# SCIENTIFIC MERIT PEER REVIEW FORM

**(**Reviewed and approved by the University Committee on Animal Care, 2019)

The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), which oversees animal-based activities in research, teaching and testing, requires that all animal-based research projects undergo scientific peer review by at least two independent experts prior to their review by an animal care committee.

In order to perform the review, a project description that explains the objectives, hypotheses, potential contributions, and methodological approach of the study must be provided by the researcher(s). Animal use protocols typically do not include all the necessary scientific information and are not structured to provide this information and therefore, the researcher(s) is responsible for making this information available.

The CCAC has provided the following set of questions to serve as a suggested template for assessing the scientific merit review. Institutions are encouraged to use and modify this sample form in building their own scientific merit peer review form. Institutions are also encouraged to modify the list of conflict of interests as appropriate for their program.

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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) Is the **justification of animal use and proposed sample size** appropriate? | ☐ YES☐ NO | Comments:  |
| e) Are sufficient details provided in the methodology to evaluate the likelihood of successful **reproducibility**? | ☐ YES☐ NO | Comments:  |
| f) Is the proposed **statistical data analysis** appropriate for the experimental design described?  | ☐ YES☐ NO | Comments:  |
| General comments on the quality of the research project: |

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| Final Decision on Scientific Merit |
| **Overall impression** (comment on the scientific merit of the proposal and make any recommendation that you believe would be appropriate): |   |
| 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;
* Is in a position to gain or lose scientifically or financially from the outcome of the application;
* Is from the same immediate department (meaning person whose primary appointment is in the same department as the applicant);
* 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 long standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant;
* Feels that they cannot provide an objective review of the application for any other reason.
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| If you believe you might be in a conflict of interest, please explain briefly:  |
| ☐ I certify that I have no real, perceived or potential conflict of interest in relation to this research proposal. |
|  | Reviewer name:Signature:Date of review: |