

Name: Pedagogical Merit Review of Animal Use Protocols for Teaching and Training
Policy Number: 8-1022
Origin: SMU Animal Care Committee
Approved: 2020-NOV-18
Issuing Authority: Vice President Academic and Research
Responsibility: Associate Vice President Research
Effective Date: 2020-NOV-18

Purpose and Responsibilities:

Saint Mary's University, as a CCAC-certified institution that conducts animal-based teaching and training, is required to have a formal pedagogical merit review process in place. At least two independent referees with knowledge of pedagogy and alternatives to animal-based teaching and who do not sit on the animal care committee (ACC) will determine if animal-based teaching or training is essential to meeting learning objectives and outcomes. Decisions are documented and sent to the ACC.

Pedagogical merit review is ultimately the responsibility the Vice President Academic and Research (VPAR). The VPAR has designated day-to-day responsibility for pedagogical merit review to the Associate Vice President Research (AVPR). The AVPR has authorized the SMU Animal Care Coordinator to manage the pedagogical merit review process.

Relevant CCAC policy documents that inform this SMU Policy are:

- CCAC policy on Pedagogical merit of live animal-based teaching and training (CCAC, 2016)*
- CCAC FAQ on Pedagogical merit of live animal-based teaching and training (CCAC, 2020)*

Scope:

Policy:

Frequency of Pedagogical Merit Reviews:

The pedagogical merit review of live animal-based teaching and training should be undertaken for every new teaching or training course, and reviewed at least every four years for ongoing teaching or training, even if there are no changes to the course. Ongoing teaching or training can undergo a pedagogical merit review when a new protocol is submitted. The four-year interval gives institutions enough time to identify possible replacement alternatives.

Pedagogical Merit Reviewers

Ideally, at least two independent referees with knowledge of pedagogy and replacement alternatives to animal-based teaching or training should be involved in the pedagogical merit review. **Reviewers normally* must not sit on the animal care committee nor be involved with the course.** There is no requirement for the same individual to possess knowledge in both areas as long as both areas are covered. Reviewers do not have to be “in-house”, as in faculty, staff or other personnel at the institution.

**Animal care committee members who have knowledge of replacement alternatives in teaching and*

Key Considerations in the Review of Pedagogical Merit

For each assessment of animal-based teaching/training, it is expected that the pedagogical merit review process will consider key aspects such as:

- whether the learning objectives are clear and specify the involvement of animals;
- whether the learning objectives specify the proportion of the objective that must be achieved and/or how well the behaviour must be performed (accuracy, speed, quality);
- whether the composition, learning level and needs of the student group(s) are compatible with the goals and objectives of the animal-based teaching/training;
- whether the timing of the inclusion of animals in the teaching/training is suitable for the projected timing of the expected outcome(s);