



RESEARCH ETHICS UCD

Use of Animals for Research & Teaching

UCD POLICY

Approved by Governing Authority on 09 February 2016

Last updated: 09 February 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

UCD is committed to ensuring that all staff and students involved in the use of animals for any purposes treat those animals with respect and consideration. Animals form a valuable part of the research and teaching activity of the university. The use of animals for research makes a valuable contribution to the understanding and development of therapies for both human and animal health problems and to improvements/efficiencies in animal production systems. Although alternative in-vitro and computer modelling methods have enabled researchers to reduce studies involving animals in some instances, the use of animals for medical and scientific research is still essential. UCD uses animals for research where there are no alternatives. UCD also uses animals for teaching in order to pass on knowledge to students. UCD ensures that the handling, husbandry and welfare of animals follow the university's best practice procedures as issued by the Animal Research Ethics Committee, the Animal Welfare Body and the Designated Veterinarians.

The principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) underpin all animal related work carried out at the University, thereby ensuring that the number of animals used is minimised and that procedures and care are refined and regularly reviewed to maximise animal welfare.

2. PURPOSE & SCOPE

All research and teaching activities involving protected live animals that are carried out by UCD staff & students (whether on or off campus) or by external personnel operating on UCD premises, require ethical review and are subject to this policy. This policy is intended to give an overview of the applicable statutory and institutional requirements.

3. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

In Ireland, research and teaching activities involving all animals considered to be sentient are governed by Statutory Instrument No. 543 of 2012 (under Directive 2010/63/EU on the Protection of Animals used for Scientific Purposes). The Statutory Instrument specifically excludes non-experimental agricultural and clinical veterinary practices as well as practices undertaken for the purposes of recognised animal husbandry - hence these are all excluded from the scope of this document.

Compliance of research and teaching involving all species covered by the Statutory Instrument is monitored on-site by designated University staff – these include the Compliance Officers, the Designated Veterinarians, the Animal Care and Welfare Officers and the Animal Welfare Body (AWB). The AWB is the internal statutory body charged with protecting the welfare of animals used for research and teaching. In UCD it

reports to the Compliance Committee and communicates directly with the Animal Research Ethics Committee.

All units carrying out research or teaching involving the use of animals are also subject to audits by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA). Any individual performing a procedure on an animal regulated by S.I. No. 543 of 2012 requires the following to be legally compliant:-

- a) An Individual and a Project authorisation from the HPRA.
- b) Relevant training acceptable to the Compliance Officer(s).
- c) Signed-off demonstration of procedural competency as overseen by a designated Training Officer.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 ROLE OF THE ANIMAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

UCD's Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC) is a sub-committee of the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC). It is charged with maintaining a comprehensive overview of all animal-based research and teaching activity related to the university in order to ensure best practice, compliance with relevant legislation and humane treatment of animals. It does this (in association with the AWB) by:-

- a) Review of all teaching and research protocols involving protected live animals to ensure that these operate to the highest ethical standards.
- b) Promoting the development and uptake of appropriate alternatives to the use of live animals in teaching and research at UCD.
- c) Ensuring that the appropriate minimum number of animals required for teaching or valid research purposes are used in every instance.
- d) Promoting the development and uptake of refinements in techniques and ensuring that these improvements are incorporated into day-to-day practice.
- e) Generating awareness of ethical principles and of animal welfare issues.
- f) Assisting researchers and educators in achieving best practice in the care and use of animals.
- g) Issuing codes of practice around the use of animals in research.
- h) Assisting the University in the formulation of policies on the use of animals in research and teaching.

4.2 ETHICAL REVIEW

4.2.1 In addition to ensuring legal compliance, all UCD personnel carrying out research or teaching involving protected live animals (whether on UCD premises or elsewhere) and all external personnel operating on UCD premises must do so in accordance with this policy and the codes of practice that have been approved by the AREC.

4.2.2 It is university policy that all teaching and research activity involving the use of animals that come under SI 543 of 2012 (or larval forms thereof) must have prior ethical approval from the AREC – this includes any activity that involves live

animals, activity that requires the killing of animals and external collaborations where animals are used and where there is significant UCD involvement. AREC application forms, procedures and guidelines for submitting protocols are available at <https://intranet.ucd.ie/researchethics/index.html>. Protocols must be submitted under the supervision of a member of staff at UCD. Protocols involving the use of animals or larval forms not covered by SI 543/2012 must apply for exemption from ethical review.

4.3 In the interests of good governance, UCD requires that the Project Manager signatory on a Project Authorisation application to the HPRA be an established Principal Investigator for research applications or a module coordinator / Head of School nominee for teaching applications.

4.4 The UCD AREC has the right to recommend to the REC the revoking, suspension, modification or reconsideration of an approval at any time and with immediate effect. In the case of serious misconduct, a researcher's or educator's right to use animals in UCD may be revoked following review by the AREC (with subsequent recommendation to the REC) or by the Compliance Committee.

5 CORE PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF ANIMALS

The university actively supports the implementation of the three R's (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement), on which EU Directive 2010/63 and SI 543/2012 on the Protection of Animals used for Scientific Purposes is based. Additionally, all those working with animals are expected to always show respect for the animals and responsible adherence to statutory and ethical requirements.

UCD expects all use of animals to be governed by the five principles: *Replacement, Reduction, Refinement, Respect, and Responsibility*.

5.1 REPLACEMENT

Applications for ethical approval must first satisfy the AREC that the research or teaching activity has intrinsic value. They must demonstrate that they have explored all alternative options not involving animals and that the use of animals is essential for their work. Researchers and educators must always strive to use non-animal alternatives and to give active support to the development and uptake of such alternatives; they must also engage on an ongoing basis with their peers to advance replacement options.

5.2 REDUCTION

Applicants must justify the numbers of animals requested, and in the case of animals to be used for research purposes this must be done by robust statistical analysis. Every research application to the AREC must undergo review by a statistician sitting on the committee before it is approved. Additionally applicants must demonstrate that they will

maximise the amount of data emerging from animal experiments by judicious experimental design or, where the use of animals is for teaching, that they will maximise the educational value of the animals used by application of appropriate educational techniques, including the use of video material.

5.3 REFINEMENT

Animal welfare must be prioritised when designing and carrying out experiments and also when teaching. This is ensured by applying high standards of training and education to researchers, animal care staff and educators as well as creating a culture of care and respect for the animals. Animal welfare must also be a priority in the provision of living space, nutrition and day to day care for the animals. Animal welfare must be prioritised when designing experiments and teaching, and by the application of modern methods of anaesthesia and analgesia.

5.4 RESPECT

5.4.1 Researchers and others working with animals must always be mindful that the animals they are using are sentient creatures and that they must be treated with care and respect at all times. They must remember that being permitted to use animals for research or teaching purposes is a privilege granted by society and that with this come distinct personal ethical and legal responsibilities.

5.4.2 They must design their experiments or teaching classes accordingly, monitor the animals' wellbeing diligently and notify animal care staff or the designated veterinarian without delay if problems arise. If indicated, they must also use the formal reporting mechanisms to report such events to the Animal Welfare Body and/or the AREC.

5.4.3 Staff members or students who have concerns about any aspect of the use of animals can and should report these to one of the Animal Care and Welfare Officers or to one of the Designated Veterinarians. Any such reports will be dealt with appropriately and with discretion.

5.5 RESPONSIBILITY

5.5.1 All those working with live animals must always operate in a responsible fashion and take care to remain compliant with the legal and ethical requirements placed upon them. They must be aware of and operate to the following at all times:

- a) They must be familiar with, and in full compliance with, the requirements of S.I. 543 of 2012.
- b) They must be familiar with the terms of their personal and project authorisations granted to them and must remain in compliance with the requirements placed upon them by the HPRA.

- c) They must be familiar with AWB and AREC procedures and the terms of any ethical permissions granted to them and must remain in compliance with the requirements placed upon them by both bodies.
 - d) They must be properly trained, and signed-off as being competent by the Training Officer, on any procedure/s or euthanasia methods that they wish to carry out.
- 5.5.2 If they are in doubt about any of the above, they must not proceed until they have made the necessary checks.
- 5.5.3 If they discover that they have been in non-compliance with any of the above, they must inform the relevant Compliance Officer without delay.
- 5.5.4 Researchers and educators should note that failure to conduct research or teaching in conformity with good practice or approval decisions or statutory authorisations may amount to misconduct within the meaning of their employment contracts or of the UCD Student Code.
- 5.5.5 Neither the University, nor the AWB, nor the AREC, nor individual members of these bodies accept legal liability for any advice or assistance offered to the applicant or to any third party in the processing of any application or for the subsequent supervision or conduct of the teaching or research. This responsibility rests with the individuals concerned and with their Project Manager.