



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

POLICY FOR RESEARCH ON ANIMALS

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¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



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1. Description

The Policy for research on animals at Umeå University aims to stipulate what applies to experiments on animals as regards ethics, rules, and legislation.

2. Background

Animals in research

The use of animals in research is something that interests many people and is an important issue related to research ethics. Animal research is used for scientific purposes, predominantly within medicine and the natural sciences. Umeå University conducts research in several subject fields, for example research into diseases such as diabetes, infections, neurological conditions, and cancer. Umeå University also runs projects that look at how we treat nature and our environment and how this affects animal life. Many projects can be conducted using microbes, insects, and cultured cells. However, research on animals is sometimes necessary to better understand physiological conditions and how diseases and environmental changes affect an entire organism.

All use of animals at Umeå University for scientific and teaching purposes must be conducted in such a way that the animal is not subjected to unnecessary suffering. The animal must also have the best possible environment and the animal's health and well-being must be central to its care.

The sustainability perspective has been integrated into this policy. Due to the content and nature of this document, the student, work environment, collaboration, accessibility, and internationalisation perspectives have not been integrated. This policy document is not regarded as having any consequences for gender equality at Umeå University.

3. Policy

3.1 An ethical review must be conducted before any research on animals may take place

Animal research is strictly regulated and is subject to Swedish law. In 2013, Sweden ratified the EU directive on the protection of animals. In Sweden, all types of research on animals must be approved by an animal research ethics committee (the Court of Appeal for Northern Norrland) before the research may begin. Animal research is only permitted when no other methods are available. The animal research ethics committee comprises a court of appeal judge, researcher representatives and laypeople. It is their task to balance the



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impact on the animal against the benefits of the research. Before an ethics application can be processed by the committee, the application must be reviewed by people with specialist knowledge of animal research and who are familiar with the conditions for conducting the experiments at the experimental animal facility at Umeå University.

3.2 Animal research follows the 3R principle

Reducing the number of experiments on animals and limiting an individual animal's suffering is desirable. Hence, planning and conducting experiments on animals follows the 3R principle², (reduce, refine, replace).

This involves:

- Reducing the number of animals used, as few as possible, but enough to ensure a statistically sound result and animals that are best suited to the purpose of the research.
- Refining the living conditions and close environments in cages, and minimising stress, discomfort, and pain in connection with the experimental methods.
- Replacing existing methods requiring the use of live animals where possible, by following the development of new, alternative methods, techniques, and platforms.

3.3 All staff must receive training in laboratory animal science for researchers

All staff (research, teaching, and technical and administrative staff) who work with research animals and conduct research on animals must have completed statutory training in laboratory animal science before they begin their experiments. The training covers current legislation, ethics, keeping and rearing animals and practical and technical knowledge of the species and elements relevant to the experiments to be conducted.

3.4 Umeå University

- All communication about research on animals must be transparent and factual. The University's website contains information about the University's research on animals.
- The University should always respond to documents circulated for comment when they are the referral body for matters related to animal experiments.

² The 3R principle permeates both Swedish and EU law on animal experiments. Sweden has ratified the European Parliament and the Council's Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals. This means that everyone working with research animals must apply the 3R principle (source: Swedish Board of Agriculture).



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- The University aims to have representatives on all Swedish authorities on animal research (committees, sub-committees, expert groups etc.).
- The same high ethical demands as those of Umeå University should be aimed for when participating in national and international collaborations.
- This policy for research on animals will ensure that both research and the animals' circumstances will improve in line with development, meaning animal research is conducted with the highest skills set in relation to the knowledge about the optimal handling of research animals. This policy is reviewed annually and updated when necessary, following suggestions from a work group included in the Animal Welfare Body at Umeå University, prior to a new decision by the Vice-Chancellor.³

³ The organisation, composition and tasks of the Animal Welfare Body at Umeå University (DO) are regulated in the Instruction for the Umeå Centre for Comparative Biology (UCCB) (FS 1.1-1063-19).