

TITLE	ACC SOP 301: Scientific Merit
SCOPE	<i>The activities of the Animal Care Committee operating under the direct authority of the University of the Fraser Valley</i>
RESPONSIBILITIES	The Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, the Ethics and Compliance Officer, and all Researchers, Staff, and Students using animals for research.
APPROVAL AUTHORITY	Associate Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies
EFFECTIVE DATE	Dec 8, 2025
Supersedes documents dated	N/A

PURPOSE

This standard operating procedure (SOP) describes the process for obtaining scientific merit for the use of research or testing. Scientific merit must be approved prior to the approval of an Animal Use Protocol (AUP).¹

AUPs associated with approved funding from peer-reviewed funding sources satisfy the scientific merit review requirement.²

DOCUMENTS

Scientific Merit Review Form - PI

Scientific Merit Review Form - Reviewer

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES^{1,2}

- The scientific merit process will begin prior to an Animal Use Protocol for research submission; however, the review may occur concurrently with the AUP review.
- Researchers will be required to fill out a detailed scientific summary form³ which describes:
 - The hypothesis, research objectives, design, and methodology;
 - Statistics, including the number of animals needed total and within the experimental group

- Scientific significance and potential contributions/impact of the project
- The scientific summary form will then be submitted to the ACC coordinator who then forwards to the Associate Vice-President, (AVP) Research and Graduate studies to find two reviewers both of whom are experts in the area of research related to the proposal. A database of experts is available on the Animal Care department drive.
- Reviewers will complete a second form to review the scientific merit of the research submitted to determine if there is evidence of scientific merit. This is only judged based on what is written in the scientific summary form.
- Comments and suggestions are given to the researcher. If additional information is required, the process will continue between the AVP and the researcher. The ACC Coordinator may facilitate this process.
- If approval is granted, then the researcher may submit the Animal Use Protocol. The ACC Coordinator will attach the approval to the AUP.
- If the ACC is already reviewing the AUP for research, they may continue with full review and approval at that time. Conditional approval will be given if scientific merit review is still in process. The ACC Coordinator will manage the AUP approval and notify the committee when scientific merit has been approved.
- The ACC Coordinator will complete the approval of the AUP.
- If the proposed animal-based research or testing model is found to not have scientific merit, the AUP will not be approved.

REFERENCES

1. CCAC policy statement on scientific merit and ethical review of animal-based research
https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/Scientific_merit_and_ethical_review_of_animal-based_research.pdf
2. CCAC FAQs on Scientific merit and ethics review of animal-based research:
https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Policies/FAQ-Scientific_merit_and_ethical_review_of_animal-based_research.pdf
3. Scientific Summary form: <https://www.ufv.ca/media/assets/animal-care-committee/forms/2024-UFV-Scientific-Merit-Form---PI.docx>