

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

19/01 A meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) was held in Committee Room 2, Whiteknights House on Thursday 7 February 2019 at 10.30 am.

Present:

[Redacted, Section 40]

Apologies were received from [Redacted, Section 40], [Redacted, Section 40] and [Redacted, Section 40].

19/02 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 13 September 2018 were approved as a correct record.

19/03 Matters Arising

18/21 Communications – non technical summaries (NTS)

It was noted that the non-technical summaries had been posted on the web pages.

As agreed at the last meeting a lay member would assist in drafting the next NTS with the project licence applicant.

AWERB noted that UAR had published helpful guidance on writing NTS.

18/21 Severity Data

It was reported that the Severity Data had been passed to [Redacted, Section 40] who would consider how best to present the data and to avoid any confusion. It was agreed that it would be helpful to include contextual information along the data and linking to the definitions of severity.

Action: [Redacted, Section 40]

18/21 Work undertaken on non-ASPA Regulated Projects

It was noted that RUSU had now responded with further details of the supplier used for the petting zoo.

On initial investigation details of any registration or animal welfare code of practice were not available on the company's website.

Whilst members of AWERB were supportive of the use as pets as therapy it did require assurance as to the welfare of the animals at their place of origin and whilst in transport.

[Redacted, Section 40] agreed to investigate further with his practice whether petting zoos were subject to any particular legislation or registration requirements.

Action: [Redacted, Section 40]

In the meantime [Redacted, Section 40] was asked to speak further with colleagues in RUSU to gain assurance as to the conditions that the animals were kept in and welfare arrangements whilst in transit. It was agreed that if required one of the University's vets or a member with animal welfare experience could along with colleagues from RUSU inspect the conditions that the animals were kept in.

18/21 Pro-forma for mid-term and end of contract review

It was noted that the pro-forma had been amended to include specific reference to the experience of the animals and to the section on the 3Rs.

Further work was required to add examples, hints and tips for completing the document.

Action: [Redacted, Section 40]

18/22 Standard form of wording for project licence amendment

It was noted so far there had been no demand for a standard form of project licence amendment. It was suggested that licence holders might view any amendments required as bespoke to their particular licence or that they assumed that validation studies could be undertaken within their current licence.

It was agreed that this matter would be raised again with the [Redacted, Section 40], as well as directly with [Redacted, Section 40].

Action: [Redacted, Section 40] and [Redacted, Section 40]

18/23 Workshop on the 3Rs

AWERB noted that [Redacted, Section 40] had made contact with NC3Rs and had discussed ideas in respect of a workshop; NC3R were keen to assist the University in this event. Both the RSPCA and NC3R had suggested possible topics.

It was agreed that the workshop should be aimed at the broadest range of colleagues as possible. With that in mind it was agreed that holding the workshop early in the Autumn Term would be ideal in terms of timing and availability of staff and students.

[Redacted, Section 40] agreed to progress arrangements as a matter of priority.

Action: [Redacted, Section 40]

19/04 Health and Life Sciences Building

[Redacted, Section 40] provided an update to AWERB in relation to welfare and ethical issues in the BRU and the move to the new Health and Life Sciences Building.

It was reported that:

- It was intended to invite the [Redacted, Section 40] back to the University for an update visit with the project team. This would include seeking further guidance on the standard wording for project amendments.

- The rederivation programme was progressing well and engagement continued with [redacted, section 43]. Seven strains had been sent for archiving, with a further five/six in the process of being identified and the males proven. There had been a delay with sending the rats to [redacted, section 43] as the strain did not produce the necessary number of pups from the first round of breeding. Depending on breeding performance it was hoped that this part of the project would be completed by the Spring. Discussions around timelines for return of live rederived rats and mice would then commence; these would be mindful of potential slippage in the opening date for the HLS BRU (currently 10 January 2020).
- There had been occasions when users of the BRU had expressed a lack of knowledge relating to Home Office updates including ASRU newsletters. The most recent examples related to Condition 18 notification. An advance notice was issued in April 2018 but users seemed unaware of this and there was some confusion over the requirement for, and the significance of, Condition 18 reports. A meeting had been held with a small number of users who expressed concerns and needed further clarification.

In regard to the Home Office updates it was agreed that [Redacted, Section 40] and [Redacted, Section 40] would consider running a lunchtime session with staff.

Action: [Redacted, Section 40]

19/05 Design of Experiments

[Redacted, Section 40] informed members that during a routine visit the question of whether there was a need for increased oversight of the design of experiments, perhaps through the evaluation of individual study plans, had been raised. It was suggested that it would be helpful to explore the design of experiments at an early stage such as the application stage, and that this could tie in with considerations in regard to the 3Rs.

It was noted that a number of institutions already had procedures in place, some of which were quite onerous and had met resistance from staff. AWERB members were keen to find a solution that would provide an appropriate level of assurance that licence holders had considered animal welfare and the 3Rs in the design of their experiments, and that wouldn't be too administratively burdensome for staff.

AWERB noted that the Farm already reviewed the design of experiments to some extent.

It was agreed that any process set up for the review of the design of experiments would be internal to the University and not part of the project licence. Ideally any process developed would be applicable across both the BRU and the Farm.

It was agreed that a sub-group of AWERB would meet to discuss this matter further, including: [Redacted, Section 40], [Redacted, Section 40], a representative from the School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy,

[Redacted, Section 40] and [Redacted, Section 40], and report to the next meeting.

Action: [Redacted, Section 40]

19/06 Pro-forma for mid-term and end of contract review

It was noted that mid-term reviews would be postponed to a later meeting.

19/07 Communications

AWERB received and noted:

- The ASRU annual report for 2017
- The ELH newsletter
- Lunch of the AWERB hub

In regard to the ASRU newsletter it was noted that there had been a number of infringements for failure to provide basic needs such as food and water. Members of AWERB were given assurance that the University had a series of systems and checks in place to ensure that this wouldn't happen and that staff were vigilant. That said the University would consider examples of good practice that were published.

19/08 PETA Campaign

It was reported that People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) were currently running an email campaign to influence UK universities on ending animal research.

PETA had created an online and social media campaign, from its main UK website, to encourage its supporters to write to the Vice-Chancellors of 35 UK universities that were licensed institutions.

As of 31 January 2019 the University had received 23 emails to which the [Redacted, Section 40] had responded.

It was noted that the Farm had been targeted by the Go Vegan Project Calf campaign who were against commercial cattle farming.

19/09 UAR Openness Awards

AWERB were pleased to note that the University was entered and shortlisted in the 'best website or use of new media' award at the 2018 UAR openness awards.

It was noted that UAR had launched a new plan to initiate a watermark standard. The award would be given to organisations who commit considerable resource and energy to following best practice, embedding openness, and making the aims of the concordat a reality. It was proposed that the University should seek to achieve this 'Leadership in Openness' status.

Members of AWERB were concerned about the level of resource that would need to be invested to achieve such a status, particularly at the current time, and wondered whether such an ambition might be too optimistic.

19/10 Dates of meetings in the Session 2018-19

Thursday 23 May 2019 10.00 am to 1.00 pm