

F.A.Qs on the use of tissue in teaching and research and the disposal of pet remains.

Q. What teaching will my pet be used for?

A. Organs or large segments of organs which contain disease are a major resource in teaching vets and veterinary students. When permission is given by the owner such organs are used anonymously to teach students the details of diseases and may be placed in containers in the pathology teaching collection of the Veterinary School. Additionally, final year vet students and trainee pathologists learn how to do post mortem examinations and examine tissues under the microscope for different types of diseases.

Q. What research will my pet be used for?

A. Microscopic slides and tissue wax blocks or small tissue samples which are retained for diagnosis are a valuable source of information on the nature of disease and may be used for research. This may include PhD or Masters projects, or research projects carried out by trainee specialist vets in the UCD Vet School (e.g. trainee surgeons, pathologists etc). If permission is given to use this material for research it will be carried out under strict conditions of confidentiality and according to the approval of the University's research ethics committee.

Q. How long will you hold onto the tissue after the post mortem examination?

A. The wax blocks and slides contain tissue and are kept indefinitely in the pathology department archive. Not all cases will have tissue retained from them.

Q. Will you keep full organs?

A. As part of the post mortem examination it is sometimes necessary to temporarily retain whole organs or large portions of organs for detailed examination in order to make a diagnosis.

Q. Can all tissue/organs be included with the body for cremation?

A. As part of the post mortem examination it is sometimes necessary to temporarily retain whole organs or large portions of organs for detailed examination in order to make a diagnosis. Because of this, it is not always possible to have the diagnostic evaluation completed before the body is sent for cremation.

Q. Can you wait for the diagnostic examination to be completed before sending the body for cremation, so that all the organs are included in the cremation?

A. This is not always possible, as we do not have the capacity to hold bodies for the medium to long term.

Q. How will tissue be disposed of after they are used for research?

A. Retained tissue samples will be disposed of sensitively in accordance with university veterinary hospital practice. (Incineration of small samples/ wax blocks etc via the clinical waste stream, group cremation for larger organs)

Q. How will organs be disposed of after they are used for teaching?

A. Retained organs will be disposed of sensitively in accordance with university veterinary hospital practice. (Incineration of small samples/ wax blocks etc via the clinical waste stream, group cremation for larger organs)

Q. What is group cremation?

A. in group cremation, your pet is cremated along with other animals. As a result, it's not possible to get your pet's ashes back.

Q. What happens to the ashes after group cremation?

A. The ashes are used in an environmentally friendly way, as a carbon neutral fuel. This is in accordance with Department of Agriculture legislation.

(CONDITIONS FOR ESTABLISHMENTS REGISTERED TO USE ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS (ABPS) AND/OR DERIVED PRODUCTS FOR DIAGNOSTIC, EDUCATIONAL OR RESEARCH PURPOSES. (SECTION X). Issued 2nd February 2016 Milk & Meat Hygiene/ABP/TSE Division. GOVERNING EU AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION: The European Union (Animal By-Products) Regulation 2014 (S.I. No. 187 of 2014) and in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 1069 of 2009 and Regulation (EU) No. 142 of 2011.)

Q. Can I say no to the use of my pet's body/organs/tissue for teaching/research?

A. We cannot accept a body for post mortem examination if we do not have permission to use the tissue. As the university's mission statement is "To foster the integration and delivery of impactful education, research...", we cannot achieve this goal if we are not permitted to use tissues following post mortem examination.

As an alternative, the Irish Equine Centre <https://irishequinecentre.ie/companion-animal-pathology/> offer a post mortem service for companion animals/pets.