency or industry that applies a peer review process, and which are not part of an undergraduate thesis or non-thesis course, must be reviewed for scientific merit. Researchers wishing to undertake research involving vertebrate animals must consult with the Office of the Vice-President, Research and provide the following:

- (a) A brief research proposal, including a summary, a brief literature review, clearly stated objectives of the research, proposed methodology, a description of the significance of the work, and a brief time schedule for work lasting up to four years;
- (b) Evidence of scholarly activities, including a list of publications and conference presentations for the past six years, academic positions held, and evidence of research impact (a current curriculum vitae will suffice);
- (c) Names, email addresses and phone numbers of at least three experts in the field relevant to the proposed research, none of whom can be the applicant's former supervisor or collaborators within the past three years.

Reprints, submitted manuscripts and other materials demonstrating scientific merit may be submitted as attachments. Within one week of receiving such an application, the VP Research will contact one of the experts recommended by the applicant, plus one or more additional expert(s) from a bank of reviewers anonymous to the applicant, ensure their participation, and send them copies of the entire proposal. These external referees will be requested to review the proposal within two weeks and to provide a brief, written report as outlined on the Peer Review Form sent to each referee. Within one week of receiving the referee reports, the VP Research will review the reports and indicate whether or not the proposal, either as proposed or with modifications, has scientific merit. The VP Research will notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of the peer reviews, and if positive, invite the applicant to submit a full AUPP to the ACC. Copies of the written reports of the referees will be provided to the applicant after removal of the referee's name upon request.