

Guidance for university web pages on animal research

Site content

- **University policy:** The main/landing page should contain a clear statement of the University's policy on animal research. This should include a commitment to the 3Rs. The 3Rs will need to be defined in simple terms accessible to the lay person – see the [NC3Rs website](#) for examples. (Alternatively, the sentiment of the 3Rs can be expressed without using the terms replacement, reduction and refinement at this stage).
- **Responsibility and accountability:** The main animal research page should demonstrate that the University takes responsibility and accountability for its animal research. This is much more powerful than merely defending the need for animal research in general terms and citing compliance with the relevant legislation, such as the ASPA (see below). Better to signal that the University strives for best practice in the conduct of animal research because it considers this is the right thing to do and that it supports high quality science and impact. For an example, see the '[Research involving animals](#)' page of the University of Manchester website.
- **FAQs:** It is valuable to have a separate page focused on common questions and misconceptions about animal research, such as why animals are used in research, when and how. This can be a good way of directly addressing concerns the public may have. It can be helpful to present this information as a series of FAQs, so that visitors can readily access answers to the questions they are most interested in. The questions should be answered accurately and honestly (e.g. avoid being overly dismissive of alternative methods).
- **Statistics on animal use:** The FAQs can be an appropriate place to provide information on the numbers of animals and species used at the University (e.g. based on Home Office returns). Information on severity levels broken down by species is given by some universities. Alternatively, a separate page highlighting animal numbers at the University can be helpful. The key point is to ensure transparency and easy access since this is likely to be the main information sought.
- **Openness Concordat:** If the University is a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research, then this should also be stated along with a link to the Concordat. It may also be helpful to list the four main commitments of the Concordat on the web page. As a reminder, Commitment 1 contains the following "*When we communicate about the use of animals in research, we should provide accurate descriptions of the benefits, harms and limitations of such research, be realistic about the potential outputs of such research, and be open about its impact on animal welfare and the ethical considerations involved.*"

- **Legislation and named persons:** It is appropriate to mention legislation such as the ASPA, and to refer to Named Persons and how they contribute to animal research oversight and improving animal welfare. However, care should be taken to ensure the University does not appear to be hiding behind the legislation (see Responsibility and accountability above).
- **Highest standards:** If claiming implementation of the 'highest standards' of animal care/welfare, then this needs to be explained/evidenced. Compliance with the mandatory minima in the Home Office Code of Practice and Directive 2010/63/EU is usually not the highest standard of animal care/welfare that can be provided.
- **AWERB:** A separate page can be included on the AWERB, outlining its function/purpose and ideally its reporting structure. This is a suitable location to link to AWERB minutes. For an example, see the [AWERB page](#) of the University of Cambridge.
- **External links:** Links to external websites are encouraged but only where they are relevant and provide useful information. Care should be taken that they do not replace information that really ought to be on the University's own web pages.

The 3Rs

- **3Rs strategy:** There should be a separate page elaborating the University's commitment to the 3Rs and how it delivers this in practice. (The 3Rs self-assessment tool that the NC3Rs is currently developing will help universities to develop a narrative about this). Where appropriate, this page can state that the University co-funds an NC3Rs regional programme manager to promote and support application of the 3Rs within the University (the NC3Rs can supply a suitable form of wording) and mention any 3Rs Working Groups/Committees.
- **3Rs case studies:** Ideally, there should be examples of science and activities being undertaken at the University to advance the 3Rs. These case studies should be genuinely impressive 3Rs work and not something that ought to be done anyway, such as the provision of suitable animal housing and environmental enrichment. The case studies are an opportunity to highlight the importance and need for the science whilst also emphasising the 3Rs aspects, or to illustrate the link between good animal welfare and good quality scientific data. See the '[Finding alternatives](#)' page of the University of Sheffield, and the '[Improvements and alternatives](#)' page of Imperial College London. The NC3Rs can help identify 3Rs work at your University. Where researchers have external 3Rs research funding, from the NC3Rs for example, the awards should be highlighted on staff web pages.
- **ARRIVE Guidelines:** Most UK universities endorse the ARRIVE Guidelines – see the [NC3Rs website](#). There should be a statement about this on the main animal research or 3Rs page.

Other points to note

- **Search engine optimisation:** The main animal research web page (containing the policy statement and sub-menus) should be readily accessible via a simple internet search (e.g. of

the University's name and 'animal research').

- **Navigation:** Sub-menus and page headings should be clear and easily navigable.
- **Accessibility:** All of the web pages should be written in a style accessible to a lay audience.
- **Images and video:** Use of images and videos is encouraged, as they make for more informative and engaging pages. They can also help to challenge misconceptions about animal facilities/research and improving understanding and openness. They should ideally be taken at the University (i.e. do not use stock images) and if not, should be representative of what is the norm at the University.
- **Password protection:** It is not recommended to have content hidden behind password protection (i.e. staff log-in to secure content should not be on these public pages).
- **Accuracy and balance:** The web pages should convey an accurate and balanced approach to the use of animals in research.