

03 June 2024

Freedom of Information Act request, IMPFOI-24-195, Animal research 2023

1. *Did your university conduct experiments on animals?*

Yes

2. *How many animals were used in experiments (species & number of each)?*

3. *How many animals were bred on the premises (species & number of each)?*

Information on animal research at Imperial College, including details of the animals used in research, the types of animals and the severity of the procedures is published on the Animal Research pages of our website, please see links below. Information is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act (Section 21) if it is already reasonably accessible to the requester. The published information is updated annually for the previous year, i.e. 2023 information will be published on those pages this year. Information that is intended for future publication is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act by virtue of Section 22 of the Act.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-integrity/animal-research/about/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-integrity/animal-research/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-integrity/animal-research/numbers/>

4. *What was the nature and outcome of these experiments?*

This information is not held in a readily extractable format. The only way that we could provide the information requested would be to review the documentation for each of the licences active during this time and to make enquiries of the researchers involved. This process would exceed the 18-hour time limit provided for in the Freedom of Information Act, at section 12. However, example case studies of projects that have involved the use of animal research methods can be found on the college website:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/253273/scientists-find-sleep-clear-brain-toxins/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/252500/why-heart-rhythm-problems-tend-happen/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/247873/getting-ready-controlled-specific-brain-wiring/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/247213/antibiotics-promote-growth-antibiotic-resistant-bacteria/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/247074/nobel-winning-bodily-pressure-sensors-filmed-first/>

5. *What are the Home Office licence classifications for these experiments in terms of pain, lasting harm, etc. if classified (species & number of each)?*

This information is included in the published figures referred to above.

6. Were the animals used for medical or non-medical research?

The research conducted was for both medical and non-medical purposes.

7. Which departments of your university were or are engaged in such research?

Research was carried out by the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Faculty of Engineering.

8. How many animals were killed without being used for experiments (species & the number of each)?

This information is not held in a readily extractable format and in order to respond to your query, we would have to manually check details of all research involving animals ongoing in 2023 to extract the information requested. This exercise would exceed the 18-hour time limit for responding to FOI requests (Section 12 Freedom of Information Act). While this data is not held, the university has an active policy in place to promote the sharing of tissues if there are any surplus animals, in accordance with the 3Rs.

9. How many animals were rehomed (species & number of each)?

No animals were rehomed after use in 2023.

10. Of those that were not re-homed, why not?

In the majority of cases, it is necessary to humanely kill the animals at the conclusion of experiments in order to collect organs or blood that are required for generating the scientific data. In addition, many of the animals used carry genetic modifications and release of such animals into an uncontrolled environment could lead to such mutations transferring into wild populations and this would be contrary to the provisions set out in relevant legislation concerning genetically modified organisms. Moreover, animals maintained by the University are of a high health status and their release into a normal environment could lead to infection and potential suffering for the animals.

11. Does the university receive an income for performing animal research?

The University receives research funding from a range of sources (including, for example, the UK Research Councils and medical research charities) to support its research, including that involving animals.

12. Does the university incur any costs by performing animal research?

Yes.

13. Were there more non-animal research methods used than animal methods? Eg. 70% where non-animal models were used and 30% where animal models were used.

Yes. We are not able to provide a precise figure, but only a small percentage of the university's research involves the use of animals and there are robust policies in place to ensure animals are only used if there is no alternative to their use.

14. Which non-animal research methods are available at the university? Eg. 3D printing, human skin cells, organ-on-a-chip.

University researchers use many forms of non-animal alternatives including (but not limited to) mathematical and computer modelling, simulation models, 3D printing, human cell cultures and organotypic cultures, immortalised cell lines, induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells, organoids and organ-on-a-chip, human samples such as blood and tissue (including access to the human lung tissue bank, brain tissue bank, heart tissue bank), clinical trials and epidemiological data. An article regarding the use of organoids can be found in [Imperial's Animal Research Report 2022-23](#) (pages 19-23)/.