

Body Bequest Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my family have a funeral service?

Yes, but this must be completed within four days of the death. Arrangements for services or notices in the paper etc. should be made with a funeral director of your choice. The University does not help with these arrangements nor bear any of the associated costs.

What happens at the end of the process?

The donor is respectfully cremated, at the University's expense, and the ashes are made available to the family or executor.

Can I be registered as an organ donor as well as a Body Bequest Program donor?

Yes, a donor can be registered with both programs. However, if the donor is deemed suitable for organ donation at the time of their death, this may exclude them from participating in the Body Bequest Program. If only the corneas are used for organ donation, body donation may still proceed.

What if I change my mind?

You may, at any time and for any reason, revise or revoke your wish to contribute to the Body Bequest Program or Brain Bank by contacting us and advising of the change.

How long will the University retain the body?

This is up to you with a choice of up to 5 years or indefinitely.

Will my body stay in Tasmania?

Generally, a donated body will remain within the state of Tasmania. However, there may be instances when a body is transferred to an interstate institution. If this occurs, at the end of the process the body will be repatriated to the State and the ashes made available to the family.

Acknowledging our donors

A Ceremony of Appreciation is held biennially. Relatives and friends of donors are invited to attend this special ceremony where staff and students express their deepest gratitude for those who have contributed to education and training through body donation.

A Book of Remembrance is available for family and friends to sign or record their thoughts and memories. Names of donors are not listed by the University of Tasmania in order to protect their anonymity. The book is on permanent display in the foyer of the Medical Sciences Precinct.

Other ways to support the Body Bequest Program

If you choose not to donate your body, please consider making a donation to the Body Bequest Program through the University Advancement Office. Your generous support will also assist this important program.

T: +61 3 6226 1920

E: university.giving@utas.edu.au

"They have donated so much more than just their bodies; the nature of their bequest is so profound that we can only aspire to achieve such a selfless persona."

3rd year medical student

Their gift allows us to understand the human body in three dimensions and furthermore to recognise what the body actually looks like and the many secrets it holds.

2nd year medical student



Enquiries

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Body Bequest Program at:

Body Bequest Program
Tasmanian School of Medicine
University of Tasmania
Private Bag 34
Hobart TAS 7001

T: 1800 792 661

E: Body.bequest@utas.edu.au
utas.edu.au/bodybequest





Helping train the medical professionals of tomorrow

The University's Body Bequest Program allows people to make a unique contribution to anatomical studies and the advancement of medicine through donating their bodies to science. The program predominantly assists in the teaching of human anatomy for medical and allied health students learning to be doctors, nurses, paramedics and scientists. In addition, some donors will contribute to professional development courses such as training surgeons in surgical techniques and procedures. We also offer the opportunity for donors to participate in a local Brain Bank, which supports research into brain related diseases.

Even with today's technology, there is no substitute for the direct, practical teaching of anatomy with real human bodies. The medical professionals of tomorrow depend on this vital and highly personal gift to enrich their training. The opportunity to examine the human body, its variability, and its complexities is a privilege, and our teachers and students are extremely grateful to those who donate their body to this program.

Becoming a donor

The most important aspect in becoming a donor is that you must discuss your wish with your family. If your family is unaware or unhappy regarding the bequest, the University will be unable to accept the donation.

Once you have discussed your intentions with your family, and they are supportive of your decision, you can register with the program.

The Program uses donated bodies to study the normal structure of the whole human body. Whilst we strive to accept all donations, there may be circumstances in which a donor is not suitable. Certain medical conditions may exclude a person from becoming a donor, for example:

- a coronial inquiry or post mortem examination;
- recent surgery prior to death;
- the presence of a contagious disease or infection;
- whole organ donation upon death (except corneas);
- physical size and general body condition;
- those assessed to be medically unsuitable.

Donations may also be declined due to the University's storage limitations, if the donor has been deceased for more than four days, or if the family does not wish the donation to proceed.

All donations are considered on a case-by-case basis at the time of death. Age is not an exclusion, but donors must be over 18 years of age to register.

Registration with the program does not guarantee acceptance. A final decision can only be determined once a medical assessment has been completed following the death of a donor. If the University declines to accept the body, it will not be responsible for the funeral arrangements or associated costs. Consequently, the donor and their family are strongly advised to have alternative arrangements in place in the event that the body is unable to be accepted at the time of death.

When a donation is accepted, the University will make arrangements and meet expenses for the transport and eventual cremation of the body. After cremation, the ashes will be available for the family to collect. The University may retain a donor's body for up to five years or indefinitely (the choice is up to you when you register).

The University of Tasmania ensures total confidentiality throughout the entire body donation process. Dignity, respect and anonymity are accorded to the donor at all times.

Brain Bank

In addition to becoming a Body Bequest Program donor, you may choose to also become a brain donor via our Brain Bank. This part of the program uses brain samples to find out more about a person's brain health. The brain, along with the medical history, is used to support research into brain related diseases such as dementia. Donated brain material is retained indefinitely by the University.

"The most valuable part of the Body Bequest Program is that it teaches us not only about medicine but also about life and loss, about humanity and generosity, love and respect. I believe these are the most admirable attributes of our community."

2nd year medical student