



BIAZA Research Policy

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Preamble

Research outputs provide evidence for developing and upholding best practice, across all areas of operations, in modern zoological collections. All research conducted in BIAZA zoos MUST adhere to relevant legislation, e.g. Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act and GDPR requirements where necessary, and to the BIAZA Research Policy. This policy outlines the key aims and objectives for research within BIAZA member organisations and includes absolute obligations (policy points with a "must") alongside of best practice intentions (policy points with a "should"). Where used, the term “zoo” refers to zoos, aquariums, wildlife parks, safari parks, and other specialist collections. All BIAZA membership zoos must meet the research requirements for Zoo Licencing.

Policy points

1. In line with the requirements of BIAZA membership, all BIAZA membership zoos must provide details of yearly research activity to the BIAZA annual questionnaire.
2. All BIAZA membership zoos must keep up-to-date records of research activities that are available for scrutiny by relevant parties when needed.
3. All BIAZA membership zoos must undertake research activity commensurate with the size and staffing level of the organisation.
 - a. Research should benefit, but is not only limited to study of, the zoo’s living collection of animals and plants.
 - b. Research conducted away from the zoo (e.g. at a zoo owned nature reserve or field site) should be linked back to the zoo's aims and operations where necessary or practicable.
4. At a basic level, zoo research can be the collation and review of data pertaining to the animal collection and management of species.



5. All BIAZA membership zoos should extend Point 4 where possible by conducting descriptive and/or empirical study that is relevant to the zoo's living collection, the aims/mission of the zoo itself and its operations.
6. All BIAZA membership zoos should seek to publish and disseminate research findings in peer reviewed journals and via professional conferences including those run by BIAZA.
7. All BIAZA membership zoos must have a member of staff responsible for research, at a minimum being a named point of contact for research-specific questions and correspondence from i) staff within the zoo ii) external researchers iii) the BIAZA Office and Research Committee.
 - a. This may be a specific research coordinator or similar, or it may be an additional responsibility within a wider role.
 - b. Any research-focussed member of staff must have suitable qualifications and/or experience and have access to appropriate resources needed where necessary to fulfil any research-focussed role and responsibility.
8. All BIAZA membership zoos should attempt to forge relationships with research-focussed institutions (e.g. local universities) to extend their research output.
9. All BIAZA membership zoos should support external researchers where practical and appropriate and where the outcomes of this research will positively impact the living collection and zoo operations. As part of this it is recommended that facilities generate a research priority list to encourage external engagement with projects that uphold the zoo's aims.
10. Commensurate with organisation size, all BIAZA membership zoos should provide research staff with appropriate opportunities for Continuing Professional Development and training to meet the aims of the zoo's research programme.
 - a. The zoo should support named research staff to be actively involved in local, national, regional and/or international research networks.
11. Medium to large-sized BIAZA zoos should, where possible, extend collaborative relationships with small BIAZA member zoos to aid and assist with research implementation and potential for wider staff involvement.
12. Medium to large BIAZA membership zoos should, where possible, help support and develop research staff at smaller zoos to extend the quality and scope of research outputs and the potential for external dissemination, presentation, and publication.

Research ethics

All zoos MUST assess research proposals and ethically review those with identified potential risk factors prior to commencement. Risks should be balanced against the overall benefit of the research being conducted, and should consider both animal and human-related ethical review.

Animals involved in research should not experience compromised welfare and due care SHOULD be taken to ensure comparable standards of husbandry and housing are maintained throughout the timeframe of the project. All identified risks should be mitigated where possible and minimal sample sizes considered in line with the guidance set by The National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research ([NC3Rs](#)). Invasive procedures performed on 'protected species' under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, ASPA or HPA Scientific Animal Protection for research purposes MUST also follow guidance set by the [Royal College of Veterinary](#)

Surgeons or relevant equivalent. If welfare is impacted as a direct or indirect result of the research (beyond the anticipated outcomes), the project **MUST** immediately stop and be reviewed using the agreed process during the risk assessment/ethical review conditions stipulated on commencement of the research.

Human participants of research **SHOULD** be allowed to take part voluntarily, with their rights protected. Projects involving adults (over 16 years of age) who lack capacity to consent as research participants (defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005), or where the use or collection of human tissue is required, may require additional external review by the Health Research Authority (HRA).