

Ethical guidelines for the use of animals in teaching and research at the University of Southern Denmark

1. Introduction

These guidelines apply to the use of animals both in teaching and in research at the university.

At the University of Southern Denmark animals are used in a teaching and a research context. In this respect, the university has to ensure that the use of such animals is ethically defensible.

The point of departure for a defensible use of animals for experimental purposes can be found in the principle of the three R's:

Refinement – all experiments with animals must be performed using the least stressful technique possible.

Reduction – as few animals as possible should be used, without quality being compromised.

Replacement – and in vitro or other alternative methods must be used whenever possible.

The use of animals for teaching purposes can only be permitted in order to practise a method or to communicate knowledge relevant for a course of study if the method or the knowledge in question can only be acquired through the use of animals.

The use of animals in research can only be permitted if these trials cannot be carried out in cell, tissue or organ cultures or using other methods that do not require intact animals.

The use of animals in teaching and research should be planned and executed with the greatest degree of professionalism and responsibility and with as much transparency as possible.

The Biomedical Laboratory¹ is the university's central facility for animal experimentation, and its task is to procure, accommodate and care for test animals and to conduct veterinary inspections on them. The Biomedical Laboratory must ensure that the university's obligations are fulfilled and that the highest possible national and international standards for animal welfare are observed.

2. Approval

Approval must be obtained from the Animal Experiments Inspectorate before an experiment can be performed on an animal. The killing of an animal cannot legally be considered an animal experiment. The involvement of dead animals in teaching and research can, therefore, take place without approval, but the animal must be killed using accepted methods.

¹ The Biomedical Laboratory comprises facilities on J.B. Winsløws Vej 23, 5000 Odense C.

The involvement of animals in teaching can only take place when the animal is under general anaesthetic and when approval to do so given by the Animal Experiments Inspectorate can be produced.

The holder of such approval must ensure that all conditions of the approval are met and that all those involved in the experiment have the necessary skills to carry out an animal experiment. The holder must also ensure that all animals involved in the experiment are registered for logging at the start of the experiment.

The holder of the approval has responsibility for all phases of the animal experiment and must inform the Biomedical Laboratory through dialogue and notification about all aspects relating to animal welfare, to health and to the workplace, such as the use of toxic materials, radio isotopes, classified microorganisms or genetically modified organisms.

3. The procurement of test animals

Test animals covered by the ministerial order on animal experimentation, Order no. 88 of 30/01/2013 may only be procured with the prior agreement of the Biomedical Laboratory and only from a supplier certified by the authorities.

The requisition of these test animals is undertaken by the Biomedical Laboratory unless there is a particular agreement to do otherwise. A valid health report must be produced before animals can be accepted by the Biomedical Laboratory.

Certain species (birds, fish, amphibians, frogs and wild animals in captivity) that are used at the Institute for Biology² can be procured directly provided the conditions of the ministerial order are met.

Wild animals in captivity must not be used for animal experimentation unless the Animal Experiments Inspectorate has given permission so to do.

4. Accommodation of test animals and conduct of experiments

The accommodation of test animals covered by the ministerial order on animal experimentation, Order no. 88 of 30/01/2013 may take place only at the Biomedical Laboratory.

The Biomedical Laboratory has the task of looking after the test animals and of carrying out veterinary inspections of the animals before, during and after the experiment.

The accommodation and care of certain species (birds, fish, amphibians, frogs and wild animals in captivity) must take place at the Institute for Biology.

² The Institute for Biology comprises facilities on Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M and at the Research Centre for Marine Biology, Hindsholmvej 11, 5300 Kerteminde.

All test animals and all animal experiments must be available for immediate inspection.

5. Animal welfare issues

If the experiment results in pain, suffering, anxiety or permanent damage to the animal beyond that described in the approval, the experiment must immediately be discontinued.

Animal welfare issues and humane endpoints for an experiment must be described prior to the experiment starting. In the event that the fixed limits established there are exceeded, the experiment must immediately be discontinued, which will as a rule involve the euthanasia of the animals.

The University of Southern Denmark has established two Animal Welfare Bodies in accordance with the ministerial order on animal experimentation, Order no. 88 of 30/01/2013, chapter 19. An Animal Welfare Body has been established at the Biomedical Laboratory for the performance of the tasks described in §70 of the order for the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Odense University Hospital. An Animal Welfare Body has been established at the Institute for Biology to carry out the same tasks for animals accommodated at the Institute for Biology.

6. Centrally determined rules

You are referred to the homepage of the Danish Animal Experiments Inspectorate www.dyreforsogstilsynet.dk for information about the Animal Experiments Inspectorate and animal experimentation.