

The University of Reading Animal Research Policy

Scope

This document describes the policy of the University in respect of research using live animals. It explains what we do, how it is regulated and who is involved. It should be read in conjunction with the [University of Reading Ethics Framework](#), which sets out broader ethical principles for all our activities.

Overview

The University is committed to high quality research with global impact. Our research contributes to the furthering of knowledge of the biological and chemical mechanisms of life. It has made, and continues to make, important advances in the understanding and treatment of a range of human health problems including cardiovascular, neurological, metabolic disorders and psychological conditions. Our research embraces animal health, welfare and nutrition as well as the impact of humans and animals on the environment.

Much of this research is conducted without the use of live animals. However, the University permits the use of animals in research when this is necessary to replicate the complex interactions of a whole living body and there are no practical alternatives.

The University is a signatory to the '[Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK](#)', joining over 120 other UK universities, charities, commercial companies, research councils, learned societies and umbrella bodies in a commitment to help the public understand more about animal research. The Concordat is an initiative promoted by [Understanding Animal Research](#) (UAR) and the University has been welcomed as one of the organisation's 15 '[Leaders in Openness](#)'.

All our animal research is closely monitored, is overseen by the University's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) and is regulated and carried out according to standards, conditions and authorities set down by the UK licensing authority – [.Animals in Science Regulation Unit - GOV.UK](#)

Our animal research

Regulated live animal research is conducted in the Schools of Agriculture Policy and Development; Biological Sciences and Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy.

The number of project licences held varies from year to year but is typically between 10 and 15. The list of current projects can be found [here](#).

Between approximately 1,000 and 4,000 animals are used in animal research by the University each year. Typically some 90% of these are mice and rats. Other species used include cattle, sheep, pigs llamas and Zebra fish. Dogs, cats, horses and non-human primates are not used in research at Reading. Data on animal use are available [here](#).

Governance

In common with all regulated live-animal research in the UK, the work at Reading takes place under the authority of the [Animals \(Scientific Procedures\) Act 1986 \(ASPA\)](#), overseen by the Home Office [Animals in Science Regulation Unit](#).

Animal research can only take place when the establishment is licensed (the University holds one Establishment Licence). The work to be undertaken is described in an appropriate project licence (between 10 and 15 licences are held by researchers from the University at any one time) and all individuals conducting live animal procedures are trained and hold appropriate personal licences (some 90 individuals at Reading hold such licences).

Applications to hold project licences (which are ultimately reviewed, authorised and issued by the Home Office - ASRU) must first be considered and approved by the University's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB). Chaired by the University Establishment Licence Holder, the AWERB's members include vets, animal welfare officers, experienced animal scientists and lay people (independent from the University).

The AWERB has, in addition, a wider remit to advise and direct University staff on all matters relating to animal welfare and the regulation and governance of animal research at Reading. Mindful of the imperative of implementing the principles and practices of replacement, reduction and refinement (the 3Rs) the AWERB has established a dedicated 3Rs sub-group. This group is charged with promoting a better balance between 'science' and animal welfare by a) providing a central source of 3Rs advice and guidance and b) motivating and facilitating wider staff involvement in 3Rs advances.

Dr Richard Messer
University Secretary

LINKS

[The Home Office: Research and Testing Using Animals](#)

This is the official Home Office site providing information on the legislation surrounding research involving animals.

[The National Centre for the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animals in Research](#)

An independent scientific organisation that works in partnership with bioscience research funders, academia, industry, regulators and animal welfare organisations to advance the principles of replacement, refinement and reduction.

[Understanding Animal Research](#)

Understanding Animal Research aims to achieve broad understanding and acceptance of the humane use of animals in biomedical research in the UK, to advance science and medicine.

[Replacing Animal Research](#)

Replacing Animal Research ultimate aim is the elimination of the need to use laboratory animals through the development, validation and acceptance of replacement alternative methods but recognises that the immediate abolition of all laboratory animal use is not possible as essential medical research must continue, so that effective treatments for diseases that lessen the length and quality of human and animal life can be found.

[Laboratory Animal Science Association](#)

This is a professional body that has been set up to advance scientific knowledge and understanding of the use, care and welfare of laboratory animals and promote refinement, reduction and replacement.

[RSPCA - Animals in Science Department](#)

This is a department of the RSPCA working with those involved in the regulation, care and use of animals in scientific experiments

VERSION	SECTION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVING AUTHORITY	APPROVAL DATE	START DATE	NEXT REVIEW
10.0	AGS	AD	Annually	AWERB	03/02/25	1/8/16	Autumn term 2027