



Use of Animals in Research Policy			
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Use of Animals in Research Policy

City St George's, University of London, is dedicated to advancing knowledge and improving human health through high-quality scientific research. We acknowledge that there is a global scientific consensus that animal research remains essential for medical progress. This research is crucial to deepening our understanding of health and disease. Many of the antibiotics, vaccines, and surgical techniques we rely on today would not have been possible without the use of animals in research. However, we are equally committed to enhancing ethical standards and reduce animal use by prioritising non-animal alternatives whenever possible.

City St George's, University of London is firmly guided by the principles of the "3Rs":

- **Reduction:** We aim to use the minimum number of animals necessary to achieve reliable results.
- **Replacement:** We prioritise the use of non-animal methods, such as computer modelling, tissue culture, and human clinical trials, whenever these methods can achieve the scientific aims.
- **Refinement:** We strive to refine all procedures to minimise pain, suffering, and distress, ensuring animals are cared for to the highest standards. Measures include improved husbandry practices, the use of anaesthesia and pain relief, and refined experimental techniques.

The University's **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)** is responsible for overseeing, reviewing, and approving research involving animals. All research involving

protected animals under the UK's *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* (ASPA) complies strictly with the regulation and is overseen by the Home Office.

All projects under the remit of ASPA must undergo a thorough ethical review by the AWERB, which involves a careful evaluation of the potential scientific and medical benefits in relation to the impact on animal welfare. The Home Office carries out regular inspections of APSA facilities to ensure compliance with all licensing requirements and to verify that high standards of animal welfare are maintained. These external inspections are reinforced by City St George's own rigorous internal and independent audit programme. This comprehensive system of oversight, combined with robust governance, guarantees accountability, transparency, and a commitment to exemplary animal care and full compliance.

Members of the University may also be involved in work with live animals, or animals killed for the purpose of research, on University premises that is not subject to ASPA. When non-ASPA projects involve the use of live animals, these projects will be reviewed by the AWERB to ensure that they comply with the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, other relevant legislation as well as strict ethical standards.

Researchers at the University may conduct studies using animal-derived materials (such as tissues, organs, or cells) obtained from animals not killed for the purpose of the research, including material sourced from external institutions such as universities, research centres, abattoirs, or zoological collections. When animal materials are obtained from an unlicensed or non-ASPA source, its use must be submitted to AWERB for ethical consideration. When animal materials are sourced from endangered species within the UK, documentation confirming ethical approval or consent from the supplying organisation must be provided to the AWERB. If material is imported from outside the UK, a valid CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) permit must be provided as evidence of lawful import.

The AWERB includes scientists, veterinarians, animal care staff, statisticians, and lay members, ensuring a comprehensive ethical review process. Before approval of a project, the following criteria are carefully considered:

- The necessity and justification for using animals, supported by evidence that non-animal alternatives are insufficient to achieve the research aims.
- The suitability of the species selected, as well as the use of the fewest animals required to achieve valid scientific outcomes.
- Efforts to minimise or avoid adverse effects on animal welfare through procedural refinement and care protocols.

City St George's, University of London, is committed to maintaining high standards of animal welfare. This includes providing housing that allows animals to exhibit natural behaviours, ensuring their psychological well-being, and supporting their physical health. We maintain specialist facilities that provide safe, clean, and humane environments tailored to each species' specific needs. Our Biological Research Facility operates under the guidance of skilled and licensed staff, offering full animal care services. Housing and procedural areas are designed to ensure the highest standards of animal welfare. Veterinary support is available at all times, and daily welfare checks are conducted by trained personnel. All staff working with animals receive comprehensive training and appropriate licensing from the Home Office.

Under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (ASPA), the University is required to appoint several designated Named Persons, each with specific responsibilities:

- **Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS):** Provides expert advice on the health and welfare of animals used in research. The University employs an NVS who is available at all times to offer care and guidance as needed.
- **Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO):** A team of NACWOs ensures that animals are transported, housed, and cared for by dedicated, professionally supervised, and appropriately trained staff. Their work focuses on promoting the animals' health and well-being, including the provision of environmental enrichment.
- **Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO):** Ensures that all individuals working with animals receive proper training, supervision, and regular assessments to maintain their competency in performing assigned tasks.
- **Named Information Officer (NIO):** Actively seeks out and disseminates information related to the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement) to all personnel at the establishment, fostering collaboration and the sharing of relevant expertise.

As a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, we are committed to transparent communication about when, how, and why animals are used in research. We engage proactively with the public and media to provide accurate information about our practices and to foster understanding of the importance and ethical management of animal research.

We report annually on our efforts to enhance openness and provide information on the advancements made possible through our research involving animals. City St George's also requires all partner institutions in collaborative animal research projects to uphold similar transparency standards and encourages them to join the Concordat on Openness.

Leading the Way in Responsible Research

City St George's endorses the **ARRIVE (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) guidelines**, developed to improve the reporting, design, and reproducibility of animal studies. We continually assess and update our animal research practices to reflect advances in science and ethics, contributing to the development of best practices in the responsible use of animals in research.

For more information on City St George's policy on the use of animals in research, or to learn more about our commitment to ethical standards, animal welfare, and public openness, please contact us at brfinfo@sgul.ac.uk.