

Policy on Independent Scientific Merit and Pedagogical Peer Review of Animal Based Research, Teaching, and Testing

Brandon University Animal Care Committee (BUACC)

Brandon University affirms that one of the most basic tenets of animal use for research and teaching is that animal use be undertaken only after careful examination of its potential value. The Brandon University Animal Care Committee (BUACC) adopts the following process for determining the merit of animal use protocols. This institutional policy is in accordance with the Canadian Council of Animal Care (CCAC) policy, which stresses the importance of independent peer review.

Process for Assessing the Scientific Merit of Research Protocols:

1. When an Animal Use Protocol is associated with funding applications to national granting agencies with peer review processes (such as NSERC, CIHR), BUACC will accept the approval of the project by the funding agency as evidence of its scientific merit. When BUACC approval is required by such a funding agency prior to their review of the proposed project, BUACC approval will be provisional, pending notification that the project has been deemed scientifically meritorious.
2. When a proposal is associated with projects with little or no peer review (e.g. industry contacts, internally funded projects, self-funded projects, etc.), BUACC requires review of the proposal and meritorious ruling by two knowledgeable scientists. The procedure for this assessment is as follows:
 - a. A *New Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application* is submitted to buacc@brandonu.ca. This form is shared with the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or designate, who shall identify two scientists from the Brandon University Merit Reviewer Database with expertise in the type of research proposed and who are not collaborators in the proposed research. The BUACC Coordinator shall contact the selected individuals to conduct a review on the proposal regarding the objectives, hypotheses, methods and contributions of the proposed project within a reasonable time (a period of approximately two weeks).
 - b. The peer review form completed by the merit reviewer shall be forwarded to BUACC and to the Principal Investigator. The original form will be retained in the Research Office as part of the protocol file.
 - c. In the event that two reviews differ in the merit of the proposed research, the Principal Investigator may either address the issues raised in the review and work toward a meritorious ruling, or request a third review of the protocol. Should a third review be requested, the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or designate shall identify the third scientist from the Brandon University Merit Review Database with

expertise in the type of research proposed and who is not a collaborator in the proposed research. The third review shall be forwarded to BUACC and the Principal Investigator.

Process for Assessing Pedagogical Merit of Teaching Protocols:

1. All new animal-based teaching and training activities that require an animal protocol must undergo a pedagogical merit review every four years. These include teaching, training activities/programs for research, and testing team members (e.g. graduate students, principal investigators, technicians in contract research), as well as non-degree/diploma/certificate credit courses (e.g. professional development or continuing education workshops) provided by faculty or other institutional personnel. This policy does not apply to activities that do not require a protocol, such as third-party animal-based activities conducted on campus (e.g. clubs using institutional facilities), or off-campus student practicums. The procedure for this assessment is as follows:
 - a. *A New Research/Teaching Animal Use Protocol Application* is submitted to buacc@brandonu.ca. This form is shared with the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or designate, who shall identify two independent referees from the Brandon University Merit Reviewer Database with knowledge of pedagogy and replacement alternatives to animal-based teaching or training. Reviewers must not sit on the BUACC nor be involved with the course. There is no requirement for the same individual to possess knowledge in both areas as long as both areas are covered. The BUACC Coordinator shall contact the selected individuals to conduct a review on the proposal, within a reasonable time frame (a period of approximately two weeks) based on the following:
 - i. the proposed use of animals contributes to understanding of fundamental biological processes or the development of knowledge that can be reasonably expected to benefit humans or animals;
 - ii. the outcomes cannot be acquired through other means; and
 - iii. the *CCAC Three Rs Microsite* was utilized in the development and review of the protocol.
2. The pedagogical review form completed by the reviewer shall be forwarded to BUACC and to the Principal Investigator. The original form will be retained in the Research Office as part of the protocol file.
3. In the event that two reviews differ in the merit of the proposed teaching protocol, the Principal Investigator may either address the issues raised in the review and work toward a meritorious ruling, or request a third review of the protocol. Should a third review be requested, the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) or designate shall identify the third independent referee from the Brandon University Merit Review Database with expertise in that field and who is not a collaborator in the proposed protocol. The third review shall be forwarded to BUACC and the Principal Investigator.

Brandon University Merit Reviewer Database:

The Brandon University Merit Reviewer Database shall be housed and maintained by the Office of the Vice-President (Academic & Provost). The Brandon University Animal Care Committee (BUACC) shall be responsible for conducting a review of the database for updating purposes ensure relevancy and accuracy.

Additional Resources:

- ***CCAC Policy Statement on: Scientific Merit and Ethical Review of Animal-based Research***
- ***Frequently Asked Questions on the CCAC Policy Statement on: Scientific Merit and Ethical Review of Animal-based Research***
- ***CCAC Policy: Pedagogical Merit of Live Animal-based Teaching and Training***
- ***Frequently Asked Questions – CCAC Policy: Pedagogical Merit of Live Animal-based Teaching and Training***

Approved by Senate – March 15, 2016

(Revised) Approved by Senate – December 18, 2018