

The University's mission statement includes an emphasis on high quality research. In a University where biological and biomedical sciences, including veterinary science, have such a high profile, animals are central to research and teaching. The use of animals in these areas has made, and continues to make, significant contributions to the understanding of biological sciences, and to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease in man and animals. Examples include the development of organ transplantation, treatment of heart disease and effective use of vaccines. Until satisfactory alternatives have been developed, the processes of discovery, enquiry and teaching require procedures which involve studies in animals in order to gain an understanding of physiological and pathological processes, the treatment of the latter, and to allow knowledge to be passed to students.

Scientists at the University of Bristol, in common with many other researchers, are committed to the policy of the '3Rs'; namely reduction, refinement and replacement of animals used in scientific research. They have made, and continue to make, significant contributions in this area, and have published their results in peer reviewed scientific journals. However, alternatives have yet to be developed that can properly reproduce the complex biological characteristics of man and animals, while studies of wild animals in their natural environment will always require the involvement of the animals themselves.

In the UK, the use of living animals* in scientific research is controlled under law by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986. Any establishment that wishes to undertake scientific research involving animals must meet and maintain the stringent requirements laid down by the Home Office (the responsible government department). Compliance is monitored by University staff, including the Named Veterinary Surgeon, and through on site audits conducted by inspectors of the Animals in Science Regulatory Unit.

In any work involving living animals, the policy of the University of Bristol is to adhere to high standards of care and welfare for the animals involved. The University has designed, built and maintains dedicated facilities for the animals, and has processes in place to ensure that it meets the statutory requirements.

Anyone who wishes to carry out procedures regulated^s under this Act must undergo prior training, demonstrated relevant experience, and be authorised by the Home Office, while the use of animals for teaching veterinary students is controlled under the Veterinary Surgeons Act, 1966. All projects involving animals at the University of Bristol are subject to prior formal ethical review within the University, whether or not the procedure is regulated under the Act. Projects involving regulated procedures are further submitted to the Home Office for approval. Work may only commence once authorised by the Secretary of State.

The over-riding considerations of the University 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 man or animals, or provide a better understanding of the animals themselves.
- Studies involving animals are conducted on the basis of well-defined scientific objectives, giving due consideration to the welfare of the animals and minimising the number of animals used.
- Where animals are used in teaching the same principles of minimising numbers used and ensuring minimal detriment to animal welfare are practised.
- There is active support for the development, validation and adoption of appropriate alternatives to the use of animals. For example *in vitro* studies are used as substitutes for whole-animal studies whenever possible, and studies of cadavers along with audio-visual and computer-based technology are used in teaching.
- The University of Bristol is committed to a 'culture of care' amongst all its members who use animals in research and/or teaching. All University personnel who supervise or undertake activities involving animals are trained to carry out their duties in a responsible and humane manner.
- All animals obtained and kept at the University are inspected by a trained animal care technician on arrival and on a daily basis. 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 well-being of the animals, with provisions for environmental enrichment.
- The University's Named Veterinary Surgeon, or his deputy, is available at all times for consultation and provision of care.
- Every effort has been made, if possible to avoid or, to minimise adverse effects of procedures on animals. This may be achieved by a number of means, including the use of anaesthetics and/or analgesics.

Further information on the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 is available at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/animal-research/>

* The Act defines a "protected animal" as any living vertebrate, other than man and all cephalopods are also protected under the Act, as are immature /developmental forms of mammals, birds and reptiles - from halfway through the gestation or incubation period; and fish, amphibia and cephalopods from the time at which they become capable of independent feeding.

\$ A "regulated procedure" is defined by the Act as "any experimental or other scientific procedure applied to a protected animal which may have the effect of causing that animal pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm".

Policy updated February 2022