



PURPOSE

The purpose of these procedures is to indicate the responsibility and general process for the review of animal-based teaching and training for pedagogical merit at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) and its related facilities. Consistent with *Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) policy: Pedagogical merit of live animal-based teaching and training*, the University Animal Care Committee (UACC) requires that all academic programs undertake and document a careful review of the importance and value of animal use in courses and workshops offered by the University of Saskatchewan.

Consistent with CCAC policy, the 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).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW

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).

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.

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).

PROCESS FOR REVIEW

Research Ethics Specialist (RES) of the Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) Office 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 merit reviews on behalf of the TLSE.

1. Procedures:

- 1.1 The Instructor completes the Pedagogical Merit Review Form (PMRF) and submits this to ACRS along with a completed Animal Use Protocol (AUP).
- 1.2 Upon receipt, the RES will compile submissions for review at the next scheduled PMRC meeting.
- 1.3 The Chair will convene the PMRC to discuss each submission.
- 1.4 Each meeting must meet the minimum membership requirement to achieve quorum.
- 1.5 The committee will meet every 2-3 months unless there are no submissions for review.
- 1.6 The RES provides the PMRF and AUP to the committee members.
- 1.7 The RES will invite the Instructor to attend the PMRC meeting to discuss the PMRF and AUP with the committee members.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 The Chair completes the PMRAF following the PMRC meeting.
- 1.10 If the PMRC identifies issues with the AUP, the RES will communicate those concerns to the Instructor.
- 1.11 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.
- 1.12 The RES informs the AREB Chair when a decision by the PMRC is final.

2. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (WCVM)

Due to the nature of the curriculum and the breadth and depth of animal training, WCVM 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.

3. APPEALS

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Peer review for pedagogical merit of a proposed AUP for teaching will involve the following considerations:

- a. The AUP should clearly identify the pedagogical objectives/learning goals of the course and how the students benefit. This should involve direct query of the students through the use of such mechanisms as exit surveys or class discussions.
- b. The proposed animal use must contribute to an understanding of fundamental biological/physiological processes and/or to the acquisition of knowledge that will have future benefit to humans or animals.
- c. The pedagogical objectives cannot be met through other non-animal mechanisms as evidenced by a careful review of an appropriate Three Rs search, and provision of a sound justification for the animal use over alternatives such as computer simulations, videos, models, etc.
- d. The curricular approach (e.g., use of an investigative approach versus a demonstrational model; hands-on approach to teach manual skills and techniques associated with a specific profession) to the use of animals positively impacts students' attitudes regarding animal use in teaching.
- e. The types of experiments/teaching exercises and methodology(ies) are appropriate to meet the teaching objectives.
- f. The level of experience/competence of the instructors is adequate to assure successful teaching outcomes and the student/instructor ratio is appropriate.
- g. The level and type of training of the students is appropriate such that the student will clearly benefit from the proposed animal use and the student/animal ratio is appropriate.
- h. The course must incorporate discussion on the ethical issues and responsibilities associated with animal use in teaching to instill in students an appropriate sensitivity to this issue.

Updated by the PMRC, 28 April 2022