

University Biomedical Services

Animal Welfare Policy

Research using animals has made, and continues to make, a vital contribution to the understanding, treatment and cure of major human and animal health problems; including cancer, heart disease, polio, diabetes and neurological diseases and disorders. While new methods have enabled scientists and medical researchers to reduce studies involving animals, some work must continue for further fundamental advances to be made.

The University of Cambridge only uses animals in research where there are no alternatives. In fact, the law demands that where a non-animal approach exists, it should be used. The principles of reduction, refinement and replacement of animals in research (the '3Rs') underpin all related work carried out at the University; ensuring that the number of animals used is minimised and that procedures, care routines and husbandry are refined and regularly reviewed to maximise welfare.

Until satisfactory alternatives have been developed, the processes of discovery, enquiry and teaching require procedures that involve animals in order to gain a knowledge and understanding of structure, physiological and pathological processes, and in order to pass on knowledge to students.

Scientists at Cambridge, and elsewhere, are seeking ways to reduce the number of animals needed for their research and for teaching; indeed they have been instrumental in devising a number of such alternative methods. However, 'alternative' tests and models have yet to be developed that can properly reproduce the complex biological characteristics of man and animals, and studies of wild animals in their natural environment will always require the involvement of the animals themselves.

In the UK, research and teaching activities involving animals considered to be sentient are governed by a range of legislation, including the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 and, in the case of teaching to veterinary students, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. Compliance of research involving these species is monitored by University staff, including the Named Veterinary Surgeon, and by the Home Office through its inspectors. All members of the University carrying out procedures regulated under the Act must by law have prior training, relevant experience, and authority from the Home Office. All projects affecting such animals are subject to prior formal ethical review within the University.

In any work involving animals of protected species, the policy of the University of Cambridge is to adhere to high standards of humane care and treatment of those animals. The University has procedures to meet these requirements and complies with relevant laws and guidelines. The University supports and expects everyone involved in animal research to use [Laboratory Animal Science Association \(LASA\) Guidelines](#), which should be adhered to whenever animals are used in research.

The over-riding considerations are that:

- Research on animals is conducted only when it will contribute to the advancement of knowledge that is likely to lead to improvement of the health and welfare of animals or human beings, or provide a better understanding of the animals themselves.
- The University conducts studies involving animals on the basis of well-defined scientific objectives and the advancement of knowledge, giving due consideration to the welfare of the animals, minimising the number of animals employed in each test, and avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- Where animals are used in teaching, either to demonstrate fundamental principles or to provide practical training to veterinary students, the same principles of minimising numbers and maximising animal welfare are practised.
- The University actively supports the development, validation and adoption of appropriate alternatives to the use of animals, in order to eliminate the need for animals in both research and teaching. In-vitro studies are used as substitutes for whole-animal studies whenever such tests are feasible, and cadavers and audio-visual technology are used in teaching.
- Animals are transported, housed and cared for by dedicated and trained staff under professional supervision in a manner designed to ensure the best health and wellbeing of the animal, with provisions for environmental enrichment.
- Named Veterinary Surgeons are available at all times for consultation, care and attendance.
- The University of Cambridge is committed to the responsible use of animals in its research and teaching activities. All University personnel who supervise or undertake activities involving animals are trained to carry out their duties in a responsible and humane manner.