

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE USE OF SENTIENT ANIMALS IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

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## 1. Statement of University Policy

The use of sentient animals in research and teaching at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) is restricted to observational and behavioural studies only. No research and teaching activities that fall within the scope of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) amended 2012 are carried out.

## 2. Background

When the University's research governance documentation was originally drafted in 2004/5, no research involving the use of sentient animals was being carried out or envisaged. For that reason the research governance documentation referred solely to research involving human participants. To take account of a change whereby the University began research and teaching in animal cognition and animal behaviour, it became necessary in 2011 to extend current ethics and governance policies and procedures to cover this development.

The University notes the existence of the *Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK*. This was published in 2014, on the premise that "the public deserves to know why and how animals are used on its behalf in scientific, medical and veterinary research in the UK". Because none of our research and teaching activities fall within the scope of ASPA, the University is not currently a signatory to this *Concordat*.

## 3. Current and future research areas

In addition to the previously mentioned observational and behavioural studies, CCCU is becoming involved in new areas of biological and biomedical research and teaching. These cover a range of scientific disciplines and may employ a range of methods including computer modelling, *in vitro* cell-based techniques, clinical trials in humans, and animal based research projects. New areas of work involving mammalian embryos will not proceed beyond the point at which the embryo is deemed to become a protected animal, and will not therefore fall within the scope of ASPA.

## 4. Guiding principles

The main guiding principle in all research and teaching involving animals undertaken at CCCU is the requirement to use humane techniques at all times. The University therefore supports the principle of the 'Three Rs' (Russell & Burch, 1959) when using animals in research and teaching:

- Replacement - the use of non-animal subjects wherever possible, and the research, development and validation of new non-animal research and testing models;
- Reduction - where replacement is not currently possible, the minimising of the number of animals used by, for example, better research design, appropriate statistical methods and use of information databases; and
- Refinement - improvement of experimental procedures and aspects of housing and husbandry so as to minimise risks to welfare.

The use of animals in behavioural research and teaching can raise important ethical issues. Such studies, though usually non-invasive and involving observation only, can involve manipulation of the animals in order to answer the research questions. It is essential that any such manipulation carried out in studies at CCCU falls outside the scope of ASPA.

## 5. Definition of animal sentience

CCCU recognises the definition of sentience used by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW):

*It is now widely accepted that all vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish) are sentient - that they have the capacity to feel pain, to experience distress and*

*suffering, to experience both positive and negative feelings. Scientific evidence is that this also possibly applies to some invertebrates, such as cephalopods and crustaceans.*

If there is any uncertainty, the animal in question should be treated as if it were sentient; from an ethical point of view, it is essential that this is taken into account at all times.

All use of the term 'animals' elsewhere in this document refers to sentient animals as defined above.

## **6. The welfare of animals used in research and teaching**

CCCU endorses the welfare principles promoted by UFAW as encompassed within the Animal Welfare Act (2006).

The Act demands that those responsible for animals take all reasonable steps to ensure that the needs of an animal for which they are responsible are met to the extent required by good practice. An animal's needs are taken to include:

- its need for a suitable environment;
- its need for a suitable diet;
- its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and
- its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

No animals are kept for research or teaching purposes at any of the University's campuses. The animals used in behavioural research and teaching are either studied in zoos or in their natural habitats, or are domestic pets or livestock whose participation is conditional on the permission of their owners. In all cases the University expects those responsible for the day-to-day care of these animals to follow the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act (2006).

## **7. Governance of research and teaching activities involving the use of animals**

Except for purely observational studies carried out in natural habitats or zoos, all research and teaching activities involving interaction with animals will be governed as follows:

- Research activities will be the subject of a full ethical review by the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee (reinforced as necessary with additional expertise from e.g. a veterinary surgeon). A FREC application form specific to studies involving animal studies will be used for these reviews. The Ethics Review Checklist has been revised to ensure that all animal studies are submitted for full ethical review.
- Teaching activities involving the use of animals should be subjected to ethical review on a course basis prior to validation and revalidation.
- The ethical review of research and teaching activities involving animals will be undertaken against the criteria set out in section 8 of this document.
- Informed consent for all research and teaching activities will be obtained in advance from the owners of all animals participating in these activities. This will follow the same format – i.e. an information sheet and consent form – as that used for human participants.

## **8. Ethical criteria for research and teaching activities involving the use of animals**

In reaching an opinion on the ethical soundness of an application involving the use of animals, the Ethics Committee/Panel will determine whether the following criteria have been met:

- Does the researcher/teacher have appropriate training and experience to carry out this work? [This will be determined from the applicant's CV and answers to the relevant question on the application form]
- Has adequate consideration been given to the principles of replacement, reduction and refinement (the 'Three Rs')? In particular:
  - are animals essential for the study in question; have the alternatives been considered? This is particularly relevant for teaching activities where alternatives such as video records of previous work or computer simulations should have been considered;
  - has a power calculation been undertaken to ensure that the number of animals involved is minimised without a detrimental effect on their welfare?
  - has the application undergone a satisfactory peer review to ensure that the study does not unnecessarily repeat work already done, and that the design and conduct of the study maximises scientific benefit while minimizing potential welfare issues for the animals?
- Does the application take full account of the welfare of the animals involved before, during and after the study in compliance with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act (2006)?
- Is the Information Sheet for Owners fit for purpose?
- Has the applicant weighed the potential gain in knowledge from the study against any adverse consequences for the animals involved?
- In the event of adverse consequences being identified, what steps if any will be taken to minimise or ameliorate these for the animals?
- Has a risk assessment that complies with CCCU requirements been carried out? This should include the personal safety of the research/teaching teams.
- Does the application comply with the appropriate professional guidelines, e.g. the British Psychological Society, the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour?

## 9. Further reading

Russell, W.M.S. & Burch, R.L. (1959). *The Principles of Humane Experimentation*. London: Methuen. Reprinted 1992

Understanding Animal Research (2014) *Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK*.

<http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/files/6614/1207/5133/concordat-on-openness-on-animal-research-in-the-uk.pdf>

Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (2006). Guidelines for the treatment of animals in behavioural research and teaching. *Animal Behaviour*, **71**, 245-253.

[http://www.elsevier.com/framework\\_products/promis\\_misc/ASAB2006.pdf](http://www.elsevier.com/framework_products/promis_misc/ASAB2006.pdf)

The British Psychological Society (2012). *Guidelines for Psychologists Working with Animals*.

[http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/guideline\\_for\\_psychologists\\_working\\_with\\_animals\\_2012\\_rep55\\_2012\\_web.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/guideline_for_psychologists_working_with_animals_2012_rep55_2012_web.pdf)

Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (website):

<http://www.ufaw.org.uk/index.php>

General information on animal ethics issues (website):

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/animals/>