



**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Use of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts**  
**Policy RI 12**

**Implementing Executives:** Senior Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences  
**Responsible Units:** Industry Relations and Continuing Education, Health Sciences  
**Category:** Research  
**Effective Date:** January 12, 2026

**I. Purpose**

Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts are vital to the research, educational, and clinical training missions of the University of Pittsburgh (“University”), so they must be handled respectfully and ethically. By formalizing the standards, practices, and responsibilities regarding the acquisition, management, use, and disposition of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts, the University of Pittsburgh commits itself to the ethical treatment of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts in its academic, educational, and research missions.

**II. Scope**

This Policy applies to any use including, but not limited to, the observation, management, tracking, storage, and disposition of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts in University spaces. This Policy does not apply to human remains that are managed or procured by the Department of Anthropology or Biobanks.

**III. Definitions**

- A. Course or Activity Director- an academic professional responsible for teaching a course or leading an activity that requires the use of a Human Cadaver or Recognizable Human Body Part
  
- B. Biobank- a collection of biological samples that are stored for the purpose of Research and Education and approved by the University of Pittsburgh's Institutional Review Board.

- C. Facility Director- a University Member who is responsible for the management and operations of a lab, library, or any other University space where Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts are stored and/or managed.
- D. Human Cadavers- whole body deceased human remains.
- E. Legacy Collections- a historical compilation of Recognizable Human Body Parts for which the origin may be unknown or unclear or for which the informed consent of the individuals from whom the Recognizable Human Body Parts were obtained has not been determined.
- F. Principal Investigator- lead researcher responsible for the overall design, execution, and management of a research project.
- G. Project- Any use of Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts.
- H. Recognizable Human Body Part- bones, viscera/organs and external parts that are commonly recognizable by the lay person without use of any specialized methods of identification. Recognizable Human Body Parts do not include blood, urine, feces, semen, or other bodily fluids, small or microscopic quantities of tissue or sections of bone or viscera, human cells, hair, teeth, nails, paraffin blocks, or any body part designated for immediate therapeutic or clinical use.
- I. University Member- anyone employed by, contracted with, or enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh, including faculty, staff, students, interns, post docs, research fellows, academic visitors.

#### **IV. Policy**

The University of Pittsburgh is committed to the ethical use of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts, and developed this Policy with the following considerations in mind: (1) demonstrating appropriate treatment of and respect for Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts and for those who donate them; (2) enabling faculty, staff, and students to employ Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts within appropriate and approved activities; (3) promoting transparency regarding the University's use of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts; (4) recognizing the profound contributions that donors of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts have made to the mission of the University; and (5) ensuring that all practices related to the University's acquisition, management, use, and disposal of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts comply with relevant regulations and reflect best practices.

This Policy describes and establishes the rules, roles, and responsibilities governing the use, management, and disposition of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts at the University

#### A. Use of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts

Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts may only be used for activities approved through the processes described in this Policy. The use of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts must first be authorized by the Committee for Oversight of Research and Clinical Training Involving Decedents (CORID) and then by the Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens (OOAS), as described below.

##### i. Authorization

To ensure their ethical use, all Projects, as defined in Section III of this Policy, which intend to use Human Cadavers and/ or Recognizable Human Body Parts must first be authorized. Only Principal Investigators, Facility Directors, and Course or Activity Directors may apply to use Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts. Authorization entails both an ethical review by CORID and a Project review by OOAS, as detailed below.

##### 1. Ethical Review of Projects

All Principal Investigators, Facility Directors, and Course or Activity Directors who intend to use Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts must first submit a proposal to CORID for a review on the ethics of the Project. In the application, the Principal Investigator, Facility Director, or Course or Activity Director must demonstrate how the Project will adhere to the principles and requirements stated in this Policy and all relevant laws and regulations.

CORID will review the submissions to determine whether they have demonstrated that the proposed Project will be conducted in compliance with this Policy and in alignment with the highest ethical standards.

When feasible, in the evaluation of the application, CORID will confirm that the appropriate consent was secured via body donation registration, autopsy authorization, or consent provided by next of kin or legal representative, and consider the scientific, educational, or clinical merit of the proposed Project.

CORID reserves the right to approve, approve with amendment, seek clarification on, or deny any Project based on the principles and requirements of this Policy. CORID must provide its decision in writing. For more information and to submit an application for ethical review please follow the link here: <https://oas.pitt.edu/corid>.

##### 2. Project Review

Once a Project is approved by CORID, the Principal Investigator, Facility Director, or Course or Activity Director must submit their Project for review by OOAS, which will review the Project's logistics and ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, alignment with best practices, and availability of materials and facilities for the execution of the Project.

OOAS reserves the right to approve, approve with amendment, seek clarification on, or deny any Project based on the principles and requirements of this Policy. OOAS must provide its decision in writing. For more information and to submit an application for review please follow the link here: <https://oas.pitt.edu/specimen-request-disposition-procedures>.

#### ii. Secondary Requests

At times, a Principal Investigator or Course or Activity Director may want to use Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts for a purpose outside the scope of their initial application for authorization. Any use of Human Cadavers or Recognizable Human Body Parts outside the scope of the Project's authorization requires a secondary request and its subsequent authorization by OOAS and CORID. No one may use the Human Cadaver and/ or Recognizable Human Body Part for a purpose not specified in the initial application without a secondary request and its subsequent authorization. For more information, and to submit a secondary application, please follow the link here: <https://oas.pitt.edu/specimen-request-disposition-procedures>

If the secondary request is time- sensitive due to the nature of the research and the storage of the Human Cadaver and/or Recognizable Human Body Part, the PI is responsible for notifying CORID of the request's time- sensitive nature. When appropriate, CORID will expedite the review, to the extent possible and to ensure a commitment to pioneering research and the ethical treatment of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts.

#### iii. Reauthorization

The authorization of a Project will expire exactly one year after the date of authorization; therefore, annual requests for reauthorization are required for continued use of the Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts. If the authorization for the Project is not reauthorized prior to the expiration date, all activity must cease until reauthorization is granted. CORID and OOAS will review the reauthorization request and reserve the right to approve, approve with amendment, seek clarification on, or deny any request for reauthorization. To initiate a reauthorization process, contact OOAS through the email provided on their website: [Contact Us | Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens | University of Pittsburgh](#)

#### B. Management of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts

CORID and OOAS shall manage the acquisition, storage, tracking, and disposition of all Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts. The following sections provide a framework to ensure proper management of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts.

- i. Obtaining Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts
  1. Procurement

All Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts must be acquired through OOAS: [Specimen Request & Disposition Procedures | Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens | University of Pittsburgh](#)

2. Forensic Consultations

Occasionally, University Members are asked to consult with medical examiners or other forensic specialists. If such consultations involve the storage of Human Cadavers or Recognizable Human Body Parts in University facilities, even if the storage is temporary, the University Member must inform their respective unit/department, CORID, and OOAS. Documentation of the transfer of these materials from the forensic specialist to the University Member must be provided to the University Member's unit/department, CORID, and OOAS. To initiate the documentation process for forensic consultations, contact OOAS through the email provided on its website: [Contact Us | Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens | University of Pittsburgh](#)  
[Contact Us | Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens | University of Pittsburgh](#)

- ii. Storage and Tracking

Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts are considered sensitive materials. As such, the storage of, tracking of, and access to Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts must be restricted.

The security of these facilities must be sufficient to ensure only authorized personnel have access to the space where Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts are located. Unauthorized access or removal of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts from their respective facilities is prohibited.

If Human Cadavers or Recognizable Human Body Parts are discovered in University spaces, a University Member must notify CORID and OOAS, which shall be jointly responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy.

1. Legacy Collections

The University understands that there are Legacy Collections of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts at the University. These Legacy Collections must be registered with CORID and OOAS within one year of the implementation of this Policy. Register legacy collections by contacting OOAS through the email provided on its website: [Contact Us | Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens | University of Pittsburgh](#)

- iii. Transfer

Any transfer of Human Cadavers and/ or Recognizable Human Body Parts, even internally, must first be approved by CORID and OOAS. The link to this approval process may be found here: [Guidelines for disposition of Anatomic Specimens & Transport 9.24.2019.pdf \(pitt.edu\)](#)

iv. Trafficking

The University and University Members are prohibited from participating in commercial trafficking of Human Cadavers and or/ Recognizable Human Body Parts. The University and University Members must not sell or otherwise profit from the transfer of Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts.

v. Disposition

Any disposition of Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts must comply with guidance provided by CORID and OOAS, which may be found here: [Specimen Request & Disposition Procedures | Office for Oversight of Recognizable Human Body Parts | University of Pittsburgh](#)

CORID and OOAS shall provide all Principal Investigators, Facility Directors, or Course or Activity Directors responsible for Projects using Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts with directions for disposition.

vi. Behavior when Interacting with Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts

Any person who manages, studies and/or handles Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Body Parts must be trained prior to conducting that work. OOAS is responsible for developing and administering training and communicating retraining needs. Relevant guidance can be found here: [Committee for Oversight of Research and Clinical Training Involving Decedents \(CORID\) | Office for Oversight of Anatomic Specimens | University of Pittsburgh](#)

Additionally, CORID shall provide guidelines regarding appropriate behavior when interacting with Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts. These guidelines may be found here: [Specimen Request & Disposition Procedures | Office for Oversight of Recognizable Human Body Parts | University of Pittsburgh](#)

vii. Access to Laboratory

Any person who manages, studies and/or handles Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Body Parts must receive the training provided by OOAS in order to gain access to the lab to conduct that work. Individuals who will not be working with the Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Body Parts, may be granted access to the laboratory for a limited purpose and only while under the supervision of a lab supervisor who has completed this training requirement.

Any person, including visitors, entering a lab with direct access to Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts must provide a signed copy, in a manner determined

appropriate by CORID and OOAS (e.g., electronically, hard copy), of an agreement stating they will abide by the rules provided by Facility Directors and CORID for behavior when interacting with Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts. CORID and OOAS are responsible for creating, updating, and communicating procedures on tracking, storing, and accessing these attestations.

The Facility Director and/or the Course or Activity Director or Instructor, as appropriate, are responsible for ensuring all who enter the lab are trained or sufficiently supervised by a trained lab supervisor. Facility Directors shall also provide all persons who enter their labs, classrooms, and other University spaces storing Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts with CORID's guidelines and any rules specific to their lab.

**V. Governance & Responsibilities**

- a. Committee for Oversight of Research and Clinical Training Involving Decedents (CORID)- Responsible for reviewing and approving all activities with Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts to ensure their compliance with this Policy and alignment with the highest ethical standards and partnering with OOAS to develop educational materials providing guidance to the University community when engaging with Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts.
- b. Facility Directors- Responsible for providing specific rules related to safety for behavior regarding Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts related to safety within their lab, classroom, or any other University space.
- c. Office of Oversight of Anatomic Specimens (OOAS)- Responsible for the approval, procurement, storage and tracking, and disposition of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts; identifying, vetting, and maintaining a list of authorized providers of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts; establishing and managing a procurement process that complies with this Policy and federal and state regulations; providing guidance on the disposition of Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body parts; providing the University community with guidance for behavior when engaging with Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts; developing educational materials that may be used as a remedial resource, pursuant to the disciplinary action consistent with University Policy; and reviewing and approving activities with Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts.

**VI. Noncompliance**

If you would like to report a potential violation of this University Policy, please contact the Office of Compliance, Investigations, and Ethics via Pitt Concern Connection (linked here: [www.report.pitt.edu](http://www.report.pitt.edu))

The University does not tolerate the mistreatment of Human Cadavers and Recognizable Human Body Parts; therefore, alleged violations of this Policy will be investigated by the Office of Compliance, Investigations, and Ethics. If a University Member is found responsible for violation of this Policy, they may be subject to University Sanctions commensurate with the severity of the violation.

Furthermore, use of Human Cadavers and/or Recognizable Human Body Parts in violation of applicable laws or regulations may be subject to civil or criminal penalties.

#### **VII. Contact Information & Accessibility**

This Policy is posted under Research & Innovation on the Office of Policy Development & Management's website and can be found at: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu> .

For specific questions related to this Policy, please contact the [Office of Anatomic Specimens](#)