

Animal Welfare Policy

The University of Cambridge recognises that research using animals has made, and continues to make, a vital contribution to the fundamental understanding of the biological sciences, and the treatment and cure of human and animal diseases. We realise that we must not be complacent and therefore will actively promote, investigate and use new methods of research that can replace animals and only ever use animals where these alternatives are currently not viable. Our scientists are instrumental in devising humane alternative methods to animal models. These non-animal models are designed to effectively reproduce in part or fully the complex biological characteristics of man and animals. When validated these non-animal models remove the need for animal use and allow us to move towards our goal of eventually ending the use of animals in fundamental, medical and veterinary research.

In the UK, research with animals is governed by a range of legislation, including ASPA and, in the case of teaching to veterinary students, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

Our research compliance is regulated by ASPA and is monitored by University staff, including the Named Veterinary Surgeons [NVS] and by assigned Home Office inspectors. All members of the University carrying out procedures regulated under ASPA must by law have prior training, relevant experience, be assessed as adequately competent to work with animals and their programme of work must be licensed by the Home Office. All animal research project licences are subject to robust scrutiny by the University AWERB process. The AWERB committees tasked with the review of project licences have memberships consisting lay-members, veterinary surgeons, animal welfarists/animal care staff and academic staff. On many of the committees members are drawn from both outside the animal research field (lay members) and when required from other research establishment (specialist scientists). Only where a programme of animal research is necessary and considered justified by AWERB and with due consideration to Reduction, Replacement and Refinement [the 3Rs] will it be submitted to the Home Office for assessment and processing.

To this end, we strictly adhere to the principle of law which demands that where a non-animal approach to research exists, it should be used. The principles of the 3Rs underpin all related work at the University; ensuring that if animals have to be used then the numbers are minimised and that procedures, care routines and husbandry are refined and under constant review to maximise welfare. All involved are charged with bringing to our attention, including to the highest level of management, without fear of personal negative consequence, any animal welfare concerns or issues that jeopardize our commitment to these principles and must therefore follow the University procedures for whistleblowing and escalation of concerns. The University is committed to openness and transparency regarding its use of animals in research and will make every endeavour to deliver on its registration to the Concordat.

Where wild animals need to be observed and studied in their natural habitat, our responsibilities will extend outside of UK legislation and country borders to ensure research in non-laboratory settings is also undertaken with full consideration of our robust ethical justification and animal welfare.

University staff undertaking regulated procedures, or collaborating with scientists, abroad or at other ASPA licensed user establishments, or work performed elsewhere during sabbaticals will employ the same standards required under UK legislation.

Where no alternative exists to work involving animals of protected species, the University will require researcher to adopt the same high standards of care and humane treatment of their animals and adherence with all relevant laws and guidelines. Wherever possible and feasible, rehoming laboratory animals is investigated and supported. The University expects everyone involved in animal research to follow the Laboratory Animal Science Association [LASA] guiding principles as set out in their published documents, apply the use of analgesia and anaesthetic regimes together with applying a robust welfare ethos and strongly discourage aversive training and testing regimes. All experiments using animals should be carefully designed and conducted data published in accordance with the ARRIVE guidelines. Wherever possible negative data should be published (for example in F1000) thereby reducing the risk of experiments being repeated unnecessarily by others.

The key principles governing all our animal research are:

- a) It 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 involves observations that will lead to a greater understanding of the animals themselves.
- b) It is undertaken 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 used in each experiment and avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- c) The University will actively support the development, validation and adoption of appropriate alternatives to the use of animals, aimed at eliminating the need for animals in research.
- d) Animals are transported, housed and cared for by dedicated and appropriately trained staff under professional supervision in a manner designed to maximise health and wellbeing of the animals, with provisions for environmental enrichment.
- e) A Named Veterinary Surgeon is contactable at all times for consultation, care and attendance.
- f) The University of Cambridge considers that the use of animals in research is not a right, but a privilege that must be earned by demonstration of our staff's commitment to achieving the highest standards of animal welfare and an ongoing commitment to replacement, reduction and refinement.