School of Medicine

ANATOMICAL DONATION PROGRAMME

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University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoil Corcaigh
Thank you for your interest in donating your body to University College Cork.

The generous act of body donation is vital to the study of human anatomy. In doing so, donors make a unique contribution to training the next generation of health professionals and scientists.

The Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience provides anatomy education to over 600 students setting out on their career paths every year. These are mainly medical and dental students, but we also teach neuroscience, nursing and allied healthcare students, and provide on-going training to healthcare professionals such as medics and surgeons.

The dignity of our donors is our highest priority throughout the body donation process. Enquiries and donations are dealt with in a sensitive, discreet and professional manner. All information is held in the strictest confidence.
In an effort to recognise the generosity and to acknowledge recent donors, the Department holds a biannual Thanksgiving Service in the Honan Chapel, UCC. A specially commissioned commemorative sculpture by the artist Alexandra Wejchert (1921-1995) also stands at the entrance to the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience. The sculpture, titled ‘Flame’, represents the flame of knowledge leading to the light of understanding.

As Professor of Anatomy and on behalf of all my colleagues and the University community, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our donors and their families.

Professor John F. Cryan
Professor of Anatomy
University College Cork
What is the donation procedure?

Read through this booklet carefully, and if you are interested in donating your body to the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience in University College Cork, complete the enclosed consent form. Return the original to the Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience. A copy of the donation form should be given to your next of kin or a person in a similar position of responsibility and trust.

The second page of the consent form is optional, but it is useful for us to have some information about your medical history. You may give as much or as little detail as you wish.
What are donated bodies used for?

Anatomical Examination:
Most bodies are used for teaching purposes. Studying real human bodies is an invaluable way of learning anatomy for medical, dental, neuroscience, and other healthcare students.

Education, training and professional development:
Qualified health professionals benefit hugely from the opportunity to develop their surgical and medical skills as their careers progress. The department runs many courses which help to advance surgical knowledge and develop techniques which can lead to improved treatment for patients.

Research into disorders of the human body:
Your body may be used for research purposes to understand the biological basis of complex diseases and seek to develop treatments.
How long will the University keep my body?

On the consent form, you will choose how long you wish your body to remain in UCC. There are two options:

**Option 1: Permanent Donation:** Your body will remain with the Department indefinitely. Next of kin will not receive back any remains.

**Option 2: Three Year Donation:** Your body will remain in the Department for a maximum of three years, after which your remains will be released back to your next of kin. In choosing this option, you may also opt to allow a part or parts of your body to be retained for teaching purposes. Any such parts will be kept by the Department indefinitely and will not be returned to the next of kin. The period of study in this case can vary from as short as eight weeks to the full three years. It is not possible to predict the exact length of stay for any individual in advance.
What other details are required on the consent forms?

In addition to routine personal information and an optional medical history, you will be asked for permission to take images of your remains. These images would be used in teaching and may be included in research papers. Images will only be taken with your explicit permission. You will not be identifiable in these images and they will never be for public use.

We ask you to decide at this point what should happen to your remains when the study period is finished. Donors may choose one of the following options:

**Cremation.** If you choose to be cremated, the University will provide transport of your remains to The Island Crematorium in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork, and an officiant and other incidentals. Ashes will be returned to the next of kin in a standard container. Ornamental urns may be purchased by families if they wish.

**Burial in the UCC plot.** The University has a plot in St Mary’s Cemetery, Curraghkippane, Co. Cork. If you wish to be buried in the UCC plot, the University will provide transport of your remains to the cemetery, an officiant, and other incidentals. Headstones are not provided by the University, but families may apply to place a headstone on the grave if they wish.

**Burial in a private family plot.** If you wish to be buried in a private plot, the University will provide transport of your remains to the cemetery. All other costs are met by your estate or next of kin.
**What is the procedure after my death?**

A family member/next of kin, or person such as a doctor or nurse, should let the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience know about the death as soon as possible. Your family and friends may arrange a funeral service, but it is very important that the University receives your body within 48 hours of death. Contact details may be found on the back of this booklet.

The next of kin/estate is responsible for providing a conventional wooden coffin and for any religious or secular services held. The Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience will take care of arrangements for removing your body to the University.

Occasionally, we agree to receive donations from outside Munster, if, for example, someone has relocated since donating. In such cases the costs incurred for additional transport will be covered by the family of the deceased.
What happens to my remains afterwards?

**Permanent Donation:** if you decide to leave your body to UCC permanently, your remains will not be released back to your next of kin. They will be cremated at a later date and the ashes placed in the University plot. Next of kin /relatives will not be notified of the cremation, and there will be no individual grave to visit.

**Three Year Donation:** your next of kin will be contacted by letter within three years, informing them that your body is ready to be released. They may then choose a suitable date for your remains to be buried or cremated, according to the choice you have made in your donation consent form. Relatives and friends are welcome to attend burials or cremations and a short memorial service.

Your coffin will be held in storage during the study period, and your remains will be placed back into this coffin for burial or cremation.

Once a body has been received by the University, it will not be possible to arrange a viewing under any circumstances.
Will UCC definitely accept my body?

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to accept donors’ bodies. At the time of death there may be medical circumstances which result in your body being unsuitable for donation. You and your next of kin are encouraged to have alternative arrangements decided on in case this occurs. Please be assured that the Department does not turn away bodies due to lack of space.

Some reasons that a body may not be accepted include:

- Organ donation
- Post-mortem/ autopsy
- More than 48 hours since death
- Blood borne illnesses or reportable infections, for example HIV, Hepatitis B, or *C. difficile*
- Very recent surgery
- Extremely under- or overweight

You must be over 18 to donate your body, but we have no upper age limit.
**What must I do now to register as a body donor?**

If you are content to proceed with the donation process, please complete the enclosed donation consent form and return it to the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience using the address on the form. We will acknowledge receipt of your completed forms in writing.

The consent form must be signed by the person donating (another person cannot sign on their behalf) and by one witness. The witness should be the person who will liaise with the University at the time of death and when your remains are released for burial or cremation. Donors and witnesses must be aged 18 years or over.

We cannot accept verbal instructions or instructions given in a will as consent to donate. In the event you change your mind, your consent may be withdrawn at any time by notifying the Department in writing. Should your contact details or the details of your next of kin change, simply send the new information in writing.

We encourage all donors to discuss their decision with relatives and friends. This helps to ensure that families are aware of the process and that your wishes will be carried out correctly.
Flame Sculpture

The generosity of donors is remembered daily by students and staff as they pass the specially commissioned sculpture ‘Flame’, in the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience Western Gateway Building.

The abstract piece in the form of a flame, by artist Alexandra Wejchert, represents the flame of knowledge which leads to the light of understanding.

The FLAME laboratory has created its name, an acronym for Facility for Learning Anatomy, Morphology and Embryology, from this commemorative work.

The Flame also features in the logo for the department symbolising that the work there is possible due to the generosity of donors.

In the logo the flame is connected to a nerve fibre, which in turn represents the teaching and research work in the department.
Thanksgiving Ceremony

In 2012, the Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience held its inaugural Thanksgiving Ceremony in the Honan Chapel to honour all anatomical donors since 1849.

Biannually since then, families of recently buried or cremated donors are invited to join staff and students from the School of Medicine in a non-denominational ceremony of readings, music and reflection, to remember and recognise the immense generosity of donors and their families.

Families, friends and staff attending the ceremony have an opportunity to meet one another afterwards, and remember their loved ones while having a cup of tea or coffee in the University’s Common room.
Contact us

Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience,
Room 2.33 Western Gateway Building,
University College Cork,
Western Road,
Cork.

Telephone (office hours):
(021) 420 5497 or (021)420 5461

To notify the department of the death of a donor outside office hours, please telephone (087) 0909 481

Email: anatomy@ucc.ie
Website: www.ucc.ie/en/anatomy/