UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
University Biomedical Services

UBS University Biomedical Services

Study Plan Template Guidance

Study Plans are a mandatory requirement for regulated work being undertaken in animal units across the University of Cambridge. A template can be found on the UBS webpage or obtained from a local Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO) / Biofacility Manager. It is a requirement to complete this template prior to commencing every experiment using animals. Having submitted a Study Plan to your unit NACWO or deputy, please allow up to 5 working days for them to confirm they can accommodate your experiment.

***Please note**: Whilst every effort is made to adhere to this 5 day turnaround time there may be extenuating circumstances when this is not achieved (e.g. resource availability, checking authority for regulated procedures requested to be undertaken by UBS staff etc.) but clear communication will be made within 5 working days of submission.*

The Study Plan is designed as a welfare tool to inform UBS animal care staff about what you plan to do to your animals, which in turn will help UBS staff facilitate your research. Study Plans should be used by you to tell the NACWO, Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) and animal care staff, what will actually happen to your experimental animals because this is not always apparent from reading the Home Office Project Licence (PPL). When well completed a Study Plan enables everyone to understand which side-effects are expected following a procedure and help to easily distinguish these from the adverse effects that are not expected.

There is also a section for you to give clear instructions about how UBS animal care staff should proceed if unexpectedly one of your animals dies or needs to be killed. In such circumstances you can advise, through the Study Plan, which tissues to take or how to store the dead animal or its tissues. If you have provided your contact details and the responsible PPL/Personal Licence Holder (PILh) UBS staff will always try to contact you first should they find one of your animals sick and in need of attention. If they cannot contact you they will refer to the Study Plan to see who else to contact and what action should be taken. If no instructions are provided and they cannot contact you or other PILh listed on the Study Plan, your animal will be killed, if that is the most appropriate course of action.

When writing a Study Plan you should take time to check both PPL and Personal Licence (PIL) authorities. Although Study Plans will be read by the NACWO (or deputy), and sometimes the NVS too, you cannot expect that they will routinely check that authority for your proposed experiment exists. Under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 this responsibility lies with the PPL holder and PIL holders performing the procedures.

After reading a Study Plan the NACWO and NVS may have questions or perhaps suggestions (e.g. the most appropriate injection route, which analgesic and anaesthetic agents to use, etc.). As well as safe-guarding the welfare of your animals, the NACWO and NVS can be approached to provide advice and help. As with all areas of science and veterinary medicine, laboratory animal welfare practices continually evolve with new refinements published daily. Study Plans can help to stimulate discussion although their primary purpose is to assist with the day-to-day care of your animals. It is best to have a discussion about how to optimise all parts of an experiment using animals before an experiment starts to ensure welfare and science are maximised every time. Therefore, please do not take any offence if questions are asked.

If you are unsure how to interpret PPL authorities please ask your NVS and NACWO, if they are unsure, they will help you seek advice from your local Home Office inspector.

FILLING OUT THE STUDY PLAN: Please try to use lay terms so misunderstandings do not arise. Describe your experiment using numbered bullet points which detail the procedures you plan to use and when administering substances, what will be administered, how much, how often, by what route, etc.. When a surgical procedure is planned, please briefly describe the procedure and include information about the anaesthetic and analgesia you plan to use. It is helpful beside each of the procedures in your Study Plan to include the Protocol step number shown in the PPL Protocol (e.g. *Administration of tamoxifen by oral gavage; 15ml/kg daily for 3 days [Protocol 1: step 2b]*). Describe what will happen to your animals after surgery and indicate a time frame (e.g. *On days 7 and 12 post surgery animals will undergo behavioural testing on a rotarod [Protocol 1: step 4]. On day 14 animals will be killed by a Schedule I method [Protocol 1: step 6]*). List or briefly describe any adverse effects you might expect; these should be the actual clinical signs that this cohort of animals might show *not* those copied directly from the PPL. The humane endpoints need to be stated so that UBS staff understand which clinical signs would warrant them needing to euthanase an animal when you or others named on the Study Plan cannot be contacted. Please be assured that when time permits several attempts will be made to contact the PILs listed on the Study Plan prior to an animal being euthanised.

WHEN TO COMPLETE A STUDY PLAN: A Study Plan should always be filled in before starting each experiment. The lead PIL holder undertaking the experiment must sign and date the form and the Study Plan must be counter signed by the Project Licence holder or nominated deputy. It is quite acceptable to use a Study Plan that has been used on previous cohorts of animals, as a template, but each experiment must have its own Study Plan detailing the proposed start and finish dates.

If you have any questions or concerns then please contact your NACWO or NVS.