
UC Anatomical Donation Program: Use of Human Remains in Education and Research

Guidance, Policies and Considerations

August 2026

Purpose

This training is intended for any institution or individual who seeks, receives, or uses an anatomical donation from the University of California for research or educational purposes.

This training will:

- familiarize you with important policies and guidelines when working with human remains
- educate end users (students, faculty, staff and researchers) on where anatomical materials come from
- explore considerations for working with donors and specimens
- raise awareness that anatomical specimens are a precious resource and working with them is a privilege

Topics Covered

UC Policy on Anatomical Donation Program and Anatomical Materials	4
What is an anatomical specimen?	5
Where do anatomical specimens come from?	6
The UC Anatomical Donation Program	7
How to request human remains for education or research	8
Attestation	9
Custodianship of Donors	10
Care for Donors & Donor Anonymity	11
Anatomical Materials Request Process	12
Facility Requirements	13
Site Visit Inspections	14
Donor Images & Donor-Based Publications	15
For Trainings Outside of UC	16
Final Points	21
UC Anatomical Donation Program contact information	22

UC Policy on Anatomical Donation Program and Anatomical Materials

This policy establishes standards and procedures for the **procurement, inventory, use, management, transfer, transportation, and disposition of human anatomical specimens** used to support the educational and research needs of **faculty, staff, students, residents** and **educational or industry partners**.

University of California – Policy Anatomical Donation Program



Anatomical Donation Program and Anatomical Materials

Responsible Officer:	Executive Vice President
Responsible Office:	University of California Health
Issuance Date:	8/21/2026
Effective Date:	8/21/2026
Scope:	The goal of the University is to ensure that human Anatomical Materials are effectively managed and that the Anatomical Donation Programs maintain public confidence in meeting the needs of donors and their families and advancing the health sciences education and research enterprise. Achieving this goal is the responsibility of the Program staff, medical school deans and their designated Responsible Executive Officers, Vice Chancellors for Research and the Office of the President.

What is an anatomical specimen?

At UC, anatomical materials, or anatomical specimens, are defined as:

human bodies or body parts, including brains and organs, in whole or in part, that are **grossly identifiable** and **commonly recognizable**.

Excluded from the definition are:

blood, urine, feces, semen, or other bodily fluids, non-organic tissue types, tissue samples, human cells, hair, nails, teeth, paraffin blocks, or tissue slides.

Where do anatomical specimens come from?

In the US, an individual or their legal representative can make an anatomical gift (donation) for education and research.

In some states and countries, unclaimed and unconsented bodies may be used for education and research. In other cases, bodies and body parts may be bought and sold on the national or international market for this purpose.

UC requires that human remains used for education and research purposes should only come from:

- *a donor who has **specifically consented** – either for themselves or authorized by their legal representative – to be used for scientific study, and*
- *an organization that adheres to the terms of the **donation consent**.*

The UC Anatomical Donation Program

Located at five of UC's medical school locations, the UC Anatomical Donation Program provides a public service in support of education and research whereby individuals can donate their bodies to UC.

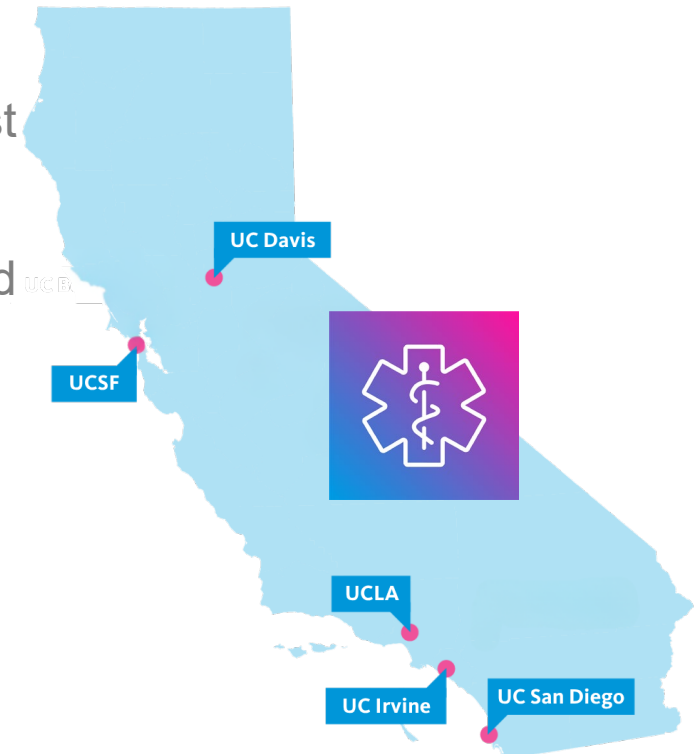
In addition to managing operations, the Program:

- ensures that education and research projects that use donated human remains meet the terms of the **donation consent agreement** signed by the individual making the donation which sets forth how UC will use the donation
- reviews all requests for use of human remains for scientific merit and ensures that the quality and integrity of **approved projects uphold the trust placed in the University** by our donors
- ensures the bodies and tissues of **human donors are treated with respect** to protect the dignity of the donors and their next-of-kin
- **supports and protects faculty, staff, and other end users** in their education and research pursuits

How to request human remains for education or research

Contact one of the 5 Anatomical Donation Program locations and request an application.

- An Anatomical Material Request Application must be filled out completely
- Signatures are required by the requestor (PI) and department chair or dean
- External requestors must also complete a contractual agreement with UC
- All applications are reviewed by the Anatomical Material Review Committee for scientific merit



Attestation

The Anatomical Material Request Application contains conditions that you attest to understand and abide by during your approved use of donors and donor specimens.

You must be familiar with all 5 sections encompassing:

- Custodianship of Donors
- Care for Donors & Donor Anonymity
- Anatomical Materials Request Process
- Facility Requirements
 - Site Inspections
- Donor Images and Donor-Based Publications

Custodianship of Donors

- Donated remains are loaned for use, not sold. UC prohibits the sale of donated remains.
- UC may recall anatomical materials at any time.
- You may not transfer, sell, or otherwise provide anatomical specimens to anyone.
- ID tracking number must stay attached to specimen and packaging.

Care for Donors & Donor Anonymity

- Donations and the identity of donors to the UC are confidential.
- No medical history or personal information may be disclosed to third parties.
- Donor respect and anonymity must be preserved. All parts of donor remains not actively in use should remain covered.
- The requester/PI is responsible for conveying to all end users the appropriate care and respect of donors.

Anatomical Materials Request Process

- Requests for use of anatomical materials are approved by a committee on a hierarchical basis.
 - Priority schedule
- All requests are reviewed for educational and scientific merit by a group of experts.
- All anatomical materials must be returned to the program at the conclusion of the loan period.
- The program is responsible for disposition.

Facility Requirements

- Venues for use of anatomical materials must be a laboratory, hospital, or dedicated educational facility.
- Anatomical materials must be kept in a locked, secure space.
- ID tracking number must not be removed, and external packaging must be clearly marked.
- Universal precautions must be observed.
- The requester/PI assumes responsibility for appropriate health and safety training and oversight of personnel.

Site Visit Inspections

Before specimens are allocated, UC program staff will visit the facility where specimens are to be used/stored.

- Additional inspections may be conducted on an annual basis or as often as deemed necessary by the Anatomical Material Review Committee.
- The program reserves the right to conduct a site visit prior to or at the time of delivery of anatomical materials.

During the inspection we will look for the following:

- Appropriateness of facilities with washing stations and personal protective equipment available to end users
- Training and safety protocols for all users established and in writing
- Lab security and storage of anatomical material in a locked room
- CAL/OSHA or applicable health and safety agency compliance
- Inventory, labeling and tracking protocols that meet the requirements set forth by UC

Donor Images & Donor-Based Publications

- All image capture (photo, video, scanning or other) requires pre-approval by campus committee

In all cases:

- Social media postings are strictly prohibited.
- Use of images for marketing is forbidden.
- Unique personal or identifying features must be distorted or obscured.
- If image capture is approved, storage and use requirements apply. Contact Program for details.

Publication acknowledgment:

“The authors wish to thank individuals who donate their bodies and tissues for the advancement of education and research.”

For Trainings Outside of UC

Faculty, students, staff and physicians with academic appointments may wish to participate (by teaching or learning) in **continuing medical education (CME) or another training outside of UC** where anatomical specimens from other sources may be used.

The following slides provide information and FAQs for participating in these activities.

Why participate in activities where human specimens are used?

Human specimens are a vital resource for training and continuing education in many disciplines and can offer unparalleled learning experiences in medicine, nursing, dentistry and many allied health professions courses *when sourced and used in a safe, ethical and respectful manner.*



Considerations

Factors to consider when determining whether to participate in trainings where human remains are used:

- **Have anatomical donors given informed consent?**
- **Are donors, families and the remains being treated in a respectful and ethical way?**
- **Are there strong health and safety measures in place for participants, house staff, custodial/janitorial staff and venue users?**

For more information, contact the Anatomical Donation Program nearest you or the systemwide office at **bodydonation@ucop.edu**.

Activities of Concern

UC does not consider the following to be ethical or respectful practices:

- Use of human specimens from someone who has not consented to (or their personal representative/next of kin has not authorized) the use.
- Not adhering to the terms of the donation consent, including but not limited to use, transfer and final disposition of the donor's body or parts.
- Dissemination or use of characteristics that may identify the donor.
- Allowing unrestricted photography or image capture or sharing of images in an unsecured manner or for an unconsented purpose.
- Use of human specimens for a purpose other than that which was requested and approved.

Considerations for health and safety

Donor screening, personal protective equipment and appropriate venue are concerns.

- Venues must be laboratories specifically designated for surgical or dissection-based activities. In general, venues used by the public, such as hotels and conference centers, are not appropriate for human dissection or medical procedures.
- Donation organizations should screen or otherwise test donors for communicable diseases.
- Course hosts should require and provide all personal protective equipment, including gloves, gowns, masks, eye and shoe protection as appropriate, for the activity.

Please remember.....

- A generous and anonymous person donated their body with the intention of imparting knowledge.
- Anatomical donors are a precious resource, and it is a privilege to use them.
Treat them with respect.
- There is no single appropriate response when faced with the opportunity to dissect or otherwise learn from donated human remains.
- Some may feel uneasy and anxious at the prospect of first working with donors.
- Behavior must be appropriate for the seriousness of the work at hand.

For more information

UC Davis Body Donation Program

(916)734-9560 (24 hrs)

bodydonation@health.ucdavis.edu

UCLA Donated Body Program

(310)794-0372 (24 hrs)

DBPInfo@mednet.ucla.edu

UCSF Willed Body Program

(415)476-1981 (24 hrs)

willedbodyprogram@ucsf.edu

UC Irvine Willed Body Program

(949)824-6061 (24 hrs)

willedbody@hs.uci.edu

UC San Diego Body Donation Program

(858)534-4536 (24 hrs)

bodydonation@health.ucsd.edu

UC Office of the President

UC Health - Anatomical Donation Program

(510)287-3810 (voice mailbox)

bodydonation@ucop.edu