

**Supporting Replacement in Academia**

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**Information for participants**

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place between October 2023 - February 2024. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

**1. What is the research about?**

This project aims to examine the current social and cultural barriers and opportunities that exist around the acceptance and uptake of Non-Animal Technologies (NATs) and New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) in UK academic institutions. In doing so, we intend to provide tailored recommendations for further stimulating, facilitating, and supporting the replacement of animal use in academia.

This work will involve the use of semi-structured interviews to explore the views of the academic bioscience community across career stages (Students; Early Career Researchers; and Mid- to Late- Career Researchers). Aiming to gain a better understanding of the current research landscape and how this might support or raise challenges for training in and using NAMs/NATs, this study will examine themes such as:

* institutional and disciplinary norms
* communities and networks
* career progression
* institutional support
* access
* trust
* risk
* autonomy
* incentives
* motivators for moving away from animal use (i.e. scientific, ethical)

**2. Who can take part?**

We are looking to speak to:

* **students** in their **final year** of either an **undergraduate**, **Masters**, or **PhD** level degree within the **biosciences**,
* and **researchers** of **early**, **mid**, or **late** **career** stages undertaking procedures using animals that are regulated under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (ASPA) 1986.

**3. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part I will ask you to sign a consent form which you can sign and return in advance of the interview or sign at the meeting.

**4. What will my involvement be?**

You will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview about your views and experiences of social and cultural factors that may impact on the acceptance and use of NAMs/NATs. The interviews will explore how choices are made around which methods and models to use and how certain aspects of academia may shape awareness of, confidence in, and enthusiasm towards non-animal approaches. Interviews should last approximately one-hour and will be conducted at a time and location of your convenience (either online or in-person).

**5. How do I withdraw from the study?**

You can withdraw from the study at any point until May 2024, without having to give a reason. If you decide to withdraw from the study, none of your information will be retained unless you give permission for us to do so.

**6. What will my information be used for?**

We will use the collected information to inform our outputs which may involve, for example, a publishable research report, journal articles, presentations, recommendations for key stakeholders, guidance for institutions on developing replacement strategies, and guidance for relevant roles (e.g. Named Information Officers, AWERB members, researchers, etc.).

**7. Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?**

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only members of the RSPCA’s Animals in Science Department directly involved with the projectwill have access to the data files (e.g. transcripts) and any audio recordings. Your data will be anonymised and decontextualised – your name and institution will not be used in any outputs resulting from the study. All digital files, transcripts, and summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Any personal data will be stored in encrypted files/folders and disposed of at the end of the study. Any hard copies of research information will be kept in locked files at all times.

**8. Limits to confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible, unless you tell us something which implies that you or someone you mention might be in significant danger of harm and unable to act for themselves; in this case, we may have to inform the relevant agencies, but we would discuss this with you first.

**9. Data Protection**

Your information and any personal data will not be shared beyond members of the RSPCA’s Animals in Science Department directly involved with the project.

The RSPCA Data Protection Policy can be found at: <https://www.rspca.org.uk/-/access-to-your-information-and-correction>

**10. What if I have a question?**

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact Dr Renelle McGlacken at [renelle.mcglacken@rspca.org.uk](mailto:renelle.mcglacken@rspca.org.uk).

If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign the consent sheet attached and return to [renelle.mcglacken@rspca.org.uk](mailto:renelle.mcglacken@rspca.org.uk).