Page on working with Human Tissue for ALL UCL Divisions and Institutes

ARE YOU WORKING WITH HUMAN TISSUE OR BLOOD?

1. If you plan to carry out any research with human samples your work MUST have received Ethical Approval from an appropriate body BEFORE you start. In most cases, you also need to obtain approval from the Sponsor of the study. For UCL sponsorship, contact the UCL/UCLH Joint Research Office. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jro

It is the Principal Investigator’s responsibility to ensure that all work performed under their direction has received ethical approval, and that they are aware of all those involved in executing the work, and all such persons are listed as investigators of the ethically approved research project. It is also each researcher’s responsibility to ensure that the project on which they are working has received ethical approval

2. If your work involves storing human tissue in cellular form (i.e. any material consisting of human cells other than gametes and immortal cell lines, in a form where cells are still recognisably present), ethical approval and sponsor approval must be obtained to ensure that your work complies with the Human Tissue Act 2004. Details of this legislation can be found at http://www.hta.gov.uk/legislationpoliciesandcodesofpractice.cfm

3. In most cases using human samples, ethical approval requires the patient’s consent. However, in some cases where samples, collected as part of routine clinical care, are surplus to clinical requirement, and are anonymised so that the researcher cannot identify the donor, the samples may be analysed without patient consent provided ethical approval is given.

4. All ethical approvals are time limited, and project restricted. When approval expires you will need to apply to the relevant ethics committee to extend the study.

Obtaining Ethical Approval. Approval for your study may be obtained via two routes:

a. If human tissue is to be stored within a UCL Biobank http://www.ucl.ac.uk/biobank, or an external biobank licensed by the Human Tissue Authority, you must obtain ethical approval from that Biobank ethics committee. Biobank ethics committees must be approved by the National Research Ethics Service. There are a number of Human Tissue Authority Licensed biobanks at UCL which have National Research Ethics Committee approval. Information about these UCL HTA Licensed biobanks can be found at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/biobank. The Designated Individual for each licence can provide details on their Research Tissue Bank approvals and criteria for access.

b. For research studies which are not covered by HTA licenced biobanks, ethical approval for your project will need to be obtained directly from a Research Ethics Committee authorised by the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) – see http://www.nres.nhs.uk/

Students must provide evidence in their log book that they have undertaken training in the requirements of the Human Tissue Act, if they are undertaking research involving human samples. The MRC provides an e-learning course, http://www.byglearning.co.uk/mrcrsc-lms/course/category.php?id=1. The names of students must be added to the list of investigators involved in ethically approved research projects.
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<th>UCL Designated Individuals for UCL Licences</th>
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<th>Research Tissue Banks Under Licence</th>
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<td><strong>Dr Manuel Rodriguez-Justo</strong> &lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:m.rodriguez-justo@ucl.ac.uk">m.rodriguez-justo@ucl.ac.uk</a> &lt;br&gt;020 7679 6015 &lt;br&gt;HTA License No. 12055</td>
<td>UCL Cancer Institute&lt;br&gt;2. SATELLITE London Research Institute&lt;br&gt;3. SATELLITE - IOMS / RNOH&lt;br&gt;4. The Prostate and Breast Cancer Research Centre, Royal Free and University College Medical School</td>
<td>1. UCL - Cancer Institute: Dr Joanne Mcdonald (<a href="mailto:joanne.mcdonald@ucl.ac.uk">joanne.mcdonald@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;2 London Research Institute: Dr David Hudson (<a href="mailto:david.hudson@cancer.org.uk">david.hudson@cancer.org.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;3. RNOH / Stanmore: Ufedo Miachi (<a href="mailto:ufedo.miachi@rnoh.nhs.uk">ufedo.miachi@rnoh.nhs.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;4. Prostate research: Prof Laurence Lovat (<a href="mailto:l.lovat@ucl.ac.uk">l.lovat@ucl.ac.uk</a>)</td>
<td>UCL/UCLH Biobank for studying health and disease</td>
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<td><strong>Dr James Phillips</strong> &lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:jb.phillips@ucl.ac.uk">jb.phillips@ucl.ac.uk</a> &lt;br&gt;HTA License No. 12277</td>
<td>Eastman Dental Institute</td>
<td>Paul Ashley, <a href="mailto:p.ashley@ucl.ac.uk">p.ashley@ucl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>UCL Eastman Biobank</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Andrew Copp</strong> &lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:a.copp@ucl.ac.uk">a.copp@ucl.ac.uk</a> &lt;br&gt;020 7905 2189 &lt;br&gt;HTA License No. 12220</td>
<td>Institute of Child Health</td>
<td>1.Baby Biobank - Dr Nita Solanky (<a href="mailto:nita.solanky@ucl.ac.uk">nita.solanky@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;2. Human Developmental Biology Resource - Dr Dianne Gerrelli (<a href="mailto:d.gerrelli@ucl.ac.uk">d.gerrelli@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;3. GOSH Rare Dermatology Diseases Resource - Dr Veronica Kinsler (<a href="mailto:v.kinsler@ucl.ac.uk">v.kinsler@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;4. Cardiac Archive - Dr Andrew Cook (<a href="mailto:a.cook@ucl.ac.uk">a.cook@ucl.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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<td><strong>Dr Maria Thom</strong> &lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:M.Thom@ucl.ac.uk">M.Thom@ucl.ac.uk</a> &lt;br&gt;020 7676 2169 &lt;br&gt;HTA License No. 12198</td>
<td>Institute of Neurology, Wakefield Street</td>
<td>1.QS Brain Bank (<a href="mailto:Janice.Holton@ucl.ac.uk">Janice.Holton@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;2 NeuroResource (<a href="mailto:j.Newcombe@ucl.ac.uk">j.Newcombe@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;3.Neuromuscular Diseases (<a href="mailto:Diana.johnson@ucl.ac.uk">Diana.johnson@ucl.ac.uk</a>)&lt;br&gt;4 Epilepsy (<a href="mailto:M.Thom@ucl.ac.uk">M.Thom@ucl.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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| Professor Philip J Luthert  
p.luthert@ucl.ac.uk  
020 7608 6808  
HTA License No. 12177 | Institute of Ophthalmology | Dr Richard Elliot  
r.j.elliot@ucl.ac.uk | Eye Bank |