



Research Handbook

Dear Researcher,

Thank you for your interest in conducting your research project with Colchester Zoo. Please read through all the information in this handbook before filling out the application form. Once you have completed the application form, please return to the relevant Research Coordinator. Contact details are provided below.

Diploma and undergraduate research: wendy@colchesterzoo.org

Postgraduate and visitor studies: jemmadias@colchesterzoo.org

Please note that applications can be submitted at any time of the year. Please apply as far in advance as possible and a minimum of one month before the proposed research start date to allow for the application to be processed

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Introduction

Research is one of the primary objectives of Colchester Zoo. Colchester Zoo aims to continually increase their research potential and output in view of the growing need for knowledge necessary for undertaking conservation tasks and the unique opportunity and environment that the zoo offers for a wide variety of research areas.

Mission statement

Colchester Zoo is dedicated to encouraging, supporting, and conducting research that improves captive animal management, benefits conservation programmes and contributes to the body of scientific knowledge about animals and their natural habitats.

Aims and objectives

- Encourage research that supports the mission of Colchester Zoo.
- Support and participate in research that furthers understanding of behaviour, husbandry, welfare, environmental enrichment, nutrition, reproduction, ecology, and conservation.
- Support and participate in research that evaluates visitor perception to support Colchester Zoo's aim to promote conservation through education.
- Publish research findings which enhance understanding of wildlife, captive animal management and conservation programmes.
- Expand staff and visitor knowledge through promoting research.
- Develop links with universities and other institutions to promote zoological research.

The Research Coordinators

The Research Coordinators are responsible for overseeing all onsite research, and assessing its viability in terms of welfare, husbandry, and captive breeding. They will be the student's first point of contact and are also responsible for acting as a liaison between researchers, keepers, curators, and any other relevant staff.

Priority Research

Through your academic studies, you may have a research project you wish to propose to Colchester Zoo. Whilst individual projects will be considered based on their impact on conservation and welfare, all research must be non-invasive and cause no distress to the animals being studied.

Alternatively, Colchester Zoo produces a list of priority topics which we are keen for students to adapt into research projects. The list includes areas that have been identified by the Research Coordinators, Zoo Directors, and Animal Management staff. Please contact the appropriate Research Coordinator via email to request the current priority list

Application Procedure

1. Colchester Zoo requests that initial contact be made by the tutor/project supervisor or the student.
2. The first stage of the process will be to discuss project ideas with the relevant Research Coordinator at Colchester Zoo.
3. An application form must be completed providing information about you, your academic details and proposed project details.
4. Once the application has been submitted it is subject to assessment by Zoo Director and the Curator based on the logistics of the project and the project design
5. Research applications are assessed as soon as possible. Students should be aware that under some circumstances it may take up to one month to accept or decline a project, as it must reach the agreement of all staff. Therefore, the student should apply within plenty of time.
6. The applicant will be informed as soon as possible as to whether the application has been accepted or rejected. There may be some modifications or alterations suggested.
7. If the project is accepted, the student will be invited to attend an induction with the Research Coordinator.
8. Before data collection commences, the researcher **MUST** provide a copy of their university ethics approval; they will then be issued with a research pass at a cost of £30 plus a £50 deposit (£15 plus a £10 deposit for short term studies of up to 3 days). Deposits will be returned when the final report is submitted to Colchester Zoo. Unfinished projects will forfeit the research deposit paid at the start of the study.

Assessment of Research Proposals

All research proposals will be assessed by the Zoo Director and the Curator based on the project design and the logistics. The guidelines for assessment are:

- Compatibility with Colchester Zoo's mission to conserve and protect wild animals and their natural habitats and to promote zoological research.
- Value to captive animal management, conservation, or scientific knowledge.
- Subject to ethical review, to ensure that animal welfare is not compromised and compatibility with relevant legislation. All research should involve non-invasive methods, to impose minimal stress to the animals.
- Impact of the proposed research on staff and visitors.
- Compatibility with management and husbandry routines.
- Methodology of the proposed research. Proposals should have realistic aims and sound scientific method for data collection and analysis.

It may be the case that only some aspects of the proposal are not suitable, therefore, the Zoo Director and Curator may accept the proposal on the provision that some aspects are altered.

Terms and Conditions

Colchester Zoo agrees to fulfil the following conditions:

1. Before commencement, all research to be conducted with Colchester Zoo must be assessed and approved by Colchester Zoo to ensure scientific and ethical validity, that animal welfare is not compromised and that it complies with relevant UK and EU legal requirements.
2. Any equipment or questionnaires to be used in the study MUST be approved by Colchester Zoo in advance of the study being completed
3. The researcher must understand prior to the commencement of the project that an animal/s may not be available for study at short notice due to emergencies, e.g., veterinary care or conditions may change which could potentially affect the research, such as enclosure design, husbandry management or group composition. In such cases, Colchester Zoo will ensure to inform the researcher of any necessary changes as soon as possible.
4. Colchester Zoo will provide basic information about the animal(s) and their enclosures, diets and husbandry related to the project.
5. Any information (including biological samples, data, photographs, film footage etc) provided by Colchester Zoo remains the property of Colchester Zoo and can only be used for agreed research.
6. Data and biological samples acquired from Colchester Zoo premises may only be used for the purposes stated in the approved application documents and may not be passed onto third parties without prior consent from Colchester Zoo.
7. The Research Coordinators will not act as immediate academic supervisors for research conducted in association with Colchester Zoo unless otherwise arranged but is a support for research conducted during your time studying as Colchester Zoo.
8. To provide free access to Colchester Zoo during the pre-agreed data collection period for the purpose of their specific research project.
9. Colchester Zoo reserves the right to refuse admission at any time and revoke any agreed upon research agreements.

Whilst conducting research in association with Colchester Zoo, the researcher agrees to fulfil the following conditions:

1. Research projected carried out in association with Colchester Zoo must be fully written up and students must provide an electronic copy of the final report within one month of the course submission deadline. If a study lasts longer than 12 months, the researcher must send a progress report every 12 months to Colchester Zoo until the report is finalised.
2. All reports on research carried out in association with Colchester Zoo must fully acknowledge Colchester Zoo. Dependent on mentoring contribution of the Research Coordinators and/or Zoo Directors, co-authorship may be used as an acknowledgement.

3. Once data collection is complete, raw data **MUST** be submitted with clear and instructional annotations to Colchester Zoo. If data is not published or submitted for publishing after a period of one year from the conclusion of the study, Colchester Zoo reserves the right to publish data. In such cases, the researcher will be contacted, and all due acknowledgements will be given.
4. It is the researcher's responsibility to notify the Research Coordinators of any changes regarding your personal details, such as contact details, or research information.
5. The researcher will adhere to all Health and Safety guidelines as laid out during the research induction; if the researcher is seen or is reported to have ignored any of these instructions, then the research partnership with Colchester Zoo may be terminated.
6. Before data collection commences, the researcher needs to arrange any accommodation or travel necessary for accessing Colchester Zoo.
7. Upon completion of your final write up, you will be invited to present your project to relevant staff members at Colchester Zoo.

Application Checklist

Application form	To be completed after initial contact has been made. Return to relevant research coordinator	
University Ethics Approval	Copy to be sent to relevant research coordinator before data collection commences	
Research Agreement	To be signed by student and Research coordinator before data collection commences	
Final project	Electronic copy to be sent to relevant research coordinator up to ONE MONTH after submission	
Project Summary	To be returned to relevant research coordinator with final project	

Research Application Form

Please complete this form if you wish to undertake research onsite at Colchester Zoo.

All boxes must be completed for your application to be considered.

In order to assess your application as fully as possible, please also provide a full research proposal if available.

For diploma and undergraduate research, return to: Wendy Lehkyj, Research Coordinator, Colchester Zoo, Maldon Road, Stanway, Essex CO3 0SL wendy@colchesterzoo.org

For postgraduate research and visitor studies, return to: Jemma Dias, Research Coordinator, Colchester Zoo, Maldon Road, Stanway, Essex CO3 0SL jemmadias@colchesterzoo.org

General information

Your personal details will only be used to contact you in relation to your research project. Please contact us if you have more questions.

Title

First name

Surname (Family name)

E-mail address

Mobile phone number

Researcher details

Please provide details of the academic institution and supervisor you are completing your research in conjunction with.

Name of College/ University

Course and level of study (BSc, MSc etc)

Name of Supervisor/ Tutor

Project Information

Please provide full details on your research question/s and aim/s and how you intend to answer these.

Project Title

Research Animals (species / group)

Research Aim/s and Objective/s (Purpose of study - Project rationale (e.g., why is this research important? What is the value of this research to captive breeding programmes / conservation)? You may continue onto the next page if required).

Type of study (please highlight):

Observational (no modifications)
Experimental (modification necessary)
Sample request (e.g. faecal)

Description of Project (please include your methodology and/ or any questionnaires to be used. (You may continue onto the next page if required).

What information or assistance is required by Colchester Zoo?

Have you applied to the BIAZA Research Committee for a letter of support?

Is this research intended to be published or shared with the wider zoo community? If so, potentially which journals, conferences, or other?

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How will this research benefit species conservation and/or Colchester Zoo?

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Data collection period

Proposed data collection period (DD/MM/YY – DD/MM/YY):
Estimated number of days per week:
Estimate number of total days:
What is the latest possible deadline that you require a decision on this application?

**PLEASE ATTACH PROOF OF YOUR UNIVERSITY ETHICS APPROVAL
AND ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION E.G. RESEARCH PROPOSAL/
LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM ORGANISATIONS OR TUTORS**

Researchers' Declaration

I hereby declare that the above information is truthful and correct and that I will supply Colchester Zoo with a copy of all data and written work produced from experience/information gained at Colchester Zoo and when using either written or photographic material gained from the zoo will acknowledge accordingly.

I agree to comply with Colchester Zoo's research procedure and for a copy of my work to be held on file by Colchester Zoo.

Researcher's signature

Date:

Supervisors' Declaration

I understand that by signing below I have agreed to supervise the project outlined in the proposal.

Supervisor's signature:

Date:

Academic References

Please provide the details for two academic references these can include your supervisor/s.

Reference 1:

Name

Email Address

Telephone Number

Address

Reference 2:

Name

Email Address

Telephone Number

Address

Research Agreement

Please complete this form if your application for research at Colchester Zoo, as detailed in your research proposal, has been formally accepted by the Research Coordinator. This form will be used as a record of your agreement of our terms and conditions. Please read the terms and conditions fully before signing the form.

For diploma and undergraduate research, return to: Wendy Lehkyj, Research Coordinator, Colchester Zoo, Maldon Road, Stanway, Essex CO3 0SL wendy@colchesterzoo.org

For postgraduate research and visitor studies, return to: Jemma Dias, Research Coordinator, Colchester Zoo, Maldon Road, Stanway, Essex CO3 0SL
jemmadias@colchesterzoo.org

General information

Your personal details will only be used to contact you in relation to your research project. Please contact us if you have more questions.

Title

First name

Surname (Family name)

E-mail address

Mobile phone number

Researcher details

Please provide details of the academic institution and supervisor you are completing your research in conjunction with.

Name of College/ University

Course and level of study (BSc, MSc etc)

Name of Supervisor/ Tutor

Agreed study start date and end date

Project Information

Project Title

TERMS AND CONDITIONS - please read carefully

The visiting researcher must agree to fulfil the following conditions:

1. Researchers must have the agreement of their course supervisor that the study is acceptable and that they will supervise the study.
2. Researchers must provide a copy of the university ethics approval before their agreed data collection period.
3. To pay the research fee of £30 plus a £50 deposit (£15 plus £10 deposit for short term studies of up to 3 days. Deposit is returned when Colchester Zoo receives the final write-up) before data collection commences.
4. Researchers must ensure that they always have their research pass with them whilst in the zoo. Research passes/badges must be on display whilst the researcher is conducting research.
5. Always behave in a responsible and acceptable manner and remain within the public access areas of the Zoo, unless otherwise agreed with the Research Coordinator.
6. Researchers conducting enrichment studies must produce a timescale of enrichment additions in advance of the study and must adhere to these deadlines. If researchers cannot make a scheduled date, they must inform the Research Coordinator in advance. If the researcher repeatedly misses deadlines, Colchester Zoo reserves the right to discontinue the study.
7. Researchers must ensure that the study is completed or inform Colchester Zoo as early as possible in the event of the project remaining unfinished. Unfinished projects will forfeit the £50 (£10 for short term studies) research deposit paid at the start of the study.
8. Researchers must inform Colchester Zoo and discuss any changes to the study proposal and gain approval for any alterations of the aims or methodology of the study.
9. On completion of the study, researchers must provide an electronic copy of the final report within one month of the course submission deadline.
10. Researchers must gain the permission of Colchester Zoo before the submission of any papers or presentations of the research.
11. Researchers must guarantee the anonymity of Colchester Zoo in any papers or presentations if requested.
12. Researchers must acknowledge Colchester Zoo in any papers or presentations (unless anonymity is requested) and to include the Zoo Director or Research Coordinators as co-authors if requested (where the zoo has had significant involvement in the project or publication).

Colchester Zoo agrees to fulfil the following conditions:

1. Colchester Zoo will free entry to the researcher during their agreed data collection period for the purposes of their specific research project.
2. Colchester Zoo will not provide free entry to other individuals (e.g., friends and family) unless there has been written agreement from the Research Coordinator for assistance with data collection.
3. If conditions change, e.g., enclosure design, group composition, or husbandry which could potentially affect the research project, Colchester Zoo will ensure that the researcher is informed as soon as possible.
4. Colchester Zoo will facilitate the practical requirements of the study and to conduct the manipulations as agreed when the project is accepted. If circumstances make this impossible, Colchester Zoo will ensure that the researcher is informed as soon as possible.
5. Colchester Zoo will provide basic information about the animals, their enclosure, diet, photocopy facilities (at a cost), other equipment or information as agreed by Colchester Zoo and the researcher.
6. Colchester Zoo may not provide supervision for independent projects but may provide supervision for projects from the priority topic list, which will be agreed when the project is accepted.
7. Colchester Zoo reserves the right to publish or present the data/project. In this case, the permission of the researcher will be sought, and they will be named as a co-author.
8. Colchester Zoo retains the right to revoke agreements or refuse admission to the zoo at any time.

HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

During your data collection period you will be representing both Colchester Zoo's research department and your own institution. Therefore, you must act responsibly at all times.

You are responsible for your own health and safety when in the zoo and any aspect of your research is undertaken at your own risk. However, the following guidelines must be followed for your own safety, and the safety of other visitors, staff, and animals.

1. Do not attempt to pet any animal (with the exception of domestic stock in the Familiar Friends area), do not enter an enclosure with any animals and do not poke any object through the enclosure mesh or put items in enclosures. You must inform keepers or another member of staff if you see anyone attempting to do any of these things.
2. Do not cross any safety barriers or enter any enclosures or off-show areas of the zoo without the permission of the senior keeper or curator and without a member of staff being present *. You must inform keepers or another member of staff if you see anyone attempting to do any of these things.
3. Wash hands after working with or around animals.
4. Do not take, use, or move any tools or equipment without permission from a relevant member of staff and having received sufficient training *.
5. Follow any instructions given by members of staff, e.g., in the event of an emergency, to ensure your own safety and the safety of other visitors, staff and animals.
6. If you are injured in the zoo, please inform the Research Coordinator or another member of staff immediately, who will ensure that appropriate action is taken.
7. You will not be allowed in the zoo outside of opening hours, except with permission from the Research Coordinator or a member of management *.
8. Smoking/Vaping is not permitted in any part of the zoo grounds.
9. You must inform keepers or another member of staff immediately if you see anything in an enclosure which might harm an animal or could be used by the animal to escape or if you think an animal is sick or injured.
10. Do not feed any animals or put any item in an enclosure without permission from the keeper responsible for the section *. You must inform keepers or another member of staff if you see anyone attempting to do any of these things.
11. You must inform a member of staff immediately if you see anything in the zoo grounds which could pose a potential safety risk to visitors or staff.

*** Permission should always be obtained by approaching the Research Coordinator initially**

PUBLIC RELATIONS INFORMATION

1. Always have your pass on display the entire time that you are in the zoo conducting research.
2. If you are asked any question by visitors or staff, always be polite and provide assistance if you can, or direct them to a member of staff or Guest Services.
3. Do not talk to any media reporters about the zoo, other than when requested by the Business Development Department.
4. Do not post any material relating to your study on any social media websites or any other online forum, unless requested or approved by the Business Development Director.

Researchers' signature:	Date:
I understand that by signing above I have agreed to the Terms & Conditions, Health & Safety Guidelines and Public Relations Information for visiting researchers.	
Staff signature:	Date:
I understand that by signing above I have agreed to the Terms & Conditions on behalf of Colchester Zoo.	

Summary Report for Research Project

The following document is a report to summarise the project undertaken by a visiting researcher at Colchester Zoo. It is intended to inform management, keepers and any other interested staff of the project's success and what its main findings were.

Project details

Researcher name:

Project title:

Institution:

Course:

Academic Supervisor name:

Dates of data collection:

Date final project received:

Aims and objectives:

Method:

Summary of main findings:

Difficulties encountered during research:

Benefit of study to Colchester Zoo/zoo community/species conservation/ welfare etc.

Any other comments:

Please return completed form to:

Undergraduate projects: wendy@colchesterzoo.org

Postgraduate projects: jemmadias@colchesterzoo.org

Along with a PDF copy of your completed research project