



Students for Ethical Science

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Studying Life Sciences at the Open University

If you are a student who is interested in Biology, Life Sciences or Health Science and you are deterred from studying these topics by the prospect of being expected to cause harm to animals, please do not be put off. You can study for Life Sciences qualifications at the Open University without causing harm to animals.

The Open University offers a single science degree, Q64 BSc (Honours) Natural Sciences, with a choice of pathways for different science specialities. There is a required 30 credit level 2 practical module corresponding to each speciality. There is an additional qualification, Q71 BSc (Honours) Health Sciences.

For Q64 BSc (Honours) Natural Sciences: Biology and health sciences pathway and Q71 BSc (Honours) Health Sciences: Standard pathway the 30 credit level 2 practical module, SXHL288 Practical science: biology and health, is mandatory. SXHL288 is expected to start for the last time in October 2018.

Of the four practical activities included in SXHL288, the only one which looked as though it might be problematical was "animal physiology: cold adaptation". Enquiries to the Open University gained the following response:

"The whole topic 'Animal Physiology: adaptation to cold' - makes use of new virtual material, ranging from computer-generated rats and animal facilities to video material and digital microscope images. Within the topic materials and resources, there is one library photo of laboratory animals as well as photos of wild animals and some short archive video clips of both. There are some short new video sequences showing small amounts (thumbnail size) of real brown and white adipose tissues samples that were taken from one animal that had already been culled for another purpose. The topic is based on an underlying data set and microscope images from tissue taken from real animals used on previous (and now discontinued) OU Residential Schools SXR374 that were carried out under Home Office licence and with ethical approvals. This topic has been produced as a genuine alternative to animal use and makes good educational use of previous animal work and thus advances the 3Rs of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement."

For both Q64 and Q71 the final study is a project module, SXL390 Researching biology and health science, undertaking individual investigations within a range of defined topics, which should allow students to complete their study without causing harm to animals. SXL390 is expected to start for the last time in February 2021.

Further Information

For an overview of undergraduate science qualifications see
www.open.ac.uk/science/main/Studying-science/Undergraduate

For more information about Q64 BSc (Honours) Natural Sciences: Biology see
www.open.ac.uk/science/main/studying-science/biology-q64-natural-sciences

For more information about Q71 BSc (Honours) Health Sciences see
www.open.ac.uk/science/main/studying-science/healthsciencesQ71

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