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 **SCIENTIFIC MERIT PEER REVIEW FORM**

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.

Studies funded by major external granting agencies are considered to have undergone successful peer review during the granting process. Studies that are not peer-reviewed as part of the granting process, or are internally funded, require peer review for scientific merit.

To perform the review, a project description (including references) that explains the research background, 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 following set of questions to assess the scientific merit review has been provided by the CCAC.

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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):  |

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| 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 they cannot provide an objective review of the application.
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| If you believe you might be in a conflict of interest, please explain briefly:  |

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| [ ]  I certify that I have no real, perceived or potential conflict of interest in relation to this research proposal. |
| Reviewer name:Title:Signature:Date of review: |      |

*Please forward this form to the administrator responsible for scientific merit review, who will forward it to the researcher(s) and the animal care committee.*