

Revised September 2014

Reviewed by the BC ACC - October 2015

Reviewed by the FG ACC - November 2015

## **PROCESS FOR OBTAINING MERIT REVIEW FOR E CATEGORY OF INVASIVENESS (E COI) PROTOCOLS**

### **1. Merit Review**

#### **a. Scientific**

a i) The ACC will request that the Associate Vice-President (Research) (AVPR) conduct a rigorous peer review which will include additional external peer reviews by independent highly qualified research scientists. Specific questions regarding the adequacy of the justification for the E COI, sample sizes and a rigorous assessment of the monitoring and humane endpoints identified will be evaluated.

a ii) The PI will submit the names of five external reviewers (complete with all contact information) to the ACC coordinator. The committee can also identify reviewers. These names will be forwarded to the AVPR.

a iii) In addition, the PI will submit a 6-8 page document which provides a summary and description of the project including sufficient information to allow the reviewers to comment on the following points:

- a. background and explanation of scientific objectives and goals for proposed work;
- b. justification of the animal model proposed;
- c. description of the experimental design (including time lines if applicable) and identification of sample size for each of the proposed experiments.

a iv) If the project has been found meritorious by a national granting, **two** additional reviews will be sought.

a v) If peer review from a national granting agency is not in place, scientific peer review to determine scientific validity of the proposal will be requested from **three** external highly qualified research scientists.

a vi) The AVPR is responsible for selecting the reviewers from the suggested list, for obtaining the reviews and reviewing them accordingly. The AVPR will then advise the ACC as to the status of the scientific merit review.

#### **b. Ethical**

External reviewers will also be asked to evaluate the ethics of the project by considering and responding to the following questions;

b.i) Are the E COI level procedures necessary in order to answer the scientific question asked, i.e. is no other methodology available? Has the PI provided a thorough justification and discussed why alternate models would be insufficient for the proposed work?

b.ii) Are the numbers of animals requested the minimum that will answer the scientific question?

b.iii) Is the invasiveness of the procedures warranted based on the value of the results to be obtained?

- b.iv) What is the likelihood that the scientific question and hypothesis identified will be addressed by conducting the proposed experiments?
- b.v) Other questions provided by the committee.

The AVPR is responsible for forwarding this section of the review to the ACC for their consideration.

For multi-year studies, at the time of renewal on the full protocol form (a short form renewal will not be accepted), a review of the scientific progress and design modifications will be undertaken as necessary.

**c. Conflict of interest guidelines for selection of external reviewers exclude individuals who:**

- c.i) have collaborated, published or been a co-applicant on a research or training grant with the applicant within the last 5 years;
- c.ii) been a student or supervisor of the applicant within the last 8 years;
- c.iii) are a close personal friend or relative of the applicant, or
- c.iv) have a long-standing scientific or personal difference with the applicant and deem this to be a conflict of interest.

**d. Relevant grant proposal(s), reviewer's comments, the agency's scientific officer's comments and any other pertinent information from the granting agency will be submitted to the AVPR.**