CODE OF ETHICAL PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTATION INVOLVING THE USE OF ANIMALS

Code for Research/Experimentation Involving the Use of Animals

1. For the purpose of this code, ‘animals’ will be defined as in the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. All use of animals in scientific research in the UK is governed, through the registration of premises and facilities and through the granting of project and personal licences, by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Central to the Act, is recognition of the need for a balanced judgement: “In determining whether and on what terms to grant a project licence the Secretary of State shall weigh the likely adverse effects on the animals concerned against the benefits likely to accrue as a result of the programme to be specified in the licence.”

2. In compliance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, there is a requirement on the University to have in place an ethical review process to ensure that explicit judgements are made to weigh the harm (or cost) to the animals used in the experimentation against the likely benefits of the research. The provisions of the Act require researchers engaging in experimentation involving the use of animals to follow rigorous procedures with respect to prior approval of projects, the welfare of experimental animals and humane experimental techniques. Researchers who do not comply with the provisions of the Act may be subject to internal disciplinary measures in addition to any sanctions imposed by the Home Office.

3. The University is committed to the three Rs – Refinement, Reduction and Replacement of experiments involving animals. It is the responsibility of the Biosciences Services Unit Management Committee to consider all new applications for project licences. All applicants are required to address:

(a) the justification for the use of animals, and
(b) the balance between the likely cost to the animals and the expected benefit arising from the research.

It is the responsibility of the University Ethics Committee to audit on a regular basis all matters relating to experiments involving the use of animals.

4. The University has a further committee with an area of responsibility for animal experimentation:
   • Genetic Modification Safety Committee

The main responsibility of the Genetic Modification Safety Committee is to advise those carrying out genetic modifications on the health and safety aspects, in accordance with the Genetically Modified Organisms Regulations 1992. The Committee is responsible for assessing risks prior to the commencement of any new research project involving genetic modification. Appropriate forms for submitting project details to the Committee can be obtained from the University Safety Officer.

5. The following code of conduct must be observed by all researchers engaging in experimentation involving animals:
(a) thought should be given to the implementation of the 3Rs in any new experimental design;

(b) all relevant permissions, licences and approvals should be obtained from the appropriate internal committees and external agencies prior to the commencement of the project;

(c) high standards should be set for the care and welfare of experimental animals and experimental techniques should be designed to minimise distress to the animals;

(d) humane techniques should be employed for the despatch of experimental animals.

6. Researchers who do not comply with this code of conduct jeopardise the reputation of the University and may be subject to disciplinary measures.

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