

Policy on the Use of Animals

Imperial College London's mission is to achieve enduring excellence in research and education in science, engineering, medicine and business for the benefit of society. Research and education are central to the university's work but can raise ethical issues that need careful consideration. Imperial is committed to ensuring that all its research and teaching activities are carried out within a rigorous ethical framework.

From antibiotics and insulin to blood transfusions and treatments for cancer or HIV, many medical achievements in the past century have depended directly or indirectly on research using animals. Only a small percentage of medical and biological research involves the use of animals. That part remains vital, however, to further the development of treatments or cures for medical conditions that blight or destroy the lives of humans - and animals.

Research in the United Kingdom involving scientific procedures that may cause living vertebrates (other than man) and cephalopods pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm must comply with the requirements of the *European Directive 63/2010/EU* on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, and with the provisions of the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA)*, as amended in 2012, and any guidance and codes of practice issued under the Act. No such work involving animals can be done at Imperial without the approval of Imperial's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) and the Home Office. The AWERB Committee - which includes members who are vets, animal care staff, scientists, lay people - some of whom are independent of the university, scrutinize proposals for their scientific and ethical justification of animal use. The Committee will also provide information and advice about ethical analysis, best practice in animal welfare and new developments in techniques that avoid animal use. The UK law which governs the use of animals is widely viewed as the most rigorous piece of legislation of its type in the world and the Home Office Inspectors who administer it maintain an audit programme of facilities where work is carried out.

It is Imperial policy that animals may only be used for scientific or educational purposes where there are no satisfactory or reasonably practical alternatives to their use. The university is committed to ensuring that all staff and students involved in animal-based work treat animals with respect and consideration, and develop a culture of care in all aspects of their work. Imperial is committed to the principles of replacement, reduction and refinement (the 3Rs) in animal research and all researchers are expected to implement, wherever possible, models that replace, reduce or refine the use of animals in their research. Animals held for scientific or educational purposes must be maintained under the highest standards of care and welfare. All those working with animals are expected to take a proactive interest in the welfare of animals in their charge, and to ensure that their work complies with the highest ethical standards.

Imperial expects all its staff and students to comply with this policy whether working at the university, or otherwise with collaborators elsewhere. Work undertaken overseas must comply with relevant local legislative requirements, with funder T & Cs, and be conducted in accordance with Imperial's ethical standards. In order to ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with this policy, Imperial staff and post-graduate students whose work involves the use of animals (including but not limited to the use of living animals, the use of animal derived materials and animal derived data) are required to consult the Animal Use guidance notes and register their studies (and gain any necessary approvals) accordingly.

[Read more about animal research at Imperial](#)

Some examples of medical advances that have been achieved through the use of animals are detailed by Understanding Animal Research - see [UAR](#).