

2020 University of Vermont Cancer Center (UVMCC)

Pilot Project Review Process

- The UVMCC Pilot Project Committee is made up of the Cancer Center's senior leadership team.
- The committee Co-Chairs are the Cancer Center's Associate Director for Basic and Translational Research (ADBTR) and the Associate Director for Clinical and Translational Research (ADCTR).
- Applications passing preliminary review for eligibility and completeness will be sent to the Pilot Project Committee, whose Co-Chairs (ADBTR & ADCTR) will assign primary and secondary reviewers from among the members of the committee, or ad hoc reviewers if necessary.
- Ad hoc reviewers will be assigned only in cases where there is a conflict of interest that cannot be managed, or when the scientific expertise does not exist in the standing committee.
- All reviewers will use the same score sheet and scoring instructions, which are based on NIH models.
- Reviewers will be assigned primary and secondary Reviewer roles but expectations are the same for each with regard to the attention devoted to their written evaluations.
- The Overall Impact Scores of the primary & secondary reviewers will be averaged and only proposals in the top ~50% will be moved forward for a review by the full committee.
- If there's a significant difference in the primary & secondary reviewers' scoring (an OIS range that's ≥ 3) they will be asked to compare their evaluations. If the reviewers aren't able to agree on an OIS range of <3 , then the proposal will receive full committee review. If this occurs, the committee will be notified of the scoring disparity and will be asked to devote particular attention to the proposal.
- On completion of triage, all applicants will be informed whether or not their proposal will be moving forward for full scientific review. At this time, applicants whose proposals won't be moving forward will be provided with de-identified copies of the primary & secondary reviewers' critiques.
- For each of the top-ranking applications, the primary & secondary reviewers will be provided with each other's appraisals in advance of the full committee's scientific review.
- In the event that a reviewed application passes the triage process but the assigned reviewer is unable to attend the scientific review meeting, the reviewer will discuss their evaluation with a non-recused committee member who will present the review on their behalf. After the full committee's discussions, the proxy reviewer will be free to vote their conscience when establishing the voting range.
- During the scientific review meeting, committee members with a conflict of interest will be required to leave the room before deliberation on those applications where the conflict exists.
- Ad hoc reviewers will participate in discussion and scoring of only the proposal(s) they have been assigned to review.

- The primary reviewer will initiate discussion of the assigned application by stating their Overall Impact Score, summarizing the proposal, and sharing their evaluation of the proposal's strengths and weaknesses with the rest of the committee.
- The secondary reviewer will follow by stating their Overall Impact Score, adding to the project summary if they desire, and also sharing their evaluation of the proposal's strengths and weaknesses.
- Following committee discussion, the primary and secondary reviewers will be asked to restate their scores to establish a scoring range, changing them, if desired, after hearing the views of the rest of the committee.
- The Co-Chair(s) will state the reviewers' scoring range and ask the committee if anyone wishes to vote outside it. After further discussion (if necessary), the scoring range will be set by the Co-Chair(s) and each non-recused committee member will assign an Overall Impact Score to the proposal.
- The committee will be reminded that any scores falling outside the established scoring range will be discarded.
- Following the full review session, committee members' scores will be averaged and presented to the Co-Chairs, who will review the proposals for alignment with UVMCC programmatic & funding priorities.
- Based on a combination of scoring and alignment, the top proposal(s) will be identified and sent to the UVMCC Director for final approval.
- Competition results will be announced within a week of the Director's decision, with de-identified reviewers' critiques and suggestions to follow shortly afterward.