



Veterinary post-mortem examination

What to expect

The Pathology Service of the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science is an academic teaching unit offering a full range of post-mortem examinations, histopathology and immunohistochemistry by qualified pathologists and residents in training. As part of the teaching experience, undergraduate and postgraduate students are routinely involved in cases submitted to the service, as this is a fundamental part of our purpose.

What happens during a post-mortem?

A post-mortem is the examination of a body by dissection to determine the cause of death. The exam may also be performed to investigate any disease or injury present for educational purposes. To be able to provide a thorough examination, all bodily systems and organs are removed for in depth evaluation. This process can only be done once, so samples are taken for further testing should it be required. Once the procedure has been completed, all material from the animal is prepared for cremation.

Our team appreciate the bond between animals and their owners and perform all work respectfully recognising that connection.

Common Questions.

- **How do I submit an animal for a post-mortem?**
We are a veterinary referral service; all animals must be submitted by a referring veterinary practice. It is important to call us prior to ensure we can accept the case. Once the case has been verbally accepted, we require a submission form to be completed and signed by a veterinary surgeon - this can be found on our website.
- **Who do we communicate with?**
As a veterinary referral service, we communicate with vets and vet practices. We do not provide our services directly to animal owners.
- **How should the animal be stored until sent for post-mortem?**
Ideally the animal should be cold stored (refrigerated) until transportation to us. In some circumstances we may advise the animal to be frozen – although this can create artefacts that make it more difficult to reach a diagnosis.
- **How does the animal get to us?**
Unfortunately, we do not offer a collection service. There are courier services available to deliver to us or we are happy for colleagues/owners to deliver the animal in person at an agreed time.

- **How much will a post-mortem cost?**
Standard animal post-mortem prices can be found on our [website](#). The price includes gross (visual) post-mortem and histopathological (microscope) examination, basic disposal costs and reporting. Further testing will incur additional fees. Individual cremation requests will be billed directly to the submitting veterinary practice by the cremation company.
- **When will I receive a report?**
The submitting veterinary practice will receive the preliminary report of gross findings within 24-48 hours of the post-mortem, usually by phone. A final report including histological findings will be sent to the submitting veterinary practice in 4-6 weeks. If a final report seems to be taking longer, owners should first contact the submitting veterinary practice.
- **What will happen to the animal's body after the post-mortem?**
Animals submitted to us cannot be released back to owners/practice and can only be sent for individual cremation or incineration – this should be discussed with the submitting vet *prior* to the animal arriving with us. For individual cremation, the chosen company should be noted on the post-mortem submission form. Ashes will be returned to the submitting veterinary practice – the practice should supply relevant documentation and cremation bag for the company chosen. For incineration, ashes will not be available for return.
- **I chose to send the animal for individual cremation, when will I receive the ashes back?**
Bodies are prepared for individual cremation immediately after the post-mortem procedure for collection by the chosen cremation company as soon as possible.

Further Information

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet/service-for-business/veterinary-pathology-service/>