

Policy for Involving Animals in Research and Education

From: Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
University Executive Board

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Southampton ('the University') is strongly committed to benefiting communities across the world, through innovative research and education and the continuous pursuit of excellence in all its work. As part of facilitating advances in science and medical knowledge, the University involves animals in some of its activities, including research at the forefront of prevention and treatment of disease, international conservation and climate change, as well as in the education of future scientists. All such activity is scrutinised using the 3Rs ethical framework: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. This involves a commitment to only using animals when there is no alternative option, minimising their use by adopting and developing alternative techniques, and fostering a culture of care to ensure any suffering is minimised and the highest possible standards of animal welfare are maintained. The University's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) ensures that animal related activity is carried out with scientific rigour and according to ethical principles, including weighing the potential benefits of the activity against the likely harm to the animals concerned. The University believes that a good culture of care will contribute to better science, promote animal and staff welfare, support public confidence, and maximise the societal benefits from its work.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This Policy applies to all University staff and students who are engaged in research and education involving animals, either directly or indirectly. This would include any others who undertake such activity under the auspices of the University, using the University's facilities, or elsewhere in the world on behalf of the University. A reference to 'staff and students' in this Policy includes any person within this scope.

Reference to 'animal related activity' covers research and education involving vertebrates and cephalopods, both in the UK and abroad. This includes experimental and scientific procedures regulated by the [Animals \(Scientific Procedures\) Act 1986](#) (ASPA), as well as activities which fall outside this Act and which are covered by other legislation. 'Animal related activity' also includes animal tissue and products obtained from animals solely for the purpose of research but which has not previously undergone ethical review.

3. PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principles

- The University pro-actively embraces the concept of the 3Rs: Replacement (avoiding the use of animals where possible), Reduction (minimising their use) and Refinement (developing and using the latest techniques to minimise suffering to animals and improving their welfare).
- The University is committed to achieving and maintaining high standards of animal care, husbandry and welfare through the promotion of a good culture of care and supporting its highly skilled workforce undertaking animal related activity.
- The University promotes openness and transparency in its animal related activity by encouraging the dissemination of all research findings, public engagement, and promoting and valuing data sharing, honesty and communication.

Responsibilities:

- Staff and students should treat all animals with respect and consideration and should fully consider the 3Rs when undertaking any animal related activity.
- Staff and students engaged in animal related activity are responsible for ensuring they have the necessary skills, experience and training to carry out this work. They should be aware of, and comply with, the appropriate legislation, codes of conduct and University policies and procedures. Those involved in activities regulated under the ASPA must be familiar with, and follow the University's [Animal Research and Welfare Operational Guidelines](#)¹. The full list of the roles and responsibilities is available in Appendix A.
- All animal related activity must be scrutinised through the University AWERB ethical and scientific review process before it can commence (as per section 4 below). Where licences are required, staff and students are responsible for securing them from the relevant authority before any activity is undertaken.

The University is a signatory to the [Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK](#) (May 2014), which aims to achieve a broad understanding of the benefits, harms and limitations associated with the humane use of animals in medical, veterinary, scientific and environmental research in the UK. In signing

¹ Animal Research and Welfare Operational Guidelines are available on the BRF SharePoint site.

this Concordat, the University has made a commitment to being clear about when, how and why animals are used in research, and to enhancing our engagement and communication with the wider community.

The University strongly supports the [PREPARE guidelines](#) on planning research, and the [ARRIVE guidelines \(Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments\)](#) which aim to improve the reporting of research involving animals in order to maximise information published and to minimise unnecessary studies. All staff and students are expected to conform to these guidelines as far as possible, as well as to take into account the specific editorial policies of relevant journals or funding bodies. The University is also a member of [Understanding Animal Research](#).

4. ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY (AWERB)

The AWERB is responsible for overseeing the University's animal related activity. All proposals for animal related activity (as defined in section 2 above) must be submitted to the AWERB. Any such activity is not permitted to commence until approval is granted by the AWERB and has met the relevant legislative requirements.

AWERB's key roles are to:

- Challenge researchers to justify involving animals in University activity and ensuring that any work is underpinned by the principles in this Policy.
- Actively promote the 3Rs and help to foster a good culture of care within the establishment and the wider community.
- Ensure animal related activity is subject to a robust scientific and ethical review process through its sub-committee, the Science and Ethical Review Group (SERG).
- Provide advice to staff and students on animal welfare and re-homing.
- Provide education and training opportunities ensuring that animal related activities are undertaken by appropriately trained staff and students who are expected to incorporate innovative techniques, improvements and refinements where appropriate.

The AWERB reports to the University's Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC).

5. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE POLICY

Failure to comply with the provisions of this Policy may result in internal investigation by the Biomedical Research Facility (BRF) Management, followed by appropriate action being taken in line with the University's [Procedure for Investigating Cases of Alleged Misconduct in Research](#) (applicable to staff), or [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#) (applicable to all students). Any concerns about breach of this Policy should be raised by contacting BRF Management, the Chair of the AWERB, the researchintegrity@soton.ac.uk, or reported under the University's [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Staff and students must act at all times in a manner that is consistent with relevant legislative requirements and the principles of the 3Rs. Any non-compliance is subject to internal and external investigation and may lead to suspension or revocation of the relevant licence(s), and criminal prosecution.

6. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be regularly reviewed by the University's AWERB in the light of available guidance or forthcoming legislative changes at least once every three years. Information and advice will be provided to staff and students on any changes made.

7. SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Detailed information about legislation, guidance and involving animals in research and education can be found at <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/awerb/links.page>

8. APPENDIX A – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities for roles under ASPA are detailed within the Act.

The following are the roles and key responsibilities of those involved in complying with this policy:

President and Vice-Chancellor

- Will ensure that an establishment licence and an establishment licence holder are in place.

Deans

- Will ensure sufficient resources are provided to enable compliance with this Policy.
- Will ensure that the Heads of Schools are aware of, and adhere to this Policy, as well as all University procedures and safe systems of work related to the use of animals in research and education.

Heads of Schools

- Will ensure that all work with animals in their area of responsibility is appropriately identified and that sufficient resources are provided to adequately maintain equipment and control measures.
- Will ensure that their members of staff are aware of, and adhere to this Policy, as well as all University procedures and safe systems of work related to the use of animals in research and education.

Establishment Licence Holder (Named Compliance Officer)

- Will ensure that all relevant animal related activities follow the principles of the 3Rs: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement.
- Will ensure that the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) is established and that it takes advice from the Named Veterinary Surgeon.
- Will ensure that a system is in place to enable ethics review and to prevent unauthorised procedures.
- Will appoint Named Persons including a Named Information Officer, a Named Training and Competence Officer and Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers.

**Home Office Compliance and Liaison Officer
(Named Information Officer, Named Training and Competence Officer)**

- Will ensure that those dealing with animals are adequately trained and supervised, that they receive appropriate ongoing training, and have access to any information they need in order to comply with this Policy.
- Will act as the Home Office liaison contact and ensure that a register of competent persons is kept.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers

- Are responsible for the day-to-day care of animals and ensuring that the highest standards of animal husbandry and care are followed.

Named Veterinary Surgeon

- Is responsible for advising AWERB on individual research projects, and for providing advice on animal health and welfare.

Project Licence Holders

- Will comply with the terms and conditions of their project licence and the specified programme of work, and ensure that it follows the highest standards of animal care and welfare.
- Will ensure that all staff working on their project have a personal licence and are appropriately trained and supervised (if required).
- Will keep full, accurate and detailed records of all the procedures carried out, and ensure that all the local rules for the use of the University animal research facilities are complied with.

Personal Licence Holders

- Will comply with the terms and conditions of their personal licence and ensure that they are familiar with the details of each project licence they work under.
- Will ensure that they only perform regulated procedures that they are licensed and trained to carry out, and that they have the appropriate permission of the project licence holder.

9. VERSION CONTROL

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1.0	N/A	No previous versions.	AWERB and University Executive Board