



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

The Edinburgh Medical School  
Deanery of Biomedical Sciences  
Anatomy

# Bequest Information Pack

**November 2020**





## Anatomy

The Edinburgh Medical School  
Deanery of Biomedical Sciences

### Information on donating your body

Thank you for expressing your wish to bequeath your body to us after death for anatomical examination. We are conscious that this is a very generous decision which has not been taken lightly. You may be assured that, were it not for such acts of selflessness, it would be impossible to maintain Scotland's high educational reputation in the medical professions and for this we are extremely grateful.

The Anatomy Act (1984) and the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act (HTSA 2006) regulate the use of bodies donated for anatomical examination, education or training and medical research. It sets out the legal framework for the removal, retention and lawful use after death, of human bodies and body parts

**This pack provides information on the procedures involved in the body donation process. 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.**

## Information on the activities for which your body may be used

Our licence from the Scottish Government allows us to perform Anatomical Examinations on donated bodies, and store and use them for the purposes of education, training and research at Edinburgh University Medical School. The licence also permits us to work in partnership with The Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh in delivering surgical training.

## Activities at Edinburgh University

If you choose to donate, your body will be used to educate and train the following individuals:

- Medical and dental students, allied health care students, science students (e.g. biomedical).
- \*External visitors to the University who are qualified healthcare and allied healthcare professionals wishing to study anatomy or carry out surgical training.
- \*External visitors to the University who are not healthcare professionals such as therapists who work with or treat the human body and other individuals whose professional practice requires an understanding of human anatomy.

Anatomical examination at the University of Edinburgh may take up to 3 years to be completed.

Occasionally the opportunity to study anatomy is made available to appropriate \*individuals (as described above) who are not registered students of Edinburgh University. A fee may be charged to these individuals, but this fee is solely to cover the costs incurred by the University or industry partners to deliver such approved sessions. This is done in strict compliance with the Anatomy Act (1984).

The decision on whether your body will be used for anatomical examination or for surgical training and research will be made at the time of your death and will be influenced by your medical history and other factors.

**If you have indicated on your Declaration of Bequest that you consent to your body being donated to another Scottish Anatomy department in the event of Edinburgh University being unable to accept, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with the activities for which your body may be used at these institutions.**

If you would like to discuss how a donation may be used or require clarification about any of the information above, please contact us on 0131 651 5996.

## How we will use personal data

The University of Edinburgh will be the data controller responsible for looking after and processing the personal data we collect via the 'Declaration of Bequest Form'. We will process this data to administer your donation request as part of the University's responsibility to provide teaching, learning and research facilities, and as part of our license from the Scottish Government. This data will be stored on a secure database on the University's computer servers and will not be shared with any other organisation unless we are required to do so by law. We will keep this data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

If we are unable to accept a donation or you withdraw your donation, we will remove the data as appropriate.

You have a number of rights with respect to how we process your personal data. More information on these rights is available from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk), and on the University website at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/gdpr>.

## Notes for completing the bequest form

If you wish to bequeath your body you should complete and sign the enclosed bequest forms in the presence of a witness. The form 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 and training. Ideally, the witness should not be related to you, but may be, if no one else is available.

One copy of the completed form should then be returned to us using the enclosed addressed envelope, while the second copy should be retained with your legal papers. It is also important to inform your next of kin or executor of your wishes and you may also wish to inform your doctor of your intention to donate.

We will acknowledge receipt of your bequest form on its return to us.

The University of Edinburgh will accept responsibility for transportation costs for those potential donors who reside within the Fife, Lothian and Borders area. Should you wish to donate your body to us but reside out with this area, assurances must be forthcoming that transportation costs will either be met from the donor's estate or borne by the next-of-kin.

In some cases, we may not be able to accept your body (**See Section – Restrictions on the Acceptance of Bequests**) and under these circumstances we would ask you to consider granting permission for your body to be transported to another Scottish University Medical school. Under these circumstances we can contact the other Scottish Universities, if your next of kin wish, to see if they are in a position to accept the body. The costs of transportation in this regard may have to be met from the donor's estate or borne by their next of kin. If it is your wish that your body only be accepted by the University of Edinburgh and we are unable to do so your next-of-kin must make alternative arrangements for your funeral. Please indicate your preference on the Declaration of Bequest form (**Section 1**).

It is important that both you and your next-of-kin understand that there is no guarantee of acceptance of every body that is offered. This does not diminish the importance of your intention to donate and we are no less grateful for those few offers which we are obliged to decline.

The Anatomy Act permits your body to be retained for up to 3 years after death and it is important that your next-of-kin are informed of this. Although use of the body must be completed within 3 years, the University may wish to retain parts for a longer period or indefinitely, for continued educational and training purposes. The Anatomy Act makes provision for this. However you can choose not to allow any part of your body to be retained beyond the three year period and if so it is important that you indicate your preference on the Declaration of Bequest form (**Section 2**).

**This should be countersigned by your witness.**

Likewise it is also possible that the University may wish to take photographic/electronic images of parts of your body for educational, training and research purposes. These images will not include features which could result in your identity being disclosed. You can choose not to allow any part of your body to be photographed or recorded in any electronic format. Please indicate your preference on the Declaration of Bequest form (**Section 3**).

We would ask you also to indicate on the Bequest form whether you wish to be cremated or buried. (Next-of-kin would be required to arrange a burial.) If cremated, please also indicate if you wish your ashes to be retained and returned to your next-of-kin. (**Disposal of body and ashes**)

Ashes, if required, will be returned to the next-of-kin in the box which comes from the crematorium. Should the next of kin wish them to be in a different receptacle this would need to be arranged with the funeral director prior to collection and a charge will be made.

**PLEASE NOTE** should you wish your ashes to be returned to your next of kin upon cremation and have also consented to the retention of body parts it will only be the ashes from the original cremation that will be returned. The ashes from any retained parts cremated at a later date will be dispersed in the Garden of Remembrance at the crematorium due to the likelihood of a shared cremation.

We endeavour to use all donor bodies as fully as possible. Although the Anatomy Act allows us to keep your body for up to 3 years, in certain circumstances, your body may be used within months of arrival and a cremation arranged.

## Withdrawing consent

Consent can be withdrawn at any time. Simply notify our Bequest co-ordinator, in writing, and your details will be removed from our system and your Bequest form destroyed.

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

The Anatomy department is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. There is a voicemail system at the office and relatives or doctors should leave their name and telephone number as a recorded message so that we can deal with it promptly. Please help us by speaking slowly and clearly. Someone will contact the person immediately upon the department opening on the Monday morning.

During major the public holidays at Christmas and New Year we offer a reduced service. Please follow the instructions on our pre-recorded telephone message during this period.

At the time of a potential donor's death the next-of-kin or executor should do the following:

1. Telephone the department as soon as possible after death occurs (**see page 11**). They will be required to give us the donor's details, confirm that a bequest has been signed and asked a few questions including the cause of death. We appreciate that this will be a very difficult time for the next of kin but we need to assess whether we will be able to accept the bequest or not.
2. A death certificate will be issued by the doctor (either in the hospital or by the GP). We cannot accept a body until this has been signed. Sometimes it will be necessary for us to contact this doctor before we can make a final decision so it would be helpful if the next-of-kin could provide us with these details.
3. If the death occurs in a hospital the body is usually held in the hospital mortuary until a decision is made. If, however, the death occurs at home or in a nursing home, it would be advisable to turn off all heating where the body lies and open a window if possible. It is the responsibility of your next of kin/executor to arrange for the body to be held in a suitable environment (e.g. a hospital mortuary or undertaker with fridge facilities) until a decision is made.
4. When the offer of your body has been accepted, the University will make the necessary arrangements to remove and transport your body to the University.
5. The next-of-kin/executor should then arrange to go to the local registrar, taking with them the death certificate from the doctor, where they will be



given **Form 14 (Certificate of Registration of Death)**. They should also obtain a copy of the **Full Extract of Death Registration**. It is advisable to take birth and marriage certificates too if available.

Death registration is now subject to a random review process which can delay the actual death registration. The registrar will explain the review process and timescales, and will contact next-of-kin when the review is complete. This should not affect the body donation process. Further information on the review service can be read at:

[www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification)

6. The next-of-kin/executor will then be required to come in to the department to complete the appropriate forms.  
These forms are as follows:
  - a) **DAA1** Authorisation for use of a body for anatomical examination.
  - b) **Authority for collection of ashes**In order to do so, the next of kin must bring **Form 14** and a copy of the **Full Extract of Death Registration** with them.
7. The University will be responsible for the safe keeping, preservation and examination of the body until such time as cremation is required. Should you wish to be buried, this would have to be arranged by your next-of-kin and the remains will be returned to them at the end of the examination period.
8. Normally we do not inform the next-of-kin that the cremation is taking place unless you have indicated that you wish the ashes to be returned. Should they wish to be informed of the cremation this can be arranged but there will be no official cremation service. All cremation costs will be met by the University.

## Annual Memorial Service

An interdenominational memorial service is held every year in May at Greyfriar's Kirk to which the families of all of the donors of the preceding year are invited. All 1<sup>st</sup> year medical students and members of the anatomy staff also attend to pay their respects and acknowledge the gift that the donors have bestowed on the University. Details of this are sent out to the next-of-kin nearer the time.

## Restrictions on the Acceptance of Bequests

**No guarantee can be given that a bequest will be accepted.** 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 and 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, the object of which is the study of the normal structure of the body.

If the donation cannot be accepted, responsibility for burial or cremation rests with the executors or next of kin.

There is no upper age limit for bequeathing a body.

**A. Although not absolute**, the following may be reasons for **NOT** accepting a bequest:

- 1. Post mortem examination**
- 2. Transmissible disease** (e.g. Hepatitis, HIV, Septicaemia)
- 3. Non-senile Dementia/Alzheimer's:** of possible infective origin
- 4. Jaundice:** of infective origin
- 5. The objection of the next of kin, executor, member of the family or friend of the deceased for reasons of distress or bereavement.**

**B. Conditions which if severe or multiple MAY be a cause for refusal:**

- 6. Deterioration in the body tissue** (e.g. varicose ulcers, pressure sores, limb amputation, severe joint deformity, recent surgery where the wound has not healed.)
- 7. Peripheral vascular disease:** severe vascular disease of the limbs and severe diabetes with evidence of vascular disease.
- 8. Peripheral oedema:** severe cases
- 9. Artificial stoma:** (e.g. ileostomy, colostomy, gastrostomy)
- 10. Cancer** – acceptance depends on the spread of the cancer. Chemotherapy within three months prior to death.
- 11. Size:** excessive weight or height/ undersized.
- 12. Operational considerations** (mortuary at capacity/maintenance of essential equipment.
- 13. Out of hours** (e.g. holiday periods, weekends or out of normal working hours (Mon – Fri. 9 – 5pm)

If the body is not suitable for anatomical examination, the next of kin or executors will be informed as soon as possible so that they may make funeral arrangements.

Where a bequest is refused on the grounds of insufficient space, it may be possible to offer the body to another medical school, provided agreement for this has been given in the signed bequest form.

### **Organ and Tissue Donation**

**We are aware that many people who are considering Body Donation are also interested in or have already registered as an organ donor. The law around organ and tissue donation is changing to an opt out system in Scotland on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and it is important that you understand what this means to you. Unfortunately it is not possible to donate both organs for transplantation and your body to Medical Science. More information regarding organ and tissue donation and the choices you have can be found at: [www.organdonationscotland.org](http://www.organdonationscotland.org)**

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

When you wish to notify us of a death please phone one of the following numbers:

**Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm:            Bequest Co-ordinator - 0131 651 5996**

**After hours/Weekends :                    an answering machine will be in operation on the above number.**

We will require the following information:

- **Evidence of donor’s consent (bequest form or will)**
- **Cause of death (if available)**
- **Attending doctor’s name and telephone number**
- **Location of the deceased**
- **Contact details for the next-of-kin/executor**

After consultation with the attending doctor/GP to ascertain the cause of death and other relevant medical history, (See **Restrictions on acceptance of a Bequest**) we will make a decision on whether the donation can be accepted.

### If the donation is accepted:

- Register the death with the local Registrar (you will usually have to make an appointment), obtaining **FORM 14** and **Full Extract of Death Registration**. Take birth and marriage certificates with you if you have them.
- Arrange a convenient time for yourself to come into the department to sign the necessary documents, bringing the forms you have received from the Registrar
- We will make all arrangements to collect the deceased and bring them to the University.

## If the donation is not accepted:

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

If you are unclear on any aspect of body donation, please do not hesitate to contact us on any of the numbers below and we shall do our best to ensure that it is fully explained to your satisfaction.

**Finally we greatly respect and appreciate your generous gift.**

**Our address:** Anatomy,  
The Edinburgh Medical School  
Deanery of Biomedical Sciences,  
The University of Edinburgh,  
Old Medical School  
Teviot Place,  
Edinburgh,  
EH8 9AG

### **Contacts:**

#### **General Enquiries and Notification of Death:**

Anatomy Bequest Co-ordinator **0131 651 5996**

(Outwith office hours (9–5) and at weekends: **Bequest line: 0131 651 5996**)

**Email:** *body-donations@ed.ac.uk*