

Subject area: Research and third, second and first-cycle courses and (study) programmes

Document type: Policy

Decision-maker: Vice-Chancellor

Department/Organisational unit: Division of Planning

Administrative Officer: Kristina Julin

Decision date: 25 March 2020

Enters into force: 25 March 2020

Valid until: further notice

Should be updated before: When the Council of  
Animals in Research and Testing deems it  
necessary

Document(s) replaced/repealed: SLU ua 2015.1.1.1-4840

Appendix to: Appendix to: Vice-chancellor's decision 25 March 2020 "Policy on the use of animals in research and education at SLU"

## Policy on the use of animals in research and education at SLU

### 1. Research and testing on animals at SLU

The EU and Council of Europe define research animals only as those animals that experience some form of suffering during their use. Sweden's definition of research animals differs to that of the EU and Council of Europe; the purpose of their use determines whether or not an animal is a research animal. This means that all animals used in scientific research, teaching, diagnosing diseases, creating medical or chemical products, or other comparable purposes are classed as research animals, and are therefore covered by animal research legislation – even if they do not experience pain. Hence,

*All animals involved in research at SLU are considered laboratory/research animals, regardless of whether they are privately owned, wild, or animals housed or used at SLU's research animal facilities. Consequently, their use is subject to this policy.*

All use of animals at SLU for scientific and teaching purposes must be done responsibly and have the animal's health and welfare in focus. When planning research projects, alternatives to the use of animals must be considered and used when possible. In each instance, the discomfort of animals must be assessed against the knowledge expected to be generated following the use of animals. *All staff involved in planning experiments with animals or who will work with research animals must read, be familiar with and follow this policy.*

1.1 Those who will be using research/teaching animals as part of SLU's activities and operations are expected to be familiar with and comply with the appropriate legislation and guidelines. If in doubt, or following the discovery of non-compliance, contact the coordinator for matters concerning research animals, [djurforsok@slu.se](mailto:djurforsok@slu.se).

1.2 The Board for Animals in Research and Teaching (FDN) at SLU is the university's animal welfare body and actively works to prioritise good animal care at SLU. The animal welfare body must comply with legislation (SJVFS 2019:9, case no. L150). This involves advising staff on animal welfare issues and creating and following up internal procedures for monitoring, reporting and following up on animal welfare. The body is also responsible for the overall animal welfare work at the university.

1.3 All use of live animals for scientific or teaching purposes must first undergo ethical approval of animal research projects, unless the use is exempt from the requirement for ethical approval. The organisation must comply with this ethics permit.

1.4 Those who are responsible for planning research with animals must consult with the named animal care and welfare officer approved by the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the laboratory animal veterinarian/organisation's expert. The standard operating procedures developed for the activities at the department/organisation must be followed. . Everyone involved with animal research must take the necessary measures to establish a culture of care.

1.5 Planning and implementation of animal experiments must follow the 3R principle – *reduce, refine, replace*. This involves

- *reducing* the number of animals used, as few as possible, but enough to ensure a statistically sound result;
- *refining* the living conditions and care of the animals included in the activities, and continually improving them. The experimental methods used must minimise stress and pain.
- *replacing* existing methods requiring the use of live animals where possible, by following the development of new, alternative methods.

1.6 Planning and conducting animal experiments must not pose a threat to individual animal species or biodiversity. These experiments must be in line with the sustainable use of natural resources and take care of the environment.

1.7 All staff who use or participate in the use of live animals, or who care for animals being used for scientific purposes must have completed the required courses in in laboratory animal science, in accordance with legislation (SJVFS 2019:9 Case no. L150) before starting work. Staff must also have the necessary practical skills. These skills must be assessed by the laboratory animal

veterinarian/expert or supervisor. This also applies to students who will conduct independent studies on live animals as part of their degree project, for example. Skills training must take place prior to practical participation in animal experiments to ensure the necessary skills have been obtained. Staff must be offered continuing professional development training and be able to do this during working hours.

1.7 SLU has a special policy that must be followed when rehoming animals used in research and/or education at the university.

1.8 SLU must have a coordinator for matters concerning research animals who is responsible for the training in laboratory animal science for everyone participating in animal experiments at the university. The coordinator also advises on matters related to research animals, permit assessment, coordinating inspections and coordinating statistics.

1.9 Work with animals involved in research must be designed with staff safety and the work environment in mind.

1.10 National and international collaborations involving animal experiments must take the animals' welfare into account as well as the ethics of using the animals. An application for ethical review of animal experiments abroad should be sent to FDN.

1.11 Updated information on the applicable rules on the use of research animals must be available on the SLU staff web.

1.12 SLU is to work actively to be a consulting organisation for matters related to research animals, and be represented in efforts relating to research animals in society. SLU is currently involved in:

- The Swedish Research Council's Expert Group for Laboratory Animal Science
- The Swedish Board of Agriculture's national committee for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes [www.djurforsok.info](http://www.djurforsok.info), both the steering group and editorial council
- Regional ethics committee on animal experiments
- Central ethics committee on animal experiments
- Karolinska Institutet Ethics Council
- The national consortium for online training in laboratory animal science
- Steering group for the HVE programme in animal nursing and biomedical technology.

1.13 SLU must be transparent with animal research work, and actively provide information about the research. Researchers are encouraged to send details of their work to the SLU Division of Communication, whose task it is to share the findings from animal research in a way that is characterised by transparency, quality and

community engagement. Furthermore, researchers contacted directly by the media must work closely with the Division of Communication to ensure that information is shared efficiently and correctly.

## 2. Using animals at SLU for teaching purposes

The university's areas of responsibility include animal husbandry and health, as well as the protection of domesticated animals. SLU provides vocational education and training for future veterinary surgeons, animal agronomists, veterinary nurses, equine scientists as well as other more generalised degree courses and programmes that will involve work with animals in the future.

SLU uses healthy teaching animals belonging to the university's herds, purchased laboratory animals and privately owned animals, for example, for palpitation or when they are patients at the University Animal Hospital. Some programmes such as those including hunting and fishing also involve wild animals.

The use of animals as part of other study programmes is limited to visits to practical herds. Handling of animals during study visits can be voluntary and under supervision, for example when conducting an external assessment, hoof care and sheep shearing. Cadavers and organs and preparations from tissue materials from both healthy and sick animals are used in teaching and skills development. The materials are primarily obtained from animals who have been euthanized for reasons other than teaching purposes. Practical work with animals is an essential method for skills and knowledge acquisition as part of vocational education in veterinary medicine and animal science. Therefore, the best way to teach handling and training is by letting the student conduct the task under supervision and in a way that will be implemented in practice. The aim of the education is to promote sustainable use of animals with animal welfare in focus through good production, health and function.

The relevant legislation must be followed when using animals for teaching purposes. All use of animals and animal material for educational purposes at SLU presupposes that those in charge are aware of and comply with the legislation and guidelines applicable for the activity. All use of live animals in SLU's courses and programmes conducted at the university's animal facilities must have undergone ethical approval of animal research projects. Certain activities are exempt from ethical approval. These include animal patients at the animal hospital that will not undergo anything beyond the appropriate veterinary treatment, proficiency training for horse riding, driving and handling as part of the Equine Science programme and study visits to animal herds where the purpose is to observe or participate in ongoing activities (not animal experiments). All teaching components involving handling live or dead animals must be well thought out and result in essential professional expertise. These components cannot be replaced with animal-free alternatives, nor can they be removed from the course.

2.1 Information and a discussion on ethics must take place before a teaching component involving animals takes place. Students must be able to access the SLU policy on the use of animals in teaching if they intend to participate in a programme involving handling animals and animal materials. Information about the courses and study programmes that involve the use of live animals, carcasses or animal tissues must be made available so prospective students can access these details before they apply for a course/programme.

2.2 Students must receive detailed information of any components involving live animals, animal carcasses, organs or tissue material that will be used as part of their degree programme during the programme's first semester. Furthermore, courses or course blocks/years should begin with an ethical discussion on the relevant use of animals. The aim is to make it clear why the exercises will take place and why they cannot be conducted with alternative methods that do not involve animals.

2.3 If possible, course components requiring the use of dead animals must begin with the use of alternative methods before continuing onto the dead animals. Dissection should first and foremost be conducted on animals, organs and tissues from animals that would nevertheless have been euthanised for reasons other than teaching. The animal carcasses and tissue materials must be handled with respect. Once students are deemed to have attained the necessary skills under supervision, they may conduct dissections independently.

2.4 Course components that involve invasive procedures with live animals must, if possible, be introduced with the use of alternative methods, followed by practice on dead animals, followed by practice on animals that will be euthanised and finally, practice on animals that will survive. This also applies to handling and treatment of sick animals for students on the veterinary science and veterinary nursing programmes.

2.5 Supervisors must always be available when live animals are being handled. The animals must be treated in such a way that they do not experience stress or unnecessary suffering. Behavioural studies, handling and palpitation exercises or similar can take place on commercial herds, on research animals at SLU, or privately owned animals. Those responsible for the animals must give their permission allowing for the use of each animal.

2.6 Students who will be working independently with live animals as part of their education and research must have completed the statutory education in laboratory animal science (SJVFS 2015:24 Case no.: 150) before they begin. Furthermore, they must have developed sufficient skills under supervision.

2.7 Supervisors must be present when students practise surgical techniques on animals set to be euthanised following anaesthetic. Animals must not be handled in a way that could cause any unnecessary suffering before they are anaesthetised. To

the greatest extent possible, animals that would otherwise be euthanised are to be used in teaching.

2.8 Clinical examination techniques and minor surgery can be practised on both teaching animals and patient animals. Owners of the patient animals are expected to be aware that students will participate in the examination and treatment of the animal, as they are enlisting the services of a university animal hospital. Procedures must take place under the monitoring of the supervisor, and animals must not experience any unnecessary suffering.