

# Donating your body to the Centre for Comparative and Clinical Anatomy, University of Bristol

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Information for donor and instructions for next of kin / executor

Human Tissue Act 2004

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## Information on donating your body

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](http://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 e-mail address provided in this booklet.

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

## 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 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. We run and support many courses that develop and further clinical and surgical skills.

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

Our Centre has particular research interests in several fields, details of which can be found on our website at [www.bris.ac.uk/depts/anatomy](http://www.bris.ac.uk/depts/anatomy). Should you require more information please ring the Bequest Office on 0117 9287415 during office hours. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee that your body will be used in a particular project.

## Notes for completing the bequest form

If you wish to bequeath your body you should sign the enclosed bequest form UoBANAT1 in the presence of a witness. The forms must be completed in duplicate and both the potential donor and witness must sign and date the forms at the same time, otherwise it will not provide valid consent for acceptance of your body for anatomical examination, education, training and research. One copy of the completed consent form should be returned to the Bequest Office in the pre-addressed envelope provided; the second copy should be retained with your Will or personal papers. A bequest cannot be accepted without written and witnessed proof of consent. It is important to inform your next of kin or executor, and you may also wish to inform your doctor of your intention to donate.

### **Acknowledgement of receipt of consent form**

If you wish to have confirmation that we have received your consent form, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your completed form, which we will return to you upon receipt.

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**

There is no restriction on the length of time a donated body can be used by us. This gives us the maximum possible use of your body for the three purposes.

### **Option 2**

Your body may be retained by us for a maximum of three years\*. No body parts will be retained.

### **Option 2a**

Your body may be retained by us for a maximum of three years and your body parts may be retained for continued study anatomical examination, education, training and research\*

*\*In certain circumstances your body may be used within a month of arrival.*

## **Withdrawing Consent**

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

## **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 are assured that they would 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](http://www.hta.gov.uk).

## General Information for the next of kin or executor after death

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The Bequest Office is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. There is a voicemail system at the office and relatives should leave their name and telephone number as a recorded message so that we can deal with it promptly. The offer of the bequest will be considered immediately upon the office re-opening.

Unfortunately we are unable to accept bequests during the major public holidays at Christmas, New Year and Easter due to the Bequest Office being closed. During these times, next of kin are advised to make their own funeral arrangements.

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

1. Telephone the Bequest Office as soon as possible after death occurs. The death must be registered with the local Registrar who will issue you with a green certificate (Certificate of Burial or Cremation) and a death certificate.

2. If the death occurs in a hospital the body will be held in the hospital mortuary and once informed of the death we shall liaise with the hospital Bereavement Office.

3. If the death occurs at home or in a nursing home, the deceased should be removed to a local Chapel of Rest by an undertaker while we make our enquiries regarding the suitability of the bequeathal. It is important for the relatives to understand that the transport and cost of the undertaker must be borne by the next of kin or the donor's estate.

4. The Bequest Office will speak to the doctor issuing the death certificate and/or GP and a decision on whether or not the donation is acceptable will be made.

5. Once the bequest is accepted all reasonable costs relating to the transportation of your body to the University of Bristol and the subsequent final cremation will be borne by the University. However, your next-of-kin or executor will be asked, if possible, to contribute towards the costs involved. Further details can be obtained from the Bequest Office.

The University will be responsible for the safe keeping, preservation and examination of the body until such time as cremation is required. At the time of donation the next of kin or executor will be asked to complete form 'Instructions for the disposal of a donated body' where they will confirm if 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. We endeavour to use all donor bodies as fully as possible. Although the options allow us to keep your body for a number of years, in certain circumstances, your body may be used within months of arrival and a cremation arranged.

An interdenominational Service of Thanksgiving of those who have donated their bodies is held annually. Details may be obtained from the Bequest Office.

Regrettably it is not always possible to accept a bequest. While we are anxious that people should leave their bodies to us in sufficient numbers, no guarantee can be given that a bequest will be accepted. We hope you will understand that this does not mean any ingratitude on our part. Among other considerations, the cause of death itself or a post mortem examination could have made the body unsuitable for anatomical examination/research purposes, the object of which is the study of the normal structure of the body.

The age of the donor is immaterial but certain medical conditions or circumstances may also preclude us accepting a donation. These include:

- Transmissible disease (e.g. Hepatitis, HIV)
- Septicaemia
- Dementia/Alzheimer's disease
- Deterioration in the body tissues (e.g varicose ulcers, pressure sores, limb amputation, severe joint deformity, recent surgery where the wound has not healed
- Cancer – acceptance depends on the spread of the cancer. Chemotherapy within three months prior to death

- Size: excessive weight or height
- Organs donated for transplantation, however you can donate your eyes for corneal transplantation and still donate your body for anatomical examination
- Operational considerations (mortuary at capacity/ maintenance of essential equipment)

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.

## Instructions for the next of kin or executor when the donor dies

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You should read the previous information carefully and then telephone The Bequest Office on 0117 9287415. We will require the following information:

- Evidence of donor's consent
- Doctor's name and telephone number
- Location of the deceased
- Contact details for the next of kin/Executor

The Bequest Office will contact the deceased's GP and/or doctor issuing the death certificate to ascertain cause of death and other relevant medical history, and together they will make a decision on whether the donation is acceptable. You will be informed within a short time about the decision.

### **If the donation is accepted**

- Register the death with the Registrar and tell him/her of the wishes of the deceased. He/she will issue you with a green certificate (Certificate of Burial or Cremation).

- You will be sent Cremation 1 (Application for Cremation form) from this Office. This calls for a final decision on cremation arrangements.
- Return Cremation 1 (Application of Cremation), the certificate of disposal issued by the Registrar and a copy of the death certificate to the Bequest Office, Centre for Comparative and Clinical Anatomy, University of Bristol, Southwell Street, Bristol, BS2 8EJ. Receipt of these documents is a condition of our acceptance. If we do not receive these documents within 14 days of registration of the death we will be required to decline the bequest.
- At the time of donation the next of kin or executor will be asked to complete form 'Instructions for the disposal of a donated body' where they will confirm if 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. We endeavour to use all donor bodies as fully as possible. Although the options allow us to keep your body for a number of years, in certain circumstances, your body may be used within months of arrival and a cremation arranged.

## **Expenses**

Once the bequest is accepted all reasonable costs relating to the transportation of your body to the University of Bristol and the subsequent final cremation will be borne by the University. However, your next-of-kin or executor will be asked, if possible, to contribute towards the costs involved. Further details can be obtained from the Bequest Office.

### **If the donation is not accepted**

Proceed with normal arrangements for burial or cremation. It is regretted that the Centre cannot make any financial contribution to these private funeral arrangements.