



Directive setting the conditions for animal research carried out abroad

This directive sets the conditions for animal research carried out abroad by University of Geneva researchers or by third parties in collaboration with the University of Geneva. “Collaboration” is intended as an agreement under which University of Geneva researchers would have author or joint author status of a potential publication based on said collaboration.

The University of Geneva requires that experiments involving animals carried out in Switzerland or abroad comply with relevant ethical principles to ensure responsible and ethical animal research that fully takes into account animal suffering and wellbeing.

These ethical principles are founded on the “Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) Policy for Animal Research” and on the “Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Experiments on Animals” jointly elaborated by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) and the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT).

In some instances outlined in the present directive, animal research projects carried out abroad must be submitted to the Interfaculty Committee for Animal Research Ethics.

Experiments carried out in Switzerland are supervised by the relevant cantonal animal research commission, as well as by competent cantonal and federal authorities.

Study Directors

The Study Director at the University of Geneva shall ensure that animal research carried out abroad fully complies with relevant ethical principles. In the cases outlined in the present directive, the Study Director submits to the Interfaculty Committee for Animal Research Ethics the research projects involving animals carried out abroad by a University researcher or by third parties in collaboration with the University.

He/she shall verify that the project is authorized by the relevant country’s competent authority on animal research, when such an authority exists.

Researchers failing to comply with the present directive may face disciplinary sanctions.



Interfaculty Committee for Animal Research Ethics

Competence

The Committee:

- 1- defines a list of countries that do not require a submission to the Committee, i.e. countries where the conditions of animal research and ethical assessment are equivalent to those applied in Switzerland. This list is not applicable to projects carrying a severity degree 3 or involving non-human primates or endangered species* ,
- 2- ensures that animal research projects carried out abroad and submitted for evaluation comply with the ethical principles founded on the CRUS Policy and the ASSM and SCNAT “Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Animal Research”,
- 3- issues a preliminary opinion on the animal research projects carried out abroad that are submitted for evaluation.

The Committee may also be consulted by the Rectorate and researchers at the University of Geneva and Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) on any question regarding animal research ethics.

A member of the Committee who is directly involved in a research protocol cannot participate in deliberations on that protocol.

Members are bound to keep strictly confidential all information appearing in protocols submitted for preliminary opinion and the deliberations of the Committee.

Composition

The Committee comprises the following members:

- one professor specializing in ethics,
- two researchers from the Faculty of Medicine, at least one of professorial rank,
- two researchers from the Faculty of Science, at least one of professorial rank.

The President and other members of the Committee are designated by the Rectorate of the University of Geneva. The Rectorate shall endeavour to ensure equal gender representation.

Committee members are nominated for a three-year, renewable term. They are chosen for their scientific, professional and human qualities and their sensitivity towards animal research ethics. The President is chosen from the University professors on the Committee. In case of resignation of a member during his/her term, the committee may, through its President, propose replacement candidates.

The Director of Animal Experimentation may participate in Committee sessions, but may not vote.

The Committee may consult other members of the University scientific community at any time.



Procedure

The Study Director submits to the Committee projects involving animals during experiments abroad carried out by a University researcher or third parties in collaboration with the University of Geneva. This is applicable to:

- any project of severity degree 3 or involving non-human primates or endangered species* carried out in any country other than Switzerland,
- any project involving the use of animals (as per the Swiss Animal Welfare Act) carried out in a country not included in the list established by the Committee.

The Committee shall communicate a preliminary opinion to the Director of Animal Experimentation.

If the Director of Animal Experimentation concurs with the Committee's preliminary opinion, he/she communicates his/her decision to the Study Director.

If the Director of Animal Experimentation does not concur with the Committee's preliminary opinion, he/she details the reasons for his/her position and hands the matter over to the Rectorate for a final decision.

*in reference to Annex I, CITES