

**Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
University of California, San Francisco**

**DEPARTMENTAL SCIENTIFIC MERIT REVIEW FORM**

Peer Review of Research Proposal by Department of \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Title \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Address \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Project Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

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We have reviewed this application and believe that the proposed research deserves approval on the basis of scientific merit.

**Committee Members**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____	_____
Print Name	Title	Date

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____	_____
Print Name	Title	Date

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____	_____
Print Name	Title	Date

## DEPARTMENTAL SCIENTIFIC MERIT REVIEW [Guidance Document for Departments and ORUs]

### Background

The UCSF Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee is charged with approving all scientific research involving animals at UCSF. The IACUC evaluates the use of live vertebrate animals according to the following: 1) justification for the proposed species, strains, ages, sex, and numbers of animals to be used; 2) measures for limiting discomfort, pain and distress including the use of analgesic, anesthetic, and tranquilizing drugs; 3) adequacy of veterinary care; and 4) methods of euthanasia. In general, the committee does not review the scientific appropriateness of a given proposed set of experiments involving animals. For this judgment the committee relies on the opinion of approved funding agencies (list available at IACUC web site) or for peer-review of the protocol conducted by members of the PI's department. This document provides guidelines to departments and organized research units at UCSF for conducting Scientific Merit Review (SMR). The Departmental SMR takes the place of a review conducted by a funding agency, evaluating the scientific appropriateness of proposed experiments involving animals, and whether they are likely to result in important data.

### Guidelines

Departmental SMR must be a legitimate peer-review process involving at least three qualified faculty members who are actively engaged in research. Ideally, a senior faculty member of the department should serve as the lead person for all SMR and will appoint reviewers. Reviewers should be chosen from those research faculty members who have familiarity with the area of research covered by the proposal. The process should be blinded to both reviewers and PI to avoid bias. Each department can determine the basis for conducting the review but at a minimum, reviewers should consider a brief synopsis of the background, hypothesis tested, animal numbers and proposed data analysis. Reviewer comments should be forwarded to the PI as they may provide helpful suggestions for improving the experimental design. Please note that the departmental SMR is not intended to be an editorial review of the IACUC protocol. The review may include, but should not be limited to, the IACUC application, which focuses on animal welfare.

In addition, departmental SMR may also wish to evaluate the proposal for adequacy of the following areas (adapted from the NIH peer review process):

- **Significance:** does the project address an important problem in the field?
- **Investigator:** are the PI and other researchers capable of carrying out the project?
- **Innovation:** do the experiments challenge current scientific paradigms?
- **Approach:** are the overall strategy, methodologies, and analyses appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?
- **Environment:** is the scientific environment adequate for successful completion of the work?

These guidelines are advisory only, as each department can choose its own method for providing SMR to the IACUC. However, the IACUC, UCSF and federal policy requires that a genuine SMR process occur so that animal welfare is respected. Campus-wide adoption of these minimum standards for SMR will assure the public of the appropriate use of animals at UCSF.