

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON THE USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH

The following outlines the University's position on research involving the use of animals, as defined by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) (*note: ASPA was amended in 2012 to transpose European Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes*).

1. Research involving the use of animals has made, and continues to make, a vital contribution to the understanding, treatment and cure of major human and animal health problems; including cancer, heart disease, polio, diabetes and neurological diseases and disorders. Animal research has also contributed to developing methods for preventing and treating diseases of domestic and farm animals, and for improving their welfare. While new methods have enabled scientists and medical researchers to reduce studies involving the use of animals, some work must continue for further fundamental advances to be made.
2. The University of Aberdeen recognises that the use of animals in research is a privilege carrying with it unique ethical responsibilities. The University only uses animals in research programmes of the highest quality, when their use is justified on scientific, ethical and legal grounds, and when no alternatives are available. In the UK, research activity involving animals, and the acquisition of animals for use in research, is largely controlled by ASPA. Compliance with ASPA is monitored and controlled by the University and the Home Office. All researchers conducting studies involving animals must by law have prior training, relevant experience, and authority from the Home Office. Animals are housed and cared for by dedicated and trained staff under professional supervision in a manner designed to ensure the best health and wellbeing of the animal, with provisions for environmental enrichment. Veterinary Surgeons are available at all times for consultation, care and attendance.
3. All projects affecting animals are subject to the University's ethical review process, via its Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB), in accordance with the University Code of Practice for Research Involving the Use of Animals. This process ensures 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 animals or human beings, or provide a better understanding of the animals themselves; and
 - Projects involving animals are based on well-defined scientific objectives, giving due consideration to the welfare of the animals, minimising the number of animals employed in each test, and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

The Code of Practice also provides advice on standards of animal care, welfare, and accommodation.

4. The University of Aberdeen is committed to the implementation of the 3Rs: the **R**eplacement of animals in research with other experimental models; the **R**eduction in the number of animals used; and the **R**efinement of procedures to prevent suffering. It actively supports the development, validation and adoption of appropriate alternatives to the use of animals, in order to eliminate the need for animals in research.
5. In relation to this, the University fully endorses and supports the [ARRIVE Guidelines](#), developed by the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) to improve standards of reporting and ensure that the data from animal experiments can be fully evaluated and utilised. The guidelines are primarily aimed at scientists writing up their research for publication and for those who are involved in peer review. They are endorsed by over 300 journals, funders, universities and learned societies. This includes major funders of bioscience research (e.g. Wellcome Trust, MRC and BBSRC) meaning compliance with the guidelines is a condition of grant funding. It is the University's expectation that all Aberdeen researchers (where applicable) should publish in line with the ARRIVE Guidelines (subject to editorial policies). This has been publicised to all relevant staff. The University has also introduced the ARRIVE guidelines as part of training sessions held for licence holders.
6. The University is also committed to greater openness in its approach to animal research, and making its research in this area more accessible to the public. To this end, it is now a signatory to the Understanding Animal Research (UAR) Concordat on Openness on Animal Research within the UK. Reflecting the ethos of the Concordat, the University is committed to enhanced clarity, transparency and openness in its communications in relation to animal research, and also to more proactive public engagement in this area.

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