



## Research involving animals at the University of Bath

The University of Bath undertakes various projects in medical research and medically-associated biological research. This work is funded by the Medical Research Council, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, and major medical charities including the Wellcome Trust, Cancer Research UK, British Heart Foundation, Arthritis Research Campaign and Diabetes UK. The University carries out world-class research in this area and we are proud of the contribution we make to the advancement of science and the alleviation of human suffering. Animal Research carried out in universities and research centres in the UK has helped to make treatments possible in many areas including replacement heart valves; insulin for diabetics; the polio vaccine; kidney dialysis; open heart surgery; hip replacement surgery; and treatment for Parkinson's Disease.

The University takes the view that work on animals is essential for the progress of medical research, in particular in the search for new therapies for distressing diseases such as cancer, arthritis, neuro-degeneration, and heart disease. We make considerable use of other methods such as tissue culture and computer modelling, but certain properties are shown only by whole animals. For example although various properties of smooth muscle cells can be studied in tissue culture, the regulation of blood pressure can only be studied in whole animals.

Research in the UK involving vertebrate animals is regulated, within the framework of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, by the Home Office Animals Scientific Procedures Division and Inspectorate. All work on vertebrate animals is conducted under Home Office Licence. This means that the projects being undertaken have been through an ethical review process, and have then been assessed by a Home Office Inspector to ensure that the benefits from the research outweigh any possible discomfort to the animals. At the University of Bath we work with rodents, amphibians and fish. No work is conducted involving dogs, cats, horses or primates. Under Home Office regulation, probably the most rigorous in the world, no single animal procedure can be carried out unless it can be shown that there is no viable alternative and that it is likely to contribute to medical advances or our understanding of biological processes.

Some University of Bath projects are undertaken to advance biological knowledge rather than to search for cures for specific diseases. This knowledge is often an essential component of future research more directly associated with human benefit. The type of procedures that the Home Office would permit for work aimed at advancing biological knowledge would typically be mild or moderate, for example simple injections, changes of diet or minor surgery. Any procedures involving surgery would be performed under anaesthesia and with appropriate analgesia. All of our work is carried out under appropriate veterinary supervision.

Our animals are maintained to the highest standard in premises that are open to inspection by the Home Office at any time. Considerable sums have been spent, and will continue to be spent, upgrading these facilities. The new facilities will, for example, incorporate the latest air handling and temperature control technology to guarantee an even more comfortable environment for our rats and mice. We are confident that this new facility will enable us to remain one of the leading centres for implementation of modern guidelines on animal health and welfare.

Statistical details of all scientific procedures performed on living animals are collected from licensees and published annually by the Home Office. All work conducted at the University of Bath is eventually published in scientific journals that are available to be read by anyone. Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 sets out an exemption from the right to access information held by a public body if release of the information is likely to endanger the physical or mental health or the safety of any individual. Details identifying individual members of staff involved in particular research projects will not, therefore, be disclosed.

More information and guidance about relevant legislation is available from the Home Office at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/animals/>

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