

Motion Name: End All Forced Swimming Experiments at the University of Bristol

Proposer: Agnes Sales

Seconded: Hugh Pender

Our student body is proud to be part of this progressive institution, yet the university is stuck in the past when it comes to forced swimming experiments. Its reputation is marred by being one of the last universities in the country to conduct these archaic, cruel tests on animals, which are totally at odds with the values held by the cohort. Most other universities in the UK have shunned the forced swim test. This motion furthers Bristol SU's charitable interests because it requires the SU to function as the representative channel between the student body and the university in order to reflect the interests and morals of the student body who wish to see an end to this test.

Background:

1. In the forced swim test, experimenters place rats or mice into inescapable beakers of water and watch them desperately swim in search of an escape. The erroneous assumption is that the time it takes for the animals to stop swimming and start floating can tell us something about human mental health conditions. Workers remove the animals from the beaker and later decapitate them.

2. This test has been conducted at the University of Bristol since at least 2008 and continues today, despite being shunned by many within the global scientific community. The Home Office recently banned its use as a model of depression or for studies of anxiety and its treatment and stated its intention to eliminate it from the UK in the near future. This move was unprecedented and highlights the concerns surrounding the test.

3. More than half of the UK's Russell Group universities – including Durham University, King's College London, the University of Liverpool, the University of Manchester, the University of Nottingham, the University of Sheffield, and the University of York – have rejected the forced swim test, as have the University of St Andrews and the University of Brighton, among others. The University of Bristol must follow suit. It's one of the last academic institutions to conduct the test in the UK.

4. The test has been banned outright in New South Wales and curtailed across the rest of Australia.

5. Bristol Central MP Carla Denyer and West of England Metro Mayor Dan Norris both publicly oppose the test. The Labour Party intends to work towards phasing out all animal testing.

6. Almost every major pharmaceutical company has stepped away from the forced swim test.

Purpose:

1. To ensure Bristol SU is an effective channel for its members by making the student body's views on the forced swim test known to the university
2. To promote the well-being of students, who might not know that the university may be using their money to torment small animals with this experiment

Actions:

1. SU officers to ensure that all University of Bristol students are informed about the cruelty involved in the forced swim test by e-mailing them about this issue.
2. SU officers to raise a motion as a talking point at the Senate
3. In collaboration with VegSoc, SU officers to campaign for the university to stop using the forced swim test