

Western Carolina University Forensic Anthropology Program and Facilities Body Donation Program Policies

Thank you for your interest in Western Carolina University's Body Donation Program. The donation of a person's body is a remarkable anatomical gift, and we are very grateful. Please be aware of, and adhere to, the following policies:

Donation Arrangements Made Before Death

1. Once a body has been donated, it is not possible for the Western Carolina University Forensic Anthropology Program (hereinafter University Program) to return the donated remains to the family or Next-of-Kin.
2. A certified copy of the death certificate must be received before donated remains can be accepted.
3. We do not perform autopsies to determine cause of death.
4. We do not accept the donation of a body that has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. These diseases include, but are not limited to, smallpox, plague, HIV infection, tuberculosis, hepatitis of any kind, rabies, Jakob-Creutzfeldt, or antibiotic resistant infections such as MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus). This applies even if contracted after the donation has been arranged. Donors with an infectious disease who still wish to donate may do so by choosing to have their remains cremated prior to donation. See our Cremation Policy below.
5. If donated remains weigh in excess of 250 pounds at the time of death, we reserve the right to refuse the donation. If weight may be an issue, please consider cremation. We do accept cremated remains. See our Cremation Policy below.
6. **A donation may be rejected if the remains have been modified in a manner that reduces its scientific utility (e.g., embalming).** We accept donations that have received an autopsy, have donated tissue, or have already begun the decomposition process. Remains may be donated after the organ donation process; however, it is imperative that the donated remains not be embalmed. An embalmed body cannot be accepted as the embalming process inhibits decomposition and is a safety hazard for researchers.
7. **We reserve the right to decline donated remains for any reason.** In the case of denial, the donor, Next-of-Kin, or other responsible party should discuss alternate final arrangements.
8. If, at the time of death, should the legal Next-of-Kin choose not to honor the donor's wishes (i.e., your legal Next-of-Kin does not want to donate your remains), the University Program will honor the wishes of the donor's Next-of-Kin unless otherwise directed by a court of competent jurisdiction. It is recommended that the donor make known their desire regarding donation with their legal Next-of-Kin to ensure that their wishes are honored.
9. Pre-donor paperwork must be returned to the University Program at the time of completion in order for the donation to be approved and a file to be established. Changes of address or medical status must be sent as they occur to keep donor files up to date.
10. Pre-donor paperwork must include the signature of two (2) witnesses to verify donor signature; however, the paperwork does not need to be notarized.
11. At the time of death, have the donation form readily available so that the donation process can take place in a timely manner.
12. In the absence of Next-of-Kin, the donor should make sure that a close friend or other responsible person is aware of their wish to donate their remains.
13. It is recommended that a copy of the donation form be included with the donor's will.
14. It is recommended that the donor discuss their donation plans with their attorney.

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15. The donor, Next-of-Kin, or other responsible party should make arrangements with a funeral home to receive the donated remains after death, transport it to the University Program's on-campus facility, and create and file the death certificate. A funeral home has the appropriate license and vehicle to transport the donated remains to the University Program's facility. Funeral directors are also accustomed to creating and filing death certificates and have facilities for keeping remains in cold storage until transfer. **The University Program reserves the right to refuse donated remains that do not arrive via a licensed funeral director.** The cost of transportation, including transportation, fees, and services related to the rejection of a donation by the University Program, and other services provided by a funeral home are the responsibility of the donor, Next-of-Kin, or other responsible party.

16. While decomposition research is the primary focus, the donated remains may be used for other education, training, and other informational purposes. By donating remains to the University Program, you are accepting all conditions provided in our Informed Consent paperwork.

17. The donor is always free to change their mind regarding their desire to donate their remains after death. Please inform us in writing if you wish to revoke your anatomical gift.

Donation Arrangements Made After Death

1. In the event that someone who wishes to donate their remains to the University Program dies without having filed the appropriate donation paperwork, it is still possible for the donation to occur. In this situation, a person authorized to make the donation under N.C.G.S. § 130A-412.11 (typically the legal Next-of-Kin) may do so. Donation paperwork may be provided allowing the authorized person to donate the remains.

2. The Next-of-Kin will be asked to make arrangements with a funeral home to receive the donated remains after death, transport the donated remains to the University Program's on-campus facility, and create and file the death certificate. A funeral home has the appropriate license and vehicle to transport the remains to the University Program's on-campus facility. Funeral directors are also accustomed to creating and filing death certificates and have facilities for keeping remains in cold storage until the transfer can be made. **We reserve the right to refuse donated remains that do not arrive via a licensed funeral director.** The cost of transportation, including transportation, fees, and services related to the rejection of a donation by the University Program, and other services provided by a funeral home are the responsibility of the donor, Next-of-Kin, or other responsible party.

3. A certified copy of the death certificate must be received before a body donation can be accepted.

4. If donated remains donated by the Next-of-Kin were an organ donor, the Next-of-Kin should make arrangements for the donated remains to be transferred after the organs have been removed.

Cremation Policy

1. The University Program may accept cremation donated remains. We suggest this route if a donor has an infectious disease at the time of his or her death, weighs more than 250 pounds, if embalming has taken place, or as a matter of individual choice of the deceased or the Next-of-Kin.

2. If an infectious disease is involved, cremation must occur before remains may be accepted.

3. We ask that the Next-of-Kin request that the funeral home not pulverize the cremation, if possible.

4. As with standard donations, prior arrangements should be made with a funeral home or a crematorium to facilitate the process of transfer to the University Program; however, cremations can be legally mailed in the United States using the United States Postal Service.

5. Cremation costs are the responsibility of the donor, estate of the donor, Next-of-Kin or other responsible party. The University Program will not be responsible for cremation costs.

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6. All other applicable procedures or recommendations described above will be applied.

Contact Information:

Nicholas V. Passalacqua, PhD, D-ABFA

Director of Forensic Anthropology

Office: McKee G08B

Phone: 828-227-2306

Email: nvpassalacqua@wcu.edu

Rebecca L. George, PhD

Assistant Director of Forensic Anthropology

Office: McKee 102C

Phone: 828-227-2816

Email: rgeorge@wcu.edu

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Body Donation Policies Signature Page

Copies of this form should be retained by the donor and/or Next-of-Kin for records keeping. The original copy should be sent to:

Body Donation Program
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

I have read, understood, and agree to the body donation policy of the Western Carolina University Forensic Anthropology Program.

Printed name of Donor/ Next-of-Kin/ Executor

Signature of Donor/ Next-of-Kin/ Executor

Street Address, City, State, Zip Code

_(_____)_____

Phone number

email address (optional)

Date

Printed name of Witness 1

Signature Witness 1

Street Address, City, State, Zip Code

_(_____)_____

Phone number

email address (optional)

Date

Printed name of Witness 2

Signature Witness 2

Street Address, City, State, Zip Code

_(_____)_____

Phone number

email address (optional)

Date