**Scientific Review Guideline**

The Animals for Research Act and the Canadian Council on Animal Care ([www.ccac.ca](http://www.ccac.ca)) regulations require the Animal Research Ethics Board (AREB) to ensure that scientific merit review has taken place for all research proposals involving animals. Funding agencies at the national and provincial levels (i.e., CIHR, NSERC, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, SSHRC, etc.) that utilize peer review fulfill the requirements of scientific merit review. Funding agencies that do not utilize peer review do not fulfill this requirement. For projects that are either non-funded, or that are department funded, commercially funded or funded by agencies that do not utilize scientific peer review, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The Principal Investigator must prepare a grant-style description of their research project to provide to reviewers.
2. The Principal Investigator first contacts their Faculty’s Associate Dean or Vice Dean, Research to arrange for their research protocol to be reviewed by two arms length (someone not collaborating/supervising) reviewers outside the Department. The reviewers will be chosen by the Faculty’s Associate Dean, Research.
3. Reviewers are provided with a Peer Review Form to be completed and submitted to the requesting Associate Dean or Vice Dean. Reviewers remain anonymous to the applicant; however, their reviews should be returned (stripped of identifiers) to the applicant.
4. The requesting Associate Dean or Vice Dean will complete the Scientific Review Form along with Reviewer signatures, and submit it along with the reviews to the AREB Coordinator, Health Research Services, Room HSC-3H9.

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| Peer Review Form | | | | | | | | | |
| ***Animal Research Ethics Board* – McMaster University** | | | | | | | | | |
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| *Principal Investigator* |  |  |  | *AUP#* | | | | | |
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| *Project Title* | | | | | | | | | |
| The Canadian Council on Animal Care, which oversees animal use for research, teaching and testing, requires that all animal-based research projects receive scientific peer review from two independent experts prior to their approval by the Animal Research Ethics Board. | | | | | | | | |
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| Research project title: |  | | |
| Researcher(s): |  | | |
| Research Objectives | | | |
| a)Are the objectives **clearly described**? | | YES  NO | Comments: |
| b)Are the objectives realistically **achievable**, given the methodology and experimental design? | | YES  NO | Comments: |
| c)Does the knowledge expected to be gained from this study have **scientific importance**? | | YES  NO | Comments: |

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| General comments on the study objectives: | | |
| Research Project Quality | | |
| a) Do the proposed activities show evidence of good understanding of current **scientific literature** and **knowledge** of the issue? | YES  NO | Comments: |
| b) Is the research **hypothesis/hypotheses** clearly formulated? | YES  NO | Comments: |
| c) Is the **experimental design** appropriate to test the research hypothesis/hypotheses? | YES  NO | Comments: |
| d) Are sufficient details provided in the methodology to evaluate the likelihood of successful **reproducibility**? | YES  NO | Comments: |
| e) Is the proposed **statistical data analysis** appropriate for the experimental design described? | YES  NO | Comments: |
| **Overall impression** (summarize your impression of the quality of research proposal and make any recommendations that you believe would be appropriate): | | |
| Final Decision on Scientific Merit | | |
| With regard to the scientific merit of the described research, how would you rate the proposed study: | **Excellent**; approve “as is”  **Good**; minor revisions suggested as per the recommendations above  **Fair**; major revisions required as per the recommendations above  **Poor**; should not be pursued | |
| Conflict of Interest | | |
| A conflict of interest is a conflict between a person’s duties and responsibilities with regard to the review process, and that person’s private, professional, business or public interests.  There may be a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest when the external reviewer:   * would receive professional or personal benefit resulting from the funding opportunity or application being reviewed; * has a professional or personal relationship with the applicant or co-applicant; or * has a direct or indirect financial interest in a funding opportunity or application being reviewed.   A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when the reviewer:   * is a relative or close friend, or has a personal relationship with the applicant(s); * is from the same immediate department, institution, organization or company as the applicant, and interacts with the applicant in the course of their duties at the institution; * has collaborated, published or been a co-applicant with the applicant, within the last five years; * has been a student or supervisor of the applicant within the last ten years; * has had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant; * is in a position to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the application; or * for any other reason feels that s/he cannot provide an objective review of the application. | | |
| If you believe you might be in a conflict of interest, please explain briefly: | | |

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| Reviewer’s Approval | | | | | |
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| I authorize the release of the above comments ***anonymously*** to the Principal Investigator. | | | | | |
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| Name *(please print)* | |  | | |  |
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| Title *(please print)* | |  | | |  |
|  |  | |  |  |  |
|  | *Signature* | |  | *Date* |  |

*Revised November 2019*