**MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY**

**ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

**UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**Middlesex University Statement on the Use of Animals in Research, Practice and Teaching**

1. In the UK, the use of ‘*living animals’* (see definition below) in research is controlled by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 (“ASPA”). The amended version of ASPA implementing European Directive 2010/63EU became effective from 1 January 2013[[1]](#footnote-1). Directive 2010/63/EU established revised measures for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and redefines ‘*protected animal’ (see definition below)*.
2. No research activities that fall within the scope of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), amended 2012, are currently carried out at Middlesex University.
3. In the case of research on animals not covered by the ASPA, researchers at Middlesex University and its partners, wherever possible, should seek to adopt procedures and techniques that avoid the use of animals (i.e., non-human animals) in their research. Any research on animals must be declared in full on the Research Ethics Application Form (on MORE or equivalent) and submitted to the researcher’s Research Ethics Committee for review, i.e. all projects involving animals are subject to prior ethical review.
4. The main guiding principle in all research and teaching involving animals undertaken at Middlesex University is the requirement to use humane techniques at all times. The University therefore supports the principle of the ‘Three Rs’ (Russell & Burch, 1959) when using animals in research and teaching:
   1. Replacement - The least sentient species[[2]](#footnote-2) with the appropriate physiology is used or replaced with other experimental models.
   2. Reduction - The number of animals used is the minimum sufficient to provide adequate statistical power to answer the question posed.
   3. Refinement - The severity of procedures performed on animals is kept to a minimum. Experiments should be kept as short as possible. Appropriate anesthesia, analgesia and humane end points should be used to minimize any pain and suffering.

Applicants will be asked by the Ethics Committee to modify their research plans if their justifications are not deemed sufficient.

1. Researchers planning to work with animals need to be aware of their responsibilities and ensure they have appropriate training.
2. In research, teaching and/or practice related activities involving Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI), documented evidence is required to indicate that the animal handler possesses an awareness of safety, work hazards and risks to both the animal and other participants as part of the risk assessment and ethical review process. The activities the animal participates in should be appropriate for its abilities and strength.
3. The guidelines of the ASPA should be taken into consideration, even when the use of animals is not governed by the ASPA, as they may indicate best practice. In addition to this, guidance from relevant professional bodies and societies should be followed e.g.,
4. Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour [http://asab.nottingham.ac.uk/ethics/guidelines.php](https://owa.mdx.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=mDnaPAt8UUe2XhL4ZjS7X52_S-4eXNFIhp7Pd73bL2OEKrkry-8PuccZjAzAbaeDFXcdUJbLpUQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fasab.nottingham.ac.uk%2fethics%2fguidelines.php),
5. Society of Biology [https://www.societyofbiology.org/policy/policy-issues/biomedical-sciences/animal-research](https://owa.mdx.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=JW3fw4WcS0ChT2OiSxQYTabrVFfHXdFI7Bt5wN3mrajx8Hebmw3uXL2KOyNlkUbwCpUGwH7PQXk.&URL=https%3a%2f%2fwww.societyofbiology.org%2fpolicy%2fpolicy-issues%2fbiomedical-sciences%2fanimal-research)
6. Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Policies/animals_in_research.pdf>
7. Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/RFG/Grant-conditions/Pages/Research-governance.aspx>
8. The British Psychological Society (BPS) <http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/guideline_for_psychologists_working_with_animals_2012_rep55_2012_web.pdf> and <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-guidelines-psychologists-working-animals>
9. In addition to the requirements of ASPA, Middlesex University requires that excellent care and welfare standards for animals used in research, practice and teaching activities is maintained at all times as part of our general duty of care towards any protected animal under the Animal Welfare Act (2006). We know that animals can experience pain and distress in experiments and that this can be severe. The way that animals are bred, transported, housed and handled may also cause suffering. Therefore researchers at Middlesex University and its partner institutions must take a constructive, practical approach, liaising with people involved in animal use in government, industry and science to ensure that:

* The necessity and justification for using animals is always critically reviewed.
* Everything possible is done to speed up the development of humane alternatives.
* Every possible step is taken to reduce the numbers of animals used, and to significantly reduce their suffering and improve their welfare.

1. Researchers undertaking fieldwork should seek to minimize interference with the focal species as well as populations and eco-systems of which they are a part of. It is the responsibility of the researcher to check whether a licence is required for fieldwork in specific locations.
2. For research that involves the use of animals overseas (for example through international collaborative research) researchers are required to satisfy themselves and confirm to their Research Ethics Committee that standards are consistent with those in the UK and that appropriate local regulations are followed.
3. For research that involves the use of dead animals or biological specimens/samples (e.g., feathers, teeth, skin etc.) derived from the bodies of live or deceased animals, researchers are required to satisfy themselves and confirm to their Research Ethics Committee that the specimens/samples were either shed naturally, collected from animals that were already dead through either natural causes, or humane slaughter, or have been sourced from other research institutes/suppliers that have all the necessary home office animal licenses in line with ASPA1986, are shown to have implemented the 3Rs policy and that the animal has been terminated under Schedule 1 of the Act. Members of staff are encouraged to seek advice from their Research Ethics Committee, and/or to submit their proposal for the use of animals or animal parts in their practice for review by their Research Ethics Committee where biological specimens/samples may fall into an exceptional category, for example where samples form part of historical museum collections or have been donated from other collections.
4. We are committed to being open about our use of animals in research, teaching and practice and take note of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research published in 2014 in the UK. The University is not currently a signatory to this Concordat as none of our research and teaching activities fall within the scope of ASPA.
5. It is the responsibility of the individual member of staff to ensure that the above points are considered in relation to the use of animals or animal parts for any academic activity they plan to undertake (e.g., supervision of projects, or as part of a teaching session) (i.e., in terms of legislation, ethical issues, training and their responsibilities etc). Members of staff are encouraged to seek advice from their Research Ethics Committee, and/or to submit their proposal for the use of animals or animal parts in their practice or teaching activities for review by their Research Ethics Committee.

**Definition of ‘protected animal’:**

The ASPA defines *protected animal* as all living vertebrates, other than human beings, and any living cephalopod. Additionally:

* Embryonic and foetal forms of mammals, birds, and reptiles during the last third of their gestation or incubation period;
* Fish and amphibians once they can feed independently;
* Cephalopods at the point when they hatch;

**Definition of ‘living’:**

A protected animal is ‘living’ until its circulation stops permanently or its brain is destroyed. The ASPA considers decerebrate animals to be living and, therefore, protected, because their brains are not completely destroyed.

The Act permits the Secretary of State by order ‘to extend the definition of protected animals so as to include invertebrates of any description’ and to ‘alter the stage of development ‘at which statutory protection of an animal applies. This power was used in 1993 to include in the Act a single invertebrate species, *Octopus vulgaris*, ‘from the stage of its development when it becomes capable of independent feeding’ (see above).

On the basis that, over time, other invertebrates may become covered by the Act, academics who are working with, or intending to work with, any invertebrates, must check with their Research Ethics Committee and/or professional body the statutory status of the animal species at issue.

**Definition of ‘regulated procedure’:**

Research on protected animals requires a licence if ‘regulated procedures’ are used. The legal definition of a regulated procedure under the 1986 Act in Section 2(1) is *“any experimental or other scientific procedure applied to a protected animal which may have the effect of causing that animal pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm”. “Pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm”* encompass any material disturbance to normal health (defined as the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the animal). They include disease, injury and physiological or psychological discomfort, whether immediately (such as at the time of an injection) or in the longer term (such as consequences of the application of a carcinogen). The threshold at which regulation is applied has been agreed at the EU level to be the skilled insertion (according to good veterinary practice) of a hypodermic needle. This means, for example, that even a study, which involves only the taking of blood samples is ‘a procedure’ which is defined as regulated. Detailed guidance is provided on the Home Office website.

**JM/TC July 2014**

**UEC/TC updated January 2019**

**UEC/TC/CB updated November 2019/March 2020**

***This statement was approved by the Assurance Committee July 3rd 2014. It is due for review in July 2019. It has been further updated and approved at the University Ethics Committee in Nov 2019.***  

***This statement was approved by the Assurance Committee xxx. It is due for review in 2024.***  

1. The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Amendment Regulations were approved in 2012. These Regulations amend the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to transpose the European Directive 2010/63/EU into UK law. The current UK Act is known as the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (as amended). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A sentient animal is one that may be aware of sensations and emotions, of feelings pain and suffering, and of experiencing a state of well-being. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)