

Agenda Items:

Meeting:	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)		
Date:	10 th September 2024	Time:	13:30-16:30
Location:	University meeting room		
Members present:	AWERB Chair / Named Information Officer (NIO) NACWO Chair of BRF User Forum NASPA Chair NEER Officer NTCO/HOLC PIL representative Assurance team representative Independent, external lay member Communication's team representative Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) Academic staff with relevant research experience Researcher		
In attendance:	AWERB Secretary		
Minutes:	AWERB Secretary		
Acronyms	AWERB – Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body BRF – Biomedical Research Facility ECR – Early Career Researcher FEO – Favourable Ethical Opinion HOLC – Home Office Liaison Contact NASPA - Non-Animal in Scientific Procedures Act NACWO – Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer NEER – Non-Establishment Ethics Review NIO – Named Information Officer NVS – Named Veterinary Surgeon PILh – Personal Licence (holder) PPLh – Project Licence (holder) PELh – Establishment Licence (holder) RIGC – Research Integrity and Governance Committee RIGO – Research Integrity and Governance Office SAGE-AR – Self-Assessment for Governance and Ethics – Animal Research URIC – University Research and Innovation Committee		

Item		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies Apologies received from: AWERB Deputy Chair and Deputy Named Veterinary Surgeon.</p> <p>Chair welcomed all members and introduced the new AWERB secretary.</p>	<p>Apologies for absence to be sent to Chair in advance of meetings. (ALL)</p>
2.	<p>Approval of minutes and update on action log Previous minutes had two minor corrections for accuracy. AWERB Chair to amend.</p> <p>5/23- 3Rs strategy document still being edited by Chair. An update on the scoping review of 'replacement' technologies in an agenda item for this meeting.</p> <p>8/23 – Minor changes have been made to rehoming policy document. Documents now posted on sharepoint site.</p> <p>8/24- Chair of BRF User Forum informed that the draft has been prepared and presented. We would we need ethical approval for tissue to be shared with other users.</p> <p>9/24 – The AWERB/NASPA Chairs to plan timing of drop-in sessions to coincide with student project release.</p> <p>10/24- The Chair is looking for volunteers to assist with BRF webpage update. Ideally a member from NASPA, the user group and Vet School. The Chair would like to see a site devoted to NASPA activities. Please contact the Chair if you would like to volunteer.</p> <p>11/24 – Revisions have been completed for the new PPL application (Mitochondrial and cellular function in stressed heart) and it has been submitted to ASPEL following PELh approval.</p> <p>12/24 – HOLTIF forum meeting still to happen. The loss of 'comments' during upload in ASPEL will be raised at meeting.</p> <p>13/24 – User forum chair stated that the information was shared at User forum meeting.</p> <p>14/24 – Chair has progressed PPL amendment for PP0204823 (chronic stress and sleep fragmentation protocols); amended PPL has been submitted on ASPEL.</p> <p>15/24 – 'Microbiota' researcher to present in this meeting (see later item).</p>	<p>On- going</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Carried forward</p> <p>On- going</p> <p>On- going</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Carried forward</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>This meeting</p>
3.	<p>Update on 3Rs 'Replacement' Scoping review Doctoral College funded student has implemented a literature search strategy and found 21 relevant review articles documenting replacement activities. A table of these has been created. Suggestions from committee to speak to AI experts to help with search strategy and/or check search terms due to low number of</p>	

	<p>articles found. The student has also collated details from those at the University involved in replacement activities. Funds to support student are now used. The student's supervisor and other 3Rs champions to consider next steps once 3Rs strategy document has been updated.</p>	<p>Outstanding action 5/23 above</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>PPL PP0204823 activity update</p> <p>1) Retrospective review – committee heard from PPLh and reviewed the prepared document. Progress largely focused on objectives 2 and 3, with some data already disseminated to the wider community. Committee asked questions related to the overgrooming seen in mice and commended the trialling of additional environmental enrichment to reduce this. Review was accepted with no changes.</p> <p>2) 'Microbiota' research amendment discussion – Following a request to include an experimental manipulation step on the breeding protocols of this PPL, the committee heard from the researcher leading the microbiota work. The researcher explained how animals had been used in the program of work thus far, and future research plans. They also heard of details around future and pending funding applications. The researcher was reminded that the committee had been waiting on their PPL application for over a year. The committee were informed about issues relating to the writing process and a focus on obtaining funding. The committee considered the consequences of supporting an amendment to the existing PPL. Key points raised include – likelihood of approval by Home Office, adherence to our processes, expected timelines for PPL writing and review times for amendments versus new licences. After some deliberation and a vote, the majority of the committee agreed that the researcher should progress their own PPL. Dissenting member(s) expressed concern that this may delay progress of the research. Thus, to facilitate a more rapid review when a new PPL was submitted, the committee agreed to meet and review documents between the scheduled AWERB meetings as necessary. The Chair will convey the outcome to the individual.</p>	<p>AWERB Chair 16/24</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Named persons report</p> <p>NACWO/NVS - No major welfare issues to report. Concern raised over future use of imaging equipment in BRF due to lack of funds for servicing. Servicing is required for safe operation and committee reflected on the value of the technology even if only used by a single research group. AWERB Chair to document this formally.</p> <p>NTCO/HOLC- Training is ongoing for two individuals; no date yet for HOLC forum meeting.</p> <p>NIO – provided report and highlighted some new publications and meetings. Recent report of using absorbing molecules to transiently induce increased transparency in animals was discussed.</p> <p>NASPA report – Chair gave updates related to example cases received using new self-assessment ethics portal; some minor amends have been identified to improve User understanding. NASPA committee awaiting documents to review from new Medical School</p>	<p>AWERB Chair 17/24</p>

	<p>and information from the recent Animal Tissue audit was shared with the committee members.</p> <p>NEER Officer – one project currently under review</p> <p>User Forum – meeting held immediately prior to AWERB; committee heard more about the environmental enrichment study being undertaken to reduce overgrooming in some animals.</p>	
7.	<p>Internal animal tissue audit findings</p> <p>The Chair and NASPA Chair were contacted around mid-April and informed the University’s Audit department would be conducting an audit focused on Animal Tissue compliance. Audit proceeded in June-July, with Chairs, BRF manager and some principal investigators providing documentation as requested. An audit rating of ‘Significant Assurance’ was received (second highest category). A small number of minor control weaknesses were identified and the Chairs’ were now preparing responses to address these. These related to: provision and recording of training, lack of compliance checks, criteria for ethical and governance review of non-ASPA regulated research and missing sample storage logs. Some of these issues would be addressed by implementation of the new self-assessment governance and ethic review process, which went live as the audit was in progress. It was noted that non-ASPA regulated research lacks overarching regulation and resources compared to work performed under ASPA. The AWERB Chair reflected that this was a good report and showed that most of our processes had appropriate controls in place and operated effectively, such that risks were effectively managed. A summary of the audit criteria and main findings has been placed on the sharepoint site for members to view. An action plan with timeline to address points raised will be added once agreed by the Audit team.</p>	<p>AWERB Chair 18/24</p>
7.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>During the meeting, the NASPA Chair indicated they would be stepping down from their role at the University. There may be a option for them to continue with the NASPA Chair role but this was not certain so in the meantime, the Chair and committee members acknowledged the NASPA Chair’s contributions so far. The NASPA Chair was thanked for all the amazing work that had been done!</p> <p>Chair thanked everybody for attending and closed the meeting.</p>	

Next AWERB Committee Meeting

Tuesday 19 th November (on Teams)	
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