

**Working with animals outside the UK, undertaking collaborative work using animals overseas and sourcing animal material from non-UK sources**

**1. Introduction**

The University of Cambridge expects the use of animals in research to be conducted to the highest standards thus guaranteeing scientific integrity and exemplary animal care and welfare.

The local Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body [AWERB] oversees animal research undertaken at the University. The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Amendment Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/3039) [ASPA] requires all establishments registered by the Home Office to set up an AWERB. The AWERB is required to advise the holder of a section 2C (establishment) licence [PELh] on the science and all aspects of animal welfare and ethics relating to the use of animals in research at the establishment. This includes research performed under the Establishment’s name. For this reason, research involving animals which is undertaken outside the UK, as part of a collaborative overseas project or the sourcing of animal derived materials from non-UK sources, should be reviewed by AWERB. This document explains the standards expected when work is undertaken in the UK and **by inference** the standards expected when such work involves the use of animals overseas.

**2. Animal Welfare Policy - overseas**

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. For example, 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 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 veterinary students, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. University of Cambridge researchers working, collaborating or sourcing animal derived materials from overseas must not only comply with the local legislation of the country of origin but are also expected to work to the same high UK standards required by ASPA.

At Cambridge, our research compliance is regulated by ASPA and is monitored by University staff, including the Named People, such as Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWOs), and 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 of lay-members (from outside the animal research field), veterinary surgeons, animal welfarists/animal care staff and academic staff. When required the committee members may be drawn from other research establishments (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, everyone involved with animal research is expected to 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 makes every effort to deliver on its registration to the Concordat on Openness (<http://concordatopenness.org.uk/>).

Where wild animals that are protected under ASPA or other legislation need to be observed and studied in their natural habitat, at home or abroad, our responsibilities extend to ensuring research in non-laboratory settings is also undertaken with full consideration of our robust ethical justification and animal welfare.

Where no alternative exists to work involving protected species, the University will require researchers to adopt the same high standards of care and humane treatment of their animals and adherence with all relevant laws and guidelines, when either working at home or abroad. Wherever possible and feasible, rehoming research 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 in line with the principles set out in the PREPARE guidelines and 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.

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

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 the health and wellbeing of the animals, with provisions for environmental enrichment.

e) A Named Veterinary Surgeon (if in the UK) or other suitably qualified veterinary surgeon or person (if working abroad) 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.

g) All research undertaken overseas, in collaboration with overseas researchers or which uses animal material sourced from overseas, must adhere to the same high standards required under UK legislation plus, in some countries, to additional local legislation.

Action you will need to take:

Complete a copy of the form: *Request to work with animals outside the UK, undertake research collaborations involving the use of animals or when sourcing animal derived materials from non-UK sources.* This form can be obtained from the UBS Website, via the UBS Office at Greenwich House or your Departmental Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer and attach the completed copy to this document, retain the original copy for your records and submit an electronic copy to [UBSHOLicencing@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:UBSHOLicencing@admin.cam.ac.uk)

Signed: Date: