



CCAC policy statement on: scientific merit and ethical review of animal-based research

This policy replaces:

- the CCAC policy statement on: the importance of independent peer review of the scientific merit of animal-based research projects (2005)
- Appendix A of Section A and Appendix B of the CCAC policy statement for: senior administrators responsible for animal care and use programs (2005)
- the provisions on scientific merit included in Section 2 of the CCAC guidelines on: animal use protocol review (2005)

As explained in the CCAC policy statement on: ethics of animal investigation, animal use in research must only be undertaken if an independent opinion has attested to the probable scientific value of research within its field. Animal-based work can then proceed only if an institutional animal care committee (IACC) finds the use of animals acceptable ethically and in practice: the proposed animal-based methods should be appropriate for the work and meet institutional and CCAC guidance and standards. Animal use for research purposes must consequently be subject to two levels of review:

1.

- the researcher whose protocol is being examined by the ACC understands that the ACC will review the protocol with regard to animal-based methods and collaborate with them to determine the most appropriate methods to be used

1. Review of Scientific Merit: Research Administration

It is the institution's responsibility to develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that proposed research that will involve animals is independently reviewed for scientific merit by independent peers.

For a research program or project that has been examined through an independent and independent peer-review process (i.e., federal and provincial grant agencies and others), the institutional research administrator can choose to accept the results of this review as evidence of scientific merit.

2. Review of Animal-based Methods Within the Protocol Review Process: Animal Care Committee

When a principal investigator submits a research animal use protocol to the ACC for approval, the ACC must receive confirmation from the principal investigator and the research administration that the protocol is part of a research program or project that has been found to have scientific merit (see above). Information provided within the animal use protocol should provide the ACC with context for the proposed study and indicate the relationship between the proposed study and the overall objectives.

The ACC must evaluate the protocol to determine whether the use of animals is acceptable ethically in practice and must decide whether the animal-based methods are appropriate for the proposed work with careful consideration of the Three Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement of animal use).

The principal investigator must provide clear information on animal-based methods to the ACC. The investigator may choose to append information such as grant proposal excerpts or scientific comments (where relevant) to facilitate the protocol review process.

Where ACCs are unfamiliar with the proposed type of work, they are encouraged to seek relevant expertise.

The ACC's review and approval procedures must be based on the following statement on: terms of reference for animal care committees and CCAC guidelines on: animal use protocol review. Other institutional and CCAC guidance relevant to the nature of the study should also be used.

3. Release of Funds for Animal-Based Work: Research Administration

Once the ACC has approved a protocol, it must inform the research administration of this fact. The funds may then be released for the animal-based work. Institutions administering research grants and funds should work with these agencies to have acceptable mechanisms in place to directly link animal use protocol approvals with the release of related research funds.