

## Returning of inadequate applications for animal experiments

The Veterinary Office will do an initial check of the application. If one or more of the following criteria apply, the application will be returned directly to the applicant (without consulting the Commission for animal experimentation).

The aim is to reduce the processing time for all parties involved (researchers, commission, veterinary office) and to keep the time until the decision as short as possible.

We would like to point out that only applications that have been submitted in full will be evaluated.

### A. FORMAL CRITERIA FOR RETURNING THE APPLICATION

1. The animal numbers stated in the different sections of the application (09, 29, 30, 36) and in any attached tables do not match.
2. Applications with severity degree 2 or higher are submitted without a Score Sheet.
3. Documents referenced in the application are missing, e.g. datasheets and announcements of genetically-modified animal strains/lines, SOPs.
4. The attached documents have not been updated and documents to be replaced (e.g. old versions) have not been deleted. This applies to all applications (i.e. renewal and supplementary applications etc., but also revised applications and applications with answers).
5. No or only rudimentary information under the following paragraphs relevant for the planned experiments: effects on the animals (section 33), monitoring (section 34), termination criteria/humane endpoints (section 35), evaluation of the experiment (Method II) (sections 28-30) and weighing of interests (section 40)<sup>1</sup>.
6. The SOPs were uploaded individually. (SOPs must be merged into and uploaded as one document file. This document file may only contain SOPs which are to be used in the experiments applied for or those to be used must be clearly labelled.)
7. The SOP identification is incomprehensible or otherwise inadequate (file name). An example of adequate labeling:  
SOP Title: XXXX  
SOP number: #3                      Date of Issue: XX.YY.ZZ  
Current version: Y.XX              Last modified: XX.YY.ZZ  
Author: YYYY
8. The SOPs are not correctly referenced under the corresponding sections of the application.
9. Datasheets and announcements of genetically-modified animal strains/lines are not uploaded in a single document file.
10. Information is obviously not listed under the correct sections of the application form or the same information is repeated under different sections.
11. Section 20 (and for renewal applications section 21) exceeds one A4 page (maximum 4500 characters). (Similarly, the information under section 22 must also be as brief as possible.)
12. Reference is made to another license (or an SOP of another license) without describing the manipulations specifically in the application.
13. Literature has not been cited in a comprehensible and easy to find way (at least author, title, journal and year). No list of references is attached (include DOI in the list).

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<sup>1</sup> Please also consult «Explanatory notes on Form-A» ([www.blv.admin.ch](http://www.blv.admin.ch) -> Animals -> Animal experimentation -> Researchers -> More information -> Forms)

14. Form A application text is written in two languages (Exception: attachments e.g. SOPs can be written also in English – even when the text in Form A is in German)

## **B. CONTENT-RELATED CRITERIA FOR RETURNING**

1. A renewal application lacks a summary of how many animals were used in which severity degree under the previous license (The results per subproject are to be summarized briefly under section 21)
2. The application has too many research aims (section 20 / 22) and too many different experimental set-ups (section 23). (Several applications must be submitted such that the experimental set-ups are sufficiently clear and a weighing of interests is possible).
3. The scope of the application is not adapted to the number of persons listed in the application. (There must be sufficient personnel available for the implementation of the described project). For new research laboratories that are still in the process of recruiting personnel, it is recommended to present a personnel- and – if applicable - education plan (recruitment plan detailing number of persons and start dates) in an appendix.
4. The application is not written in a way that is generally understandable. (Academically trained persons from other disciplines, including ethics and law, must be able to evaluate the application).
5. Abbreviations for terms are not introduced when first used. (In addition, abbreviations can be used only when absolutely necessary and when the term is used more than three times).
6. The course of the experiment (section 23: what happens to which animal / which experimental group at what time point) is not clear and understandable. In addition to the text, flow charts that show the course of the experiment schematically are to be included (preferably in an attached document). If SOP numbers are part of the flow chart, the procedures must nonetheless also be mentioned in the flowchart. Abbreviations must be written out and color codes must be explained in footnotes.
7. Methods are proposed for which there are alternatives with a lower burden on the animal suitable for the experiment (e.g. retrobulbar blood sampling).

## **C. RETURNING CRITERIA FOR SUPPLEMENTARY APPLICATIONS**

1. The amendment is too extensive (e.g. new or significantly changed research questions, significantly higher animal numbers, more animals than in original application). In such cases a renewal or a new application has to be submitted.
2. Not all of the sections of Form A that are affected by changes are completed. (It is recommended to upload a document that summarizes the changes. The document must be correctly labelled with a title and date.)
3. Under section 20 the reference to the previous knowledge gain/results is not explained in a comprehensible manner.

#### **D. INSUFFICIENTLY ANSWERED QUESTIONS**

After the application has also been evaluated by the animal experimentation commission, the applicant receives questions about the content of the application from the Veterinary Office.

- If questions are not answered at all or are incompletely answered, the answers are directly (without consulting the animal experimentation commission) returned to the applicant for completion.

#### **E. REJECTION WHEN NOT ANSWERING QUESTIONS**

After the application has also been evaluated by the Animal Experimentation Commission, the applicant receives questions about the content of the application from the Veterinary Office, and then the applicant does not reply to these questions within a reasonable time. Specifically, if questions are not answered within 3 months and the Veterinary Office has not been informed about the reasons for the delay, the application will be closed with billing of the applicant for the incurred processing costs.