



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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Professor Evelyn Welch
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of Bristol

27 February 2024

Via e-mail: vc-team@bristol.ac.uk

Dear Professor Welch:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 1.3 million members and supporters with an offer to donate **£24,000 to the University of Bristol if it will permanently end all use of forced swimming tests in 2024.**

As you know, the University of Bristol has the dubious distinction of being one of the last remaining institutions in the UK still to conduct these cruel, obsolete tests – and in the largest numbers. PETA has been calling on the institution to end its use of this experiment – which induces panic in the vulnerable small animals who are dropped into inescapable cylinders of water and made to swim, terrified of drowning – and it's our sincere hope this financial offer will provide an added incentive for you to do just that.

The tide has turned against forced swimming tests. The UK's National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research identifies the test as “highly contentious” and “under considerable scrutiny” due to “its severity and effect on animal welfare”. It's worth considering that rodents often defecate during the procedure, which is thought to be out of fear, and there is a documented risk of accidental drowning or water aspiration.

While the test is acutely stressful for animals, it is widely accepted that it is a poor model for post-traumatic stress disorder and other human mental health conditions. In fact, earlier this month, more than 400 world-leading scientists, academics, and medical professionals joined together to publicly declare that the forced swim test is “not a valid or reliable scientific method” and that its use must end.

Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum have also joined together to urge the Home Office to prohibit all use of the test. Further afield, in New South Wales, Australia, policymakers have passed legislation which will prevent experimenters from initiating new projects that force mice and other mammals to experience the panic of near-drowning.

We hope you'll agree to end the use of forced swimming tests at the University of Bristol. Our donation could be put towards innovative non-animal research into human mental health conditions that would spare living, feeling beings suffering and offer us all hope of effective medical treatments. Alternatively, these funds could be used to develop a rehoming programme for the animals currently in the

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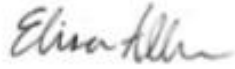
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university's laboratories, a scholarship project, or any other worthy cause that does not involve the use of animals. We are open to discussing ideas.

We eagerly await your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elisa Allen".

Elisa Allen
Vice President of Programmes and Operations
PETA