



**Bequest Office
Department of Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics
University of Oxford
Le Gros Clark Building
South Parks Road
Oxford
OX1 3QX**

Tel: 01865 272181

Authorisation for donation of body for anatomical examination

Thank you for expressing a wish to donate your body for anatomical examination, education, training and research after death. Your generous action is greatly appreciated.

This booklet contains detailed information as well as the forms you will need to complete should you decide to go ahead with donation. Please read this thoroughly as it is important that you understand this information before completing the forms. If you have any questions regarding body donation, please do not hesitate to contact us on the above telephone number.

On behalf of our staff and students, I would like to thank you for the contribution you are making to medical science. We depend very much on the generous action of people such as yourself for the continuance of medical education, although I trust it will be many years before a medical school benefits from your kindness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Cosker'.

Dr Tom Cosker
HTA Designated Individual

Overview

Oxford University is regularly ranked as one of the top universities in the United Kingdom and our teaching and research in biomedical sciences is recognised as world-class.

The Oxford medical course places a very strong emphasis on academic and scientific aspects of medicine. We aim to produce doctors who are broadly educated in science and clinical practice, and whose clinical practice is informed by their scientific approach to medicine.

In order to provide this level of education, we rely on generous and public-spirited people who would like their bodies to be of use after their death. Donated bodies are a vital resource for teaching medical students about the structure and function of the human body, as well as being used to train a wide range of healthcare professionals and develop a variety of medical and surgical techniques.

Please note that donated bodies are not used for research into specific diseases. If you wish to donate your body to research into a specific condition, please contact the relevant research organisation or charity.

If you wish to donate your body to medical science, please read this booklet carefully and discuss it with your nearest relatives before signing the forms. By signing, you are offering your body to medical science. Because of the need to safeguard our staff and our students, we cannot ever make a commitment to accept such a donation until we have spoken with the medical practitioners after death. If there is a risk of contagious illnesses being passed to our staff or students, we will have to decline. A more complete list of exemption criteria can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions on page 4.

What to do at time of death: Procedure for Next of Kin or Executors

If the death takes place in a hospital

The hospital staff will arrange for the deceased to be taken to the hospital mortuary.

If the death takes place at home

Please contact a funeral director of your choice to collect the deceased and take them to their Chapel of rest.

In either case, the deceased will be kept under refrigerated conditions until the department is able to make a decision about the donation.

Please contact us on the next working day after the death

The department is open from 8.30am-2.00pm Monday-Friday. A voicemail is available outside of these hours. We will need to ask you details about the deceased, including the name and contact number for their usual GP. It will be helpful if you have this information to hand. We will then contact medical professionals who had been dealing with them before their death to make a decision as to whether we can accept or not. We have a 5 day period between the day of a death and being able to accept, in instances of Christmas and Easter periods, we would be unable to accept as the Department is closed.

You will need to make an appointment with the registrar to register the death

You will need to inform them of the potential for donation. You DO NOT need to wait until a final decision has been reached to do this.

If the donation is accepted

We will send you forms to complete. These will give you the opportunity to state your wishes regarding the eventual funeral. We will also ask for the original green form you receive when registering the death and a copy of the death certificate.

We will not normally contact you again after we receive these forms unless you request to be informed of and/or be present at the eventual cremation.

If the donation is declined

In some cases, Oxford is unable to accept a donation but another medical school can accept. If this is the case, you will be asked whether you would like us to pass the donation on to another institution. There is no obligation to do this. If the donation is passed to another medical school, they will ask for a contribution towards the cost of transportation.

If no medical school can accept, you will have to proceed with normal funeral arrangements. We regret that we are unable to make any financial contribution towards these private arrangements.

Frequently Asked Questions

What will my body be used for?

We primarily use donated bodies for teaching medical students about the structure and function of the human body. We are also finding that an increasing number of doctors, surgeons and other healthcare professionals are coming to us for specialised training courses or to investigate novel therapies.

Can I donate my organs as well?

We are not able to accept donations for anatomical examination if any organs other than the corneas have been donated for transplantation. It is possible, however, to remain on both registers to have the highest probability of helping someone after your death. Your next of kin would need to know which form of donation you wished to prioritise and make sure that both organisations were aware of this wish.

Are all donations accepted?

Sadly, we are not able to accept all donations and we cannot make a decision about acceptance until the time of death. If we are unable to accept in Oxford but believe that another medical school might be able to, we will ask your next of kin whether they would like us to pursue this as an option. If we are able to pass your donation on to another medical school, they will ask for a contribution towards the cost of transportation.

Because we can never guarantee to accept a donation, we strongly recommend making sure that your next of kin aware of your alternative wishes should we have to decline. This reduces any uncertainty at a difficult time.

Although not exhaustive, the following is a list of some of the disorders which may prevent us accepting a body for medical science:

- Post mortem examination
- Some infectious diseases such as hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, MRSA
- A recent (less than 2 years) diagnosis of dementia
- Open wounds on the body, such as those caused by bedsores, varicose ulcers or recent operations
- Severe peripheral oedema
- Severe arthritic deformity, such that the deceased cannot lie flat
- Donation of organs other than the corneas for transplantation
- Severe obesity
- Some forms of cancer

Am I too old?

There is no upper age limit on donation. Most of our donors are over the age of 50 and a large proportion are in their 80s, 90s or even older.

What if I move house?

In Oxford, we normally only accept donations from those with an OX, RG or SN postcode, as well as some areas of the HP postcode. If you move house but remain within this area, it can be helpful to send us a note alerting us to your new address but this is not essential. If you move into an area normally allocated to another medical school, your existing forms remain valid but the processes at the time of death may be simpler for your next of kin if you let us know and also contact the relevant medical school. Please call us on the number on the front of this booklet to find out which medical school is the most appropriate.

How do I withdraw consent?

Your consent can be withdrawn at any time. Simply notify us in writing and your form will be destroyed. Please ensure that you also destroy any copies you may have made of the form, to avoid any confusion for your next of kin.

What are the funeral arrangements?

The form we send to your next of kin or executor includes questions about what they wish the final funeral arrangements to be. The vast majority of families opt to have the medical school arrange and pay for the funeral, but it is possible to have a sealed coffin returned to the family for private funeral arrangements if they wish.

Families are given three options for their involvement in the funeral.

1. To receive no further communication regarding the funeral. Many families choosing this option have a private memorial service shortly after the death.
2. To be notified of the date and time of the cremation in advance but not to attend. Some relatives simply wish to spend a few moments in private thought at the relevant time.
3. To attend the eventual cremation. If this option is selected, we will contact the next of kin and find a date and time which is mutually convenient.

Families are also asked if they wish to have the ashes returned to them or to have them scattered in the garden of remembrance. This option is not available if they have requested not to be contacted again.

Funerals usually take place approximately three years after death but certain courses or procedures can result in the funeral taking place much sooner, sometimes within six months.

Can I have a green burial?

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the chemicals we use, bodies donated to the medical school are unsuitable for green burial.

Notes on Completing Body Donation Consent Forms

Which option should I choose?

You have two options for how long your body may be retained by the medical school:

- For an indefinite period. This gives the medical school the maximum flexibility in the use of your donation. If you select this option, there is no legal limit on the length of time a donated body or body parts may be used. You should be aware that, in almost every case, anatomical examination is completed within 3 years and the body released during this time.
- For a maximum of 3 years.

Under certain circumstances, it can be useful for the medical school to be able to retain small parts of some donated bodies because of their particular value in medical education. If you would prefer the funeral to take place within three years but are happy for us to keep such samples, please tick option A on the form.

If you would prefer that no part of your body be retained for longer than 3 years, please choose option B.

It is often useful for the medical school to prepare images of parts of your body for teaching, training or research purposes. You would not be identifiable in these images. Please tick option 2 if you are NOT happy for us to prepare these images.

Witnesses

Please complete and sign both copies of the consent form in the presence of your witness. Your witness can be anyone of your choosing, including spouse, next of kin, friend, neighbour, health professional etc.

What to do on completion of the forms

Please send the **BEQUEST OFFICE** copy of your form to us at the address on the front of this booklet. Keep the remaining form in this booklet somewhere convenient for your next of kin. They will need to refer to it when the time comes.

Acknowledgement

We ask you to send back a signed copy of your consent form to reduce the administrative burden on your relatives or executor at the time of death and to ensure that it is completed correctly. There is no requirement for us to have this copy however. As such, we do not usually send out an acknowledgement that we have received your signed consent form. If you would like to receive an acknowledgement, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope or postcard with your completed form and we will return it to you.

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGY, ANATOMY AND GENETICS

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Human Tissue Act 2004

To be completed by donor. **DONOR COPY**

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

Title _____ Surname/family name _____

Forename(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Tel no _____

Date of birth _____ Religion/faith group (if applicable) _____

I WISH TO DONATE MY BODY AFTER MY DEATH. I UNDERSTAND THAT IT MAY BE USED FOR ANATOMICAL EXAMINATION, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RESEARCH.

Please read the “Notes on completing these forms” then tick as appropriate

1. I consent my body or body parts being retained indefinitely

OR

My body can be retained for a maximum of 3 years and

A. Parts of my body may be retained upon conclusion of anatomical examination

B. No part of my body may be retained upon conclusion of anatomical examination

2. I **DO NOT** consent to images being used for education, training or research.

Witness details

Full Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Relationship to donor _____

Signatures

Signature of donor _____ Date _____

Signature of witness _____ Date _____

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OR

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C. Parts of my body may be retained upon conclusion of anatomical examination

D. No part of my body may be retained upon conclusion of anatomical examination

2. I **DO NOT** consent to images being used for education, training or research.

Witness details

Full Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Relationship to donor _____

Signatures

Signature of donor _____ Date _____

Signature of witness _____ Date _____

