



Open Response to the PETA UK Campaign: “Please Stop Tests on Animals”



Thank you for writing to express your concerns regarding animal experimentation at the University of Bath via the PETA UK Universities Campaign.

The humane use of animals in research is fundamental in the quest to understand disease mechanisms and thereby develop improved treatments or even cures for chronic and distressing conditions such as cancers, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative disease and depression. A new medicine must, by law, be tested in animals before it can be tested in humans. So, without animal research, we would not have new vaccines, cancer drugs, blood pressure medication, insulin, or inhalers.

The University of Bath fully supports the principles of the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), using the minimal number of animals required to generate credible data and refining the way experiments are carried out to ensure minimal suffering. Technological advances are offering us an increasing range of alternatives to animal research, and the University is committed to the development of these techniques. In fact, when an alternative method is available, the University is legally required to use it. We make considerable use of other experimental models such as tissue culture and computer modelling but vertebrates have complex interactive systems and the measurement and analysis of these mechanisms requires whole animals; we have not yet reached the point where alternative techniques can entirely replace the need for animals in research.

At the University of Bath, we have a dedicated team of animal care and welfare staff and our veterinary surgeon is on-call at all times to ensure the well-being and ethical treatment of our animals. High welfare standards are at the heart of our animal research and ensuring the animals receive the best care is also important for successful science.

The University is a signatory of the “Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK”, a voluntary commitment to improve transparency concerning animal experiments. We have dedicated webpages (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/topics/animal-research/>) and publicise information about our research including our policies, the type and number of animals used at the University each year, and our commitments to animal welfare and the 3Rs.

While opinions may differ, we hope this reply provides clarity on why animal studies are necessary and the guarantee that the University of Bath acknowledges its responsibilities to the animals under our care.