

1. INTRODUCTION

All teaching and training involving the use of animals by University of Saskatchewan (USask) personnel must meet the highest standards of pedagogical merit. Consistent with Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) policy, the USask Animal Care Committee (UACC) requires that all animal use for teaching and training purposes undergoes a pedagogical merit review prior to final approval of animal use by the UACC Animal Research Ethics Board (AREB). Pedagogical merit review must occur independent from the UACC. The Pedagogical Merit Review Committee for Animal-Based Teaching and Training (PMRC) is tasked with this review under the Office for the Vice-Provost Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience (TLSE).

2. PURPOSE

To conduct a peer review of pedagogical merit of all teaching and training based animal use at USask to determine if animal-based teaching or training is essential to meeting learning objectives and outcomes.

3. SCOPE

The USask PMRC will review all animal use proposed for teaching and training except (but not limited to) the following:

- The teaching or training of individual students within a laboratory (i.e. as part of thesis development);
- Activities that do not require an AUP;
- Third-party animal-based activities conducted on campus (e.g. clubs using college facilities);
- Off-campus student practicums;
- Student-run clubs or wetlabs;
- Camps and other educational programs for children or youth, e.g. AgBio Camp, VetaVision;
- Professional development short courses or training for which University-level credit is not received;
- Special events or demonstrations, e.g. 'yoga with dogs/cats', Natural Sciences Museum.

The pedagogical merit review will be undertaken for every new teaching or training course, and reviewed at least every four years for ongoing teaching or training, even if there are no changes to the course. Teaching or training which is ongoing at the time of implementation of the procedures outlined in this document will undergo a pedagogical merit review when a new protocol is submitted (i.e., at four year renewal).

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The PMRC is responsible for providing pedagogical merit review of all animal use in teaching and training. For purposes of this document, teaching refers to academic courses offered by the institution and training refers to sessions offered by the institution for the acquisition of a specific skillset. Examples include:

- Teaching in academic institutions;
- Training activities/programs for research and testing team members; or
- Non-degree/diploma/certificate credit courses.

Through the Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) Office, the PMRC reports to the AREB whether the animal use has pedagogical merit, and if not, advises the instructor appropriately.

5. COMPOSITION, AUTHORITY, AND TERMS

The TLSE appoints up to 10 committee members for a term of three years with the possibility of renewal for a second term at the request of the committee member. Member composition includes tenure track faculty from the various departments, schools, and colleges engaged in animal-based research and with sufficient cross-section to satisfy the various expertise required for the highly diverse USask Animal Care and Use Program. Committee members should have knowledge of pedagogy and alternatives to animal-based teaching and must not hold concurrent membership in the UACC. Specifically, composition is as follows:

1. At least one pedagogical expert;
2. At least one expert in alternatives; and
3. At least two faculty members, one of which also acts as Chair.

The PMRC Chair is chosen from among the committee members (with possibility of renewal for an additional term). The PMRC Chair reports the review findings to the Research Ethics Specialist (RES) from ACRS who subsequently communicates the findings to the AREB and Instructor.

The RES provides administrative support to the PMRC. Specifically, the RES (a) corresponds with the Instructor regarding requirements for pedagogical merit review; (b) coordinates the PMRC meetings to review AUPs; (c) communicates the review comments from the PMRC to the Instructor; (d) provides the subsequent response from the Instructor to the PMRC, if necessary; (e) communicates to the AREB Chair the decision of the PMRC on the pedagogical merit of the animal use; and (f) archives all peer reviews on behalf of the OVPR and TLSE.

6. PROCEDURE

- 6.1 The Instructor completes the Pedagogical Merit Review Form (PMRF) and submits this to ACRS along with a completed Animal Use Protocol (AUP).
- 6.2 Upon receipt, the RES will compile submissions for review at the next scheduled PMRC meeting.
- 6.3 The Chair will convene the PMRC to discuss each submission.
- 6.4 Each meeting must meet the minimum membership requirement to achieve quorum.
- 6.5 The committee will meet every 2-3 months unless there are no submissions for review.
- 6.6 The RES provides the PMRF and AUP to the committee members.
- 6.7 The RES will invite the Instructor to attend the PMRC meeting to discuss the PMRF and AUP with the committee members.
- 6.8 At the meeting, the PMRC discusses the Pedagogical Merit Review Assessment Form (PMRAF). Concerns are recorded by the RES and a decision is indicated as one of four possible outcomes: 1) Confirmed pedagogical merit - Approved; 2) Conditionally acceptable pedagogical merit – minor revisions required; 3) Limited pedagogical merit; Not approved – Approval may be granted after full review of revisions by the PMRC; or 4) No pedagogical merit; Not approved – Concerns exist beyond minor changes. If additional information is required, the committee will decide whether the instructor’s response will be reviewed by the Chair or by the convened PMRC. This is indicated on the PMRAF.
- 6.9 The Chair completes the PMRAF following the PMRC meeting.
- 6.10 If the PMRC identifies issues with the AUP, the RES will communicate those concerns to the Instructor.
- 6.11 The Instructor may respond to the PMRC’s concerns and these responses will be communicated via the RES to the PMRC Chair or PMRC, as appropriate (depending on the decision of the PMRC review. The Instructor should include a revised AUP, as appropriate, for review by the PMRC.
- 6.12 The RES informs the AREB Chair when a decision by the PMRC is final.

7. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (WCVN)

Due to the nature of the curriculum and the breadth and depth of animal training, WCVN will undergo a presentation-based pedagogical merit review in which they outline how the different courses in per curriculum year align animal use with learning objectives and appropriate assessments.

8. APPEALS

- 8.1** In the event that a submitted AUP is rejected and the Instructor does not accept the decision, the Instructor may request that the PMRC reconsiders its decision. This requires the submission of revised materials (Pedagogical Merit Review Form) to the RES addressing reviewer concerns/comments.
- 8.2** If this does not provide a satisfactory solution, the Instructor may appeal to the Senior Administrator responsible for the PMRC. The Senior Administrator will then work with the Instructor to find a satisfactory solution and the UACC will be updated accordingly.

9. ASSISTANCE

- 9.1** If assistance is required, contact the Animal Care and Research Support Office at uacc.office@usask.ca.

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