

U O W

BODY DONATION PROGRAM

Information for Donors and Next of Kin of Donors

You are **strongly encouraged** to make this information available to your nominated next of kin if you decide to become a Donor. It is your next of kin the Program Coordinator will communicate with at time of death. Next of kin need to be aware of how the Body Donation Program works to minimise any distress to them at that difficult time.

Objective of the Program

The objective of the Body Donation Program is to obtain human materials for educational and scientific study so that we can provide our students with the best possible education, training and learning experience. The University of Wollongong offers a Body Donation Program to the public enabling them the opportunity to be part of this very unique training experience for our future health-care workers including doctors, nurses, medical scientists, exercise physiologists, dieticians and other health-related professionals.

The Importance of Body Donation

People who donate their bodies for anatomical examination and / or medical research make an invaluable contribution to the advancement of medical knowledge. The training and research this unique gift enables, can lead to important health discoveries that have the potential to alleviate suffering and improve community wellbeing. For this reason, it is greatly appreciated by medical researchers, teachers and students.

What does 'Anatomical examination' mean?

'Anatomical examination' of a body includes the use of the body for medical or scientific purposes. Medical and scientific purposes include educational and research purposes connected with medicine or science. An anatomical examination does not include a post-mortem examination.

Anatomical examination may involve examination of the exterior and interior parts of your body. To examine the interior parts, your body will be dissected using surgical instruments. This may involve the removal of the skin, the opening of various cavities of the body; the opening of the skull to allow examination of the brain and the removal of your limbs. All such procedures are performed by trained and highly skilled Anatomy Laboratory staff and / or medical students under supervision. Student dissections are performed to provide surgical experience and training to future doctors.

Will my body be used for teaching or research?

Most bodies are used to teach medical students and those in allied health fields such as health and medical sciences. Some bodies are used for research to advance our medical knowledge or to study new operative techniques for example. The University will not use your body for research unless you provide consent.

Are there any conditions which would invalidate my donation at time of death?

Yes. You and your family should be aware that there are certain circumstances which preclude the University from accepting a donor into the Program. These include if the donor:

- Has been significantly affected by certain medical conditions or procedures, such as amputation of a limb (subsequent to registering with the Program), recent unhealed surgical wounds, unhealed bed sores, or disease such as gangrene,
- Has undergone an autopsy,
- Has undergone whole organ donation,

- Is obese (or weighing 90 kg or more) or emaciated (or weighing less than 45 kg),
- Has Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), has 2 or more first or second-degree relatives with CJD, has received human pituitary hormone for infertility or human growth hormone for short stature (prior to 1986), has received a dura mater graft during brain or spinal cord surgery (prior to 1990),
- Has an unexplained progressive neurological illness of less than 12 months,
- Has certain communicable diseases (such as tuberculosis), blood borne diseases (such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C or HIV/AIDS) or antibiotic resistant bacterial infections such as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA commonly known as Golden Staph), and Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE).
- Has resided in the UK between 1980 and 1996 for a total (cumulative) time of 6 months or more
- Has received blood transfusions in the UK since 1 January 1980
- Cannot be transferred to the University within 48 hours of death

And also

- If the donor's death is the subject of a Coroner's enquiry
- If there is insufficient space within the Anatomy Facility for the correct storage of the body.
- Or death occurs during closure periods at Christmas (3 weeks) and Easter (2 weeks)

It should be understood that determination of the suitability of a body for donation can only be made at the time of death, since the cause of death may render the donation unsuitable for study. To avoid undue grief and disappointment to members of your family, they should be made aware of these conditions and exclusions and have alternative funeral arrangements in place just in case.

Do I need to have alternative funeral arrangements in place if I am a Registered Donor?

Yes. Registration with the Program is no guarantee you will be accepted at time of death. The suitability of a donor for the Program can only be determined at time of death, and the circumstances or condition of your body at that time may preclude you being accepted into the Program. **We strongly recommend that donors ensure they have alternative funeral arrangements in place and that they discuss this fully with their next of kin.**

What happens if my body is not suitable for any reason?

In the Initial Screening Process:

If your body is deemed unsuitable for the Program, based on information provided to the Program Coordinator during the initial screening process the Program Coordinator will advise the family that the donor is unsuitable at that time and it is then up to the family to go ahead with whatever alternative arrangements were in place. The University is then no longer involved in the process.

In the Final Screening Process:

If you have been deemed 'conditionally acceptable' after the initial screening process, and your body is then found not to be suitable for donation upon further examination and testing in the Anatomy Laboratory (for parameters that cannot be established in the initial screening process), the next of kin will be notified as soon as possible (usually within one week after death) so that they can go ahead with alternative funeral arrangements. The University will work with your family members to organise for the transfer of your body to their preferred funeral director.

The cost of the transfer of a donor from place of death to the Anatomy Laboratory will be covered, in good faith, by the University. If the donor is found not to be suitable upon further examination and testing once in the Anatomy Laboratory, transfer costs from the University to the funeral director of the family's choice for private arrangements will be borne by the family.

What expenses are involved upon the death of the donor?

If the donor is deemed 'conditionally suitable' for the Program, the University will assume the cost of transport of the donor's body from place of death to the Anatomy Laboratory on Wollongong Campus. The only expense to the family or to the estate may be the cost of transfer from the Anatomy Laboratory, back to the funeral director of choice for private family arrangements should the donor be deemed unsuitable on further examination and blood testing once in the Anatomy Laboratory.

What is meant by 'Research for educational benefit'?

Staff and students within educational institutions conduct medical research for the purpose of providing answers to medical questions and publishing the results to a wider academic audience. The data contained within the publications provides educational information that may influence future medical research and / or be used to educate students on particular medical matters. You may choose not to consent to 'Research for Educational Benefit' on the Donor Registration Form, and in that case, your remains will not be used for that purpose.

What is meant by 'Sponsored research'?

The University may, when approached, provide services to outside organisations for the purpose of medical research. Medical researchers from these organisations may wish to conduct research involving your body and/or tissue from your body. Examples of such research may include, but are not limited to, the development of new surgical techniques, collection of tissue for examination (structure, disease state etc.) or to develop new medical treatments and the testing of new imaging techniques. The University provides this service on a 'cost recovery' basis and does not attempt to make any financial gain from your donation. You may choose not to consent to 'Sponsored Research' on the Donor Registration Form, and in that case, your remains will not be used for that purpose.

Will my personal information be disclosed in the research findings?

No. Any results obtained from research conducted on your body and / or tissue will be grouped with those of other donors for the purposes of report generation. You will not be individually identified in any publication, report or oral presentation of the research findings. All donors remain anonymous within the Anatomy Laboratory.

Will my body remain at the University of Wollongong?

Your body will not be transferred unless you have provided the University with consent to do so. The University makes every effort to store and use all donated bodies on campus.

However, the University has a limit on its storage facilities, and its ability to accept and retain your body will depend on storage capacity. If there is insufficient storage available, from time to time the University may either (a) decline the donation due to storage capacity (b) transfer some bodies to other educational institutions for anatomical examination and research for educational benefit. This may include direct transfer of the body from place of death to another educational institution, in which case that institution will liaise directly with your next of kin to facilitate the direct transfer to that institution. These institutions must hold the relevant anatomical licenses and will be required to return your ashes to the University of Wollongong.

The University may charge the other institution a fee for receiving your body, but this fee is limited to only that amount necessary to recover costs incurred in the preparation and transfer of your body.

Your body will only be transferred to another educational institution if you provide us with consent to do so.

What is meant on the Donor Registration Form by "permanent retention of tissue" for teaching purposes?

An organ or other part of your body may be unusual (due to an abnormally developed, or diseased organ or part), and as a result may be particularly useful for teaching and/or research purposes. Such a specimen may be "preserved" so that it may be used and viewed by subsequent groups of students over time without deterioration. This enables the best possible use and appreciation of the tissue in the learning process.

Should it become necessary to dispose of any such preserved body part separately from the rest of your body, the part will be disposed of in an appropriate manner. In the case of a body part which is not a small amount of tissue suitable for disposal as clinical waste, the part will be cremated and the ashes scattered at the University's Garden of Rest.

You have the opportunity to nominate any organs or parts which you do not wish to be retained in this way.

Can the Whole of my Body be Permanently Retained if I tick 'yes' to Permanent Retention of Tissue?

Yes – that is possible, but may only occur in the following circumstances:

- a) When asked on the Donor Registration Form to identify any organs or parts of your body that you **DO NOT** wish to be permanently retained you tick 'No'.
- b) All the dissected organs and parts of your body are identified as of such anatomical significance as to warrant continued permanent use for teaching and research purposes. It should be noted that it would be extremely rare for this to be the case, but you and your family should be aware of the possibility.

Will the University take any images of my body?

The University may capture images of your body and/or tissues and may make them available in print and/or electronic format for purposes related to education and research. Any images of your body and/or tissues will be made anonymous.

The University will not use any images of your body and/or tissues in print and/or electronic format for education/research purposes unless you provide consent.

Who may serve as a witness to my donation?

Any person 18 years or older, preferably someone expected to survive you, may act as your witness. That person is deemed to be your Senior Next of Kin. The signature of at least one such witness is required on the Donor Registration Forms to ensure that person is aware of your intention to donate and is willing, when contacted about your donation, to abide by your wish to donate when the time comes.

Can I donate someone else's body, such as that of my wife or husband?

The University does not accept donations from next of kin of deceased loved ones. The University is only able to receive donations that are consented to by the donor during his/her lifetime by the completion of the Donor Registration Forms.

Should the donor inform someone of the bequest? Is it necessary to include my body donation in my will?

Your surviving partner or senior next of kin should be informed of the arrangements you have made and ideally should be provided with this information document so that they are fully aware of how the Program works to minimise distress at that difficult time. It is your nominated Senior Next of Kin that the Program Coordinator will talk to and make arrangements with at time of death. Your next of kin need to be aware of and be willing to uphold your wishes. Please note that a 'next of kin' does not have to be a member of your family, it can be a friend or colleague.

You may also choose to inform your other family members, doctor, executor and solicitor of your wishes.

You do not need to include the bequest in your Will, as your Will may not be read in time for delivery of your body to the University. It is more important to have your instructions readily available on a wallet donation card, or donation consent form, and have your survivors fully aware of your intentions.

However, should you wish to include the donation in your will, a simple statement including the words *"I have expressed the wish for and consented to the anatomical examination of my body at The University of Wollongong and the removal of tissue from my body to be used for medical and or scientific research purposes and I confirm that my wish and that consent has not been withdrawn or revoked by me."* can be included.

Please note that it is not sufficient to just include this statement in your will. You are still required to formally apply to the University, as described above, (and receive notification from the University that you are a registered donor) in order to formalise the bequest.

What arrangement should I make if I am admitted into a hospital, move to a retirement community, a nursing home or any type of care facility prior to my death?

If you are admitted into a hospital, move to a retirement community, a nursing home or any type of care facility, it is recommended that a copy of the Donor Registration Forms be placed on your chart or care plan. When death occurs, the University should be notified immediately by phoning 4221 3800.

Will any payment be received by my family for the body?

No payment may be made by the University to the donor in connection with a body donation. However, by donating your body you are exempted from the costs of cremation.

Will any payment be received if my body is used for research?

No payment may be made by the University to the donor in connection with a body being used for research. All medical research is conducted on a 'cost recovery' basis.

If a bequest is made, and the donor has a change of mind later, can the gift be rescinded?

Yes, if the request is made in writing by the donor or his/her Power of Attorney or by a telephone call. Please note that bona fides of the caller will be checked to ensure the caller is authorized to make such changes.

What is the procedure upon my death? What if I should die on a weekend or holiday?

Procedure Upon Death

When you pass away, your surviving partner, Senior Next of Kin, Power of Attorney, or medical staff member should notify the Program Coordinator as soon as possible by calling 4221 3800. If your body is deemed conditionally suitable, the body will be collected and transported to the University, or, in the case of a direct transfer to another educational institution as described above, to that institution, either by our nominated funeral director or one of your family's choice at no cost to your next of kin. A blood test will then be taken for blood borne pathogens. Full acceptance into the Program is conditional upon the blood tests returning a negative result. This can take up to 5 working days. The Program Coordinator will then contact next of kin and advise formal suitability for the Program. Once blood tests are returned with a clear result, embalming commences. The body is then placed in cold storage until required.

What if I should Die on a Weekend or outside Business Hours?

Your family should still call 4221 3800. A voicemail message directs callers to contact Hansen & Cole for the Wollongong area on 4272 4900, Murphy Family Funerals on 4423 0722 for other Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas, and your local funeral director if you are in another part of NSW. The staff of these companies will make arrangements with your family to collect your body.

Then arrangements are the same as outlined above.

What if I should die during holiday periods such as Christmas or Easter?

During the extended holiday periods of Easter and Christmas, the University will be unable to take donations. Closure periods for Christmas each year will be 3 weeks and Easter 2 weeks. Should you pass away close to or during these periods, your family should call the Body Donation Program on 4221 3800 which will have a voicemail message in operation that will advise what arrangements are in place during that period and **may** include being directed to call another university who **may** be able to take the donation at that time.

You are strongly encouraged to ensure your family are aware of these holiday arrangements and your own wishes in these circumstances (ie if you want to donate to another program). If you or your family do not wish to make a donation to another program or that option is not available for reasons out of the University's control, it would be up to your family to go ahead with the alternative funeral arrangements you have in place.

It is important, however, to still notify the UOW Body Donation Program if death of a donor occurs during the holiday breaks, so that we may disable the donor's registration, to ensure correspondence is no longer sent. This can be done by leaving a voicemail message on the Program's phone (4221 3800).

If I die during the closure periods mentioned above, will I still be able to donate to UOW?

No. You will not be able to donate to the University of Wollongong if you die during the closure periods. However the University will make every effort to ensure that there is another donor program you may contact (probably Sydney based) if you wish to go ahead with a donation. You could still be a donor, just not with the University of Wollongong. However the University of Wollongong cannot guarantee the availability of other universities to take donations during the periods we are closed, as the activities of other universities is beyond our control. **You should have alternative funeral arrangements in place just in case.**

If I decide to donate to another program during a closure period will I still be part of the University of Wollongong Body Donation support structure?

No, once you go into another university body donation program, you are not a part of the University of Wollongong Body Donation Program. What this means is, your family will speak with the staff of the other program when making the donation and the other program will communicate with your family when the time comes to return your remains to your family to carry out your wishes.

Will there always be an opportunity at closure periods to donate to another body donation program?

No. Whilst the University of Wollongong will make every effort to secure the availability of another university body donation program during closure periods, this may not always be possible for reasons out of the University of Wollongong's control.

What steps will my family need to take during a closure period?

If you should pass away within a week of or during Easter or Christmas your family should call the University Body Donation Program on 4221 3800. A voicemail message will advise that the Program is closed for the holiday period and **may** provide the name and contact details of another body donation program you may donate to if you wish. Your family need to be made aware of your wishes in this circumstance – ie if you wish to donate to another program. Your family should also be aware of your preferred funeral arrangements should this not be possible.

It is important, however, to still notify the UOW Body Donation Program if death of a donor occurs during the holiday breaks, so that we may disable the donor's registration, to ensure correspondence is no longer sent. This can be done by leaving a voicemail message on the Program phone (4221 3800).

How long will the University keep my body?

Under the *NSW Anatomy Act (1977)* and the *Human Tissue and Anatomy Legislation Amendment Act (2003)*, the University is legally allowed to retain your body for teaching and research purposes for four (4) years. The University may apply to the Anatomy Inspector (NSW Department of Health) for an extension of the retention period up to a maximum of a further four (4) years. The University of Wollongong may apply for the extension of the retention period in order to maximise the use of such a valuable donation. The University will dispose of your body at a time no longer than eight (8) years (4 + 4 extension) from your date of death. You are encouraged to inform your family as to the length of the donation period.

Will the University accept my body if I die out-of-state?

No. Because of transportation costs, legal issues, and potential deterioration of the body, donations will only be accepted if death occurs within the State of NSW.

Is it possible for an ambulance service or even a family member deliver my body to the University?

No, NSW state law requires a licensed funeral director to conduct all body transportations. All donors are transported in a professional and ethical manner in vehicles equipped with proper mortuary transportation systems.

Will my blood be screened for infectious diseases?

Yes. Under the *NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, the University of Wollongong has a duty of care to provide and maintain a safe working and social environment for the entire University community comprising students, staff and visitors. Specific to the Anatomy facility and anatomical education practices, is the need to screen the blood of all deceased donors to ensure that the risk of blood borne transmissible infectious diseases is minimised.

All bodies conditionally accepted for the Program will be transported to the Anatomy Laboratory and have blood samples taken and tested for infectious diseases. Specifically, we employ the 3 test profile for HIV antibodies, hepatitis B surface antigen and antibodies to hepatitis C.

Blood testing is the final step in the process of accepting a body into the Body Donation Program at time of death.

Test Results:

The University of Wollongong outsources the blood testing to an external pathology laboratory. If blood tests return a negative finding it means no blood borne pathogens were found and the donor will be accepted into the Program. If blood tests return a positive finding it means that one or more of the blood borne pathogens listed above were found and the donor will not be accepted into the Program. The Program Coordinator will work with your family to arrange the transport of your body back to a funeral director of your choice.

This is an extremely difficult time for your family and to minimize distress, Donors may consent to the University providing the blood test results to nominated Senior Next of Kin, should those test results preclude the donor from entering the Program at time of death.

Can a person be too old to donate his or her body?

No. Age is not a consideration in body donation. Donors must be over 18 years of age to register with the Program.

What should I do if I am an organ donor?

The University encourages you to remain a registered organ donor as your donation may save another person's life. As age, health and lifestyle are no restriction to organ donation, many people in their 80's have saved the lives of much younger people. If you and your family make the choice to donate your organs at time of death, the donation of your whole body to the University of Wollongong will not be possible.

Will my family receive a report of your findings?

No. We do not conduct autopsies and no specific reports regarding your body will be prepared. Bodies are used anonymously in education and research and no record of our findings will be kept in any form. As your body may be utilised in anatomical research, scientific reports will be published in appropriate scientific journals. However, at all times your particular results will remain anonymous.

What about autopsies before donation?

Bodies that have undergone autopsy are not suitable for teaching and learning purposes and are not considered for the Program.

What is the final disposition of my body following study?

When the University has completed anatomical examination of your body (which may take up to eight (8) years), your body will be cremated or buried according to your wishes (you are able to provide consent for either of these on the Donor Registration Form). Costs of cremation will be borne by the University with your ashes returned to your next of kin or scattered at the University's Garden of Rest at Lakeside Memorial Park and Crematorium, depending on the wishes expressed by the donor on their Donor Registration Form. However, the University will always confer with senior next of kin at that time in case donor wishes had changed in the time between completing the Donor Registration Form and time of death. Costs associated with burial, and any additional services, will be a private arrangement between your next-of-kin and the provider of the service. In the case of burial, the University recommends potential donors purchase a pre-paid plot of their choice.

In the case of cremated remains, and where the donor has indicated a wish that ashes be returned to next of kin for private arrangements, the University offers next of kin the option of collecting ashes in person only. The University does not arrange post or courier delivery of ashes to next of kin if they reside any distance from Wollongong. The University will only return ashes in person to a nominated next of kin or arrange for next of kin to collect ashes personally from Lakeside Memorial Park and Crematorium (Lakeside) at Kanahooka. Lakeside does offer a delivery option, and this should be arranged independently with Lakeside. The University does not cover any costs associated with non-personal return of ashes to next of kin.

Is there a Ceremony of Appreciation for the donors?

Yes. The University of Wollongong conducts an Appreciation Ceremony commemorating our donors which is held every second year. All registered donors and the family of those who have made the donation are invited. The next one will be on Tuesday 24 November 2020.

The University has a dedicated Garden of Rest at Lakeside Memorial Park and Crematorium at Kanahooka. The foundation stone pays tribute to all those who have donated their bodies to the University's Body Donation Program and a small plaque commemorates individually those whose ashes have been scattered in the garden. Visitors are welcome to view the memorial within the crematorium's operating hours.

The University also maintains a Memorial Book which carries an inscription for **all our donors** in the year of their donation. It commemorates both those whose ashes are scattered at the Garden of Rest and those whose ashes have been collected by next of kin for private scattering ceremonies. The Memorial Book is on permanent display in the University's Library. It is a dedicated tribute to those who have donated to the University's Body Donation Program. Inscriptions within the book may be viewed by family members during the Ceremony of Appreciation.