

RCSI Animal Research Ethics Committee Policy regarding the use of post-mortem tissue from animals in research and teaching at RCSI*

1. **Background:** The AREC considers animal welfare and ethical issues relating to the use of live animals in research and teaching at RCSI. Protocol applications to AREC involving live animals usually require project authorisation from Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA). However, the use of post-mortem (PM) tissue from the same or different animals does not require an authorisation. The AREC wishes to emphasize safety and welfare issues in relation to the use of PM tissue.
2. **Definition:** “PM tissue” refers to tissue for research and teaching derived from animals. Tissue may include internal and external organs, fur, horns, nail-clippings, teeth and fertilized eggs.
3. Researchers using live animals specifically as a source PM tissue remain subject to the 3 R’s policy and should use no more animals than necessary to yield meaningful data from isolated tissue samples. Furthermore, use of PM material from animals should be used in as many studies and projects as possible.
4. **Sourcing** of tissue: Live animals can be obtained from recommended suppliers of commercial purpose-bred laboratory animals, commercial farms, other universities and abattoirs and the wild. Sourcing of animals for PM studies should be made through AREC-approved routes. Please seek advice from Biomedical Research Facility (BRF) Managers on all sources. Laboratory animal strains from other Universities may be requested if no other commercial sources are available. Approval of purchasing is dependent on the vendor’s animals being of an acceptable health standard.
5. Wild-life and abattoir tissue carry additional safety risks for researchers. All PM tissue should be treated as specified-risk material (SRM). All necessary precautions should be taken during transport, handling, disinfection of work-tops and appropriate disposal of tissue.
6. Pre-euthanasia, animals must only be held in AREC-approved Facilities. These rooms and holding areas should be HPRA authorised establishments; the premises will have a Designated Veterinarian and a Named Day-to-Day Care Person. For further information, please e-mail: recadmin@rcsi.ie . Animals should be euthanised by trained personnel using approved methods for the species in question.
7. Use of PM tissue from animal’s euthanised for research and teaching purposes should be carefully logged by both Principal Investigators and designated individuals in AREC-approved Facilities. Annual records should state the type, number and source of animals used.
9. Use of PM tissue from genetically-modified (GM) animals is a special case. The AREC has adopted a policy in line with best practice to the effect that breeding of GM animals is subject to ethical assessment. Therefore, a protocol application to AREC is required even if those animals are only being bred for the purposes of obtaining subsequent PM tissue. Distribution of PM tissue from GM animals bred and maintained in accordance with an existing approved protocol amongst as many researchers as possible is strongly encouraged (see 3. above).

****The RCSI AREC acknowledges UCD guidelines as a resource used in generating this document.***