

Donating your body to the School of Anatomy, University of Bristol

Information for those wishing to donate their body for anatomical examination and instructions for next of kin or executor

Human Tissue Act 2004

Thank you for expressing your wish to bequeath your body to us after death; your generous action is greatly appreciated.

The Human Tissue Authority (www.hta.gov.uk) regulates the use of bodies donated for anatomical examination, education or training relating to human health and research in connection with disorders, or the functioning of the human body within the legal framework set out in the Human Tissue Act 2004.

Detailed instructions are enclosed. It is most important that you understand the information contained in this booklet before signing the consent form. If you need any further information, please contact us on the telephone number or the e-mail address provided in this booklet. We also advise that your next of kin or executors read this booklet, so they can also understand this information before they need to inform our office of your death.

We hope, however, that it will be many years before your wishes need to be considered.

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What will my body be used for?

Your body may be used for one or more of the following purposes.

1. Anatomical examination

This includes teaching, studying and researching the form, shape and structure of the human body. It allows us to use your body for teaching anatomy to undergraduate students (including medical and dental students), related health care professionals and participants on authorised courses.

2. Education or training related to human health

Health professionals derive great benefit from the opportunity to develop surgical skills and other clinical procedures on a body. In our Vesalius Clinical Training Unit we run and support many courses that develop clinical and surgical skills.

3. Research in connection with disorders, or the functioning of the human body

Our School supports research projects that have been ethically approved. These projects can be with postgraduate students, healthcare professionals, or healthcare companies developing products for use in the healthcare profession.

Duration of a body donation

Under the terms of the Human Tissue Act 2004 there is no limit on the length of time a donated body may be retained by us*. However, if you wish to restrict the time that your body is retained you have an opportunity to do so on the consent form, by selecting one of these options:-

Option 1

I place no restriction on the length of time my body can be used by the institution that receives my body.

Option 2

I wish for my body to be retained for a maximum of three years.

**In certain circumstances your body may be used within a month of arrival. Please be reassured that if a cremation service is arranged shortly after acceptance of a donor, it does not mean that the donation has any less value.*

Consent to retain body parts

After we have completed our examinations, we will arrange for disposal of the body with a cremation. At this time body parts could be retained by the University for teaching, educational training or research. If you wish to give permission for body parts to be retained, please tick the corresponding box on the form.

Access to medical records and images

After a potential donor's death, the Bequest Office will contact your general practice or hospital doctors to find out your background medical history and cause of death. This is a necessary part of the donation process to determine if your body will be suitable for donation.

If a bequest is accepted, in certain circumstances we may request copies of your medical records or medical images. This information would be used to further assist in Anatomical Teaching or Research.

Images of a Donated Body

It may be useful for the receiving institution to prepare images of parts of your body for:

- Education or training relating to human health
- Research in connection with disorders, or the functioning, of the human body

The taking and displaying of images (including photographs, films and electronic images) is outside the scope of the Human Tissue Act 2004; however, the HTA endorses the good practice principles set out in guidance issued by relevant professional and regulatory bodies. Donors will not be identifiable in any images that may be taken. For further information, please refer to the HTA's Codes of Practice, available at www.hta.gov.uk.

Notes for completing the bequest form

If you wish to bequeath your body, you should sign the enclosed bequest consent form (UoBANAT1) in the presence of a witness. A bequest cannot be accepted without written and witnessed proof of consent.

1. Complete two copies of the consent forms with a witness. Please ensure that both the potential donor and witness sign and date the form at the same time.
2. Return one copy of the form to the Bequest Office in the provided addressed envelope.
3. Keep one copy of the form with your own personal papers, such as your will.

If you wish to receive a written confirmation that we have received your consent form, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when returning your completed form.

Who can act as a witness?

A witness can be any person that knows you, who can verify your signature. For example, your next of kin, executor, family member, friend, GP or solicitor.

Can I sign the consent form if I am under 18?

We are unable to accept a donor under the age of 18. However, if you are under 18 and wish to sign our consent forms to donate your body in the future, additional supporting documents will need to be provided by a Doctor or healthcare professional. Please contact the Bequest Office on 0117 928 7415 for further information.

Who should I inform of my wish to donate my body?

You should discuss your wishes with your close family or your executor as they will need to inform the Bequest Office of your death. We advise that your next of kin and/or executor should read through this booklet before your death so that they are fully informed of the process. It is also advisable to notify your GP of your wishes, as we will need to discuss your medical conditions and cause of death when you have died.

How do I withdraw my consent?

Consent can be withdrawn at any time. Simply notify the Bequest Office, at the University of Bristol, in writing, and your details will be removed from our system and your consent form destroyed.

Circumstances where a donation may be declined

Regrettably it is not always possible to accept all body donations offered.

There are certain medical conditions or circumstances at the time of the death which can make the body unsuitable for anatomical examination or research purposes.

These preclusion criteria are in place to safeguard our staff and students, to allow for study of the normal structure of the body, and to ensure that a body accepted is suitable for our preservation processes. These circumstances are outlined in further detail on pages 9 and 10.

The University is unable to accept donations when our mortuary is at capacity, and when the Bequest Office is closed, for example during major public holidays, such as Easter or Christmas and New Year.

We hope you will understand that if a donation is declined, this does not mean any ingratitude on our part. If the donation cannot be accepted the next of kin or executor will be informed as soon as possible so they may make funeral arrangements.

No guarantee can be given that a bequest will be accepted.

The following is a list of circumstances or conditions which will result in the donation being turned down:

- 1. Post mortem examination or coroner's inquest**
- 2. Transmissible disease:** for example, Hepatitis, HIV, Septicaemia, Clostridium, MRSA, Tuberculosis, Meningitis, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.
- 3. Dementia: Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Mixed aetiology dementias or dementia of an unknown cause** (Vascular dementia is acceptable)
- 4. Jaundice**
- 5. Organs donated for transplantation** (cornea donation is acceptable)
- 6. Chemotherapy treatment** within three months prior to death.
- 7. Internal bleeding or severe circulatory problems**
- 8. Aged under 18 years:** There is no upper age limit to acceptance. However, we are unable to accept donors under 18 years of age.
- 9. Seven days or more have passed since death, or transport cannot be arranged to the School of Anatomy within seven days.** We must arrange for a body to be accepted in the School of Anatomy within seven days of death. A decision for acceptance will need to be made soon after death, to allow time for transport arrangements to be made.

The following is a list of conditions or circumstances that might affect a donation:

1. **Cancer:** Depending on type, severity and spread of the cancer.
2. **Severe bedsores or varicose ulcers or broken skin:** Small sores may be acceptable.
3. **Peripheral vascular disease and peripheral oedema.**
4. **Recent operations** where the wound has not healed.
5. **Previous multiple operations:** This is dependent on the number and type of previous operations, and the ability to study normal anatomy.
6. **Amputation** of more than one limb.
7. **Severe deformity of joints and spine, or limb contractures**
8. **Obesity/Size:** Excessive weight or height.
9. **Multiple Sclerosis.**
10. **Operational Considerations:** At times the Bequest Office may be closed due to the mortuary being at capacity, or for maintenance of essential equipment.
11. **University Closure Period.** Unfortunately, we are unable to accept bequests during the major public holidays at Christmas, New Year and Easter due to the Bequest Office and School of Anatomy being closed. During these times, next of kin are advised to make their own funeral arrangements.

Instructions for the next of kin or executors when a potential donor dies

At the time of a potential donor's death, the next of kin or executor should:

1. Report a Potential Donor's Death to the Bequest Office

Telephone the Bequest Office on **0117 928 7415** as soon as possible after death occurs. Please have the following information ready before calling:

- Evidence of donor's consent (if provided in a will, or when the consent forms have not been returned to the Bequest Office)
- Doctor's name and telephone number
- Location of the deceased
- Contact details for the next of kin/executor

The Bequest Office is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays to Fridays, excluding bank holidays. Out of hours there is a voicemail system at the office. Relatives should leave a message with their name and telephone number, so that we can return your call when the office re-opens.

2. If the death occurs in the community, such as the person's own home, a nursing home or a hospice without mortuary facilities, the deceased should be removed to a local Chapel of Rest by an undertaker. It is important for the relatives to understand that the transport and cost of the undertaker must be borne by the donor's estate or the next-of-kin/executor.

3 If the death occurs in a hospital (or hospice with mortuary facilities) the body will be held in the mortuary. Please inform the hospital bereavement team of the potential donor's wish to donate their body.

4. Make an appointment with the local Registrar. Once the medical cause of death has been issued by the doctor, next of kin or executors will need to make an appointment to register the death with the local Registrar.

5. If the donation is accepted, the next of kin or executors will be asked to complete and return some paperwork to the Bequest Office. Further details are outlined on pages 13-14.

How a decision is made regarding acceptance

Once notified of a death, the Bequest Office will contact the relevant healthcare services/professionals, typically the GP, hospital, hospice and nursing home staff, to discuss the cause of death and other relevant background medical and surgical history. This is a necessary part of the bequest process and will determine whether the donation can be accepted. Next of kin and executors will then be informed of the decision.

In some circumstances when Bristol Bequest Office is closed, it is possible for a person's body donation to be accepted with another licenced medical school or anatomy department. If you wish to only donate your body to Bristol University, please state this when returning your consent form. We can then add this information onto your record.

Instructions for next of kin or executors if a donation is accepted

The Bequest Office will arrange transport of the body to the University through our funeral directors. Next-of-kin or family do not usually need to make these arrangements.

At the time of acceptance, the Bequest Office will send the next of kin/executors the following documents to complete and return. The receipt of these documents is a condition of us accepting the donation. If we do not receive these documents within 14 days of registration of the death, we will be required to decline the bequest.

- Register the death with the Registrar and inform them of the wishes of the deceased. The registrar will issue you with a green certificate (Certificate of Burial or Cremation) and a death certificate.
- You will be sent Cremation 1 (Application for Cremation form) and the form 'Instructions for the disposal of a donated body'. This paperwork will allow a cremation service to take place. Next of kin or executors can confirm whether they wish to be informed of the time of cremation, attend the cremation or take possession of the ashes. The Bequest Office will arrange the cremation based on the information provided on this form.

- Return the following forms to the Bequest Office, School of Anatomy, University of Bristol, Southwell Street, Bristol, BS2 8EJ.
 - Copy or photocopy of the death certificate
 - Original copy of the green disposal certificate
 - Completed Cremation 1 (Application for cremation form) form
 - Completed 'Instructions for the disposal of a donated body' form

Expenses

The initial costs of moving and storing a person's body to a local undertaker will need to be paid by the deceased's estate or their next-of-kin. Providing a person's bequest is accepted, all reasonable costs relating to the onward transportation of the body to the School of Anatomy and the subsequent final cremation will be borne by the University of Bristol.

Thanksgiving Event

An interdenominational Thanksgiving Event is held annually, to which the next of kin or executors of those who bequeathed their bodies are invited. This provides an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks to those that have donated their bodies, together with members of the University staff and students. Further details may be obtained from the Bequest Office.

Arranging cremation and taking possession of ashes

At the time a donation is accepted your next of kin or executor will be asked to confirm if they wish to be informed of the time of cremation, attend the cremation or take possession of the ashes. When we have completed our examinations, we will contact your next of kin or executor based on their wishes. Cremation services are individual to the donor and held at a local Bristol crematorium.

Although the consent form may allow us to keep a body for several years, in certain circumstances, the body may be used, and a cremation arranged within a month of arrival. We endeavour to use all donor bodies as fully as possible. Please be reassured that if a cremation service is arranged shortly after acceptance of a donor, it does not mean that the donation has any less value.

When ashes are ready for collection, they can be collected either directly from the crematorium or from a Bristol based funeral directors. Alternatively, if next of kin/executors do not wish to take possession of the ashes, we will arrange for the ashes to be scattered in the gardens of rest within the crematorium grounds.

It is the responsibility of the next of kin or executor to advise the Bequest Office of any changes in contact details. If all reasonable attempts have been made to contact the next of kin or executor, the Bequest Office will arrange a non-attendance cremation service and/or scattering of the ashes.

If the donation is not accepted

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that a donation will be accepted to the School of Anatomy. If the donation is not accepted, we advise next of kin or executors to proceed with normal arrangements for burial or cremation. It is regretted that the University cannot make any financial contribution to these private funeral arrangements.

Data Protection

The Bequest Office holds onto personal data of individuals who contact the office, persons who complete and return the consent forms, and details of the next of kin or executor, and witnesses. This information is held securely in both electronic and paper records. We will only hold onto your personal data for the length of time it is necessary. When the information is no longer needed it is securely destroyed and deleted.

The Bequest Office will only share your personal information with third parties as part of our enquiry and acceptance processes if it is necessary to allow a body donation to potentially be accepted. Please contact the Bequest Office if you would like further information on how your personal data is handled.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it necessary to sign a form if I've left my body in my will?

Although it may be possible to accept a person's body donation through a will, the wording can cause problems in understanding your wishes and may make acceptance difficult. We advise that you also sign a consent form and return a copy to the Bequest Office in order to make your wishes clear.

I have a rare medical condition. Can I donate my body, to research my condition?

The School of Anatomy does not undertake research into specific disorders and cannot accept donations to research into a specific medical condition or disorder.

If you wish to leave your body or body tissues for research into your specific medical condition, you could discuss this with your specialist medical team (consultant or specialist nurse) or a research organisation.

Can I register as an organ donor and register for body donation?

Yes, you can be registered with both services, however we are unable to accept a body donation if a person donates their organs (other than corneas) at the time of their death.

Can I donate my brain and body to separate services?

We can usually accept if a person also donated their brain to a separate service.

Are there any costs or payments involved for my next of kin or executors?

Please see page 14 for this information.

Does the University make a profit from the use of my body donation?

We do not make a profit from the use of any body donors. We do however charge for the use of facilities and recovery costs associated with body donation.

Additional Contact Details

Human Tissue Authority

The HTA is the regulator for the work and storage for any body tissues or parts within England and Wales. The HTA website provides good general information on body donation or other types of tissue donation, as well as contact information for other local anatomy departments.

Telephone: 020 7269 1900 **Website:** <https://www.hta.gov.uk/>

Address: HTA, 151 Buckingham Palace Road,
London, SW1 9SZ