

# Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

24/01 A hybrid meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) was held in Committee Room 1 and via Teams on Monday 5 February 2024 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Chair Type	Percentage
Armchair	10%
Sofa	10%
Recliner	10%
Rocking chair	10%
Stool	10%
Bar stool	10%
Bar stool with back	10%
Bar stool with backrest	10%
Bar stool with backrest and armrest	10%
Bar stool with backrest and armrest and footrest	10%
Bar stool with backrest and armrest and footrest and backrest	10%

NACWO = Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer

NVS = Named Veterinary Surgeon

Apologies were received from [REDACTED]

24/02 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 September 2023 were approved as a correct record.

24/03 Matters Arising

23/19 List of licence holders circulated to Heads of School

It was noted that a list of current licence holders had been circulated to Heads of School.

23/22 Any amendments needed to the mid-term review form

The mid-term review form would be amended following the next review in May 2024.

#### 23/23 Compliance with Establishment Licence (PEL) Standard Conditions

The Chair asked the group to consider further how to assess conditions into the red/amber/green categories, with those areas flagged where there were concerns.

#### 23/26 Annual Review of AWERB's activities

A small sub-group had been established to take forward the action as requested.

#### 23/27 Animal Research Policy

The Animal Research Policy had been updated to reflect the creation of the 3Rs sub-group and the focus of the AWERB on 3Rs. This had been published on the website

All other matters arising were covered below.

#### 24/04 Compliance with Establishment Licence (PEL) Standard Conditions

With the advent of the Home Office's 'Bridging Ways of Working' initiative and the changes to the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) compliance and enforcement activities, work had been undertaken to review the University's compliance, and how this could be evidenced, with the standard conditions of Reading's Home Office Establishment licence. The AWERB received a paper setting out the current conditions and an assessment of the extent of the University's compliance, with a red/amber/green code to indicate the seriousness/urgency of any required remedial actions.

It was noted that since the last meeting work had included:

- Condition 2 – Kill Register. Confirmation that continued competency assessments in all procedures was being performed.
- Condition 15 & 16 – Performance of Named Persons: Roles to be covered in staff PDRs; a reminder to that effect would be rolled out in the Summer Term; Review of Names Persons: questionnaires would be drawn up with respect to Named roles and what the Home Office expected each person to be compliant with.
- Condition 20 – Prevention of Unauthorised Procedures. A study plan would be drawn up for all studies and this would be used to check that all persons involved with a study followed procedure. CEDAR and BRU would compare study plans on an annual basis to assess good practice.

#### 24/05 3Rs Strategy Update

The AWERB received an update on the work of the 3Rs group. As part of the task of reviewing and ensuring compliance with the Standard Conditions of the Establishment Licence was the work to ensure promotion and adoption of the 3Rs 'best practices'.

It was noted that the following activity had taken place since the last meeting:

- Update of the work plan
- 3Rs Seminar Series scheduled in 2024 - Bi-monthly 3Rs seminars had been advertised to the ASPA community, encompassing the following topics '*Replacement, compliance, Experimental Design Fundamentals, Recording Actual Severity, Ethics and Using Both Sexes*'. New seminar for 2025 are being lined up, to keep the 3Rs focus, exploring different topics.

- The seminar on 'Thinking Differently – an introduction to exploring non-animal approaches' had 14 in attendance (24% of the ASPA community). The next seminar in February was with [REDACTED] talking about compliance. It was suggested that after the first few sessions, data on attendance should be given to the Heads of School. Consideration would also be given to how to engage [REDACTED] with these sessions and whether any recorded sessions could be made available on UoRLearn.  
**Action:** [REDACTED]
- Development of interview questions in recruiting new animal researchers – these questions would be shared with the HR Business Partners for the Life Science Schools.  
**Action:** [REDACTED]
- Non-ASPA animal work
- 3Rs champions had been identified – [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
- Working with the external comms teams, the 3Rs sub-group was exploring the possibilities to promote the 3Rs work on the webpages.
- Encourage the use of the NC3Rs self-assessment tool - The self-assessment tool link had been sent to the relevant ASPA community and would be sent at routine intervals to capture any new starters.
- Implement a formal mechanism for tissue sharing - A tissue sharing meeting was held on the 14th of November 2023 to discuss the potential possibilities of tissue sharing.
- An email had been sent to Heads of School in regard to non-procedural animal work. Responses would be chased. The aim of the email was to ensure oversight of all activities as part of the 3Rs focus.

#### 24/06 Report from Technical Services

The AWERB received an update from the BRU, in particular it was noted that:

- SCH1 refinements – discussions had been held with the NVS regarding an anaesthetic regime before CO2 Euthanasia. This has been based on recommendations from the Newcastle Consensus Meeting on Laboratory Animal Euthanasia, 2016. Discussion at the BRU user group meeting had highlighted that this might not be possible under some protocols. The recommendations were to use the most humane method where possible, therefore when the science permits it, the use of anaesthetic should be encouraged. The American Veterinary Medical Association and Newcastle consensus meeting on laboratory animal euthanasia had recommended a CO2 flow rate of between 30-40%, so the BRU would be implementing this refinement as part of the process.
- Training and competency - A spreadsheet of all competencies held had been created including dates of last assessment. The NTCO had communicated with the users to confirm that the central record held by the BRU matched the records held by individuals. This spreadsheet was being used to identify and prioritise competencies for reassessment. When a study plan for new animals comes through, the user was asked what procedures were going to be carried out and by whom. If the technique needed to be reassessed, a time to carry out the assessment was arranged. [REDACTED] had attended the Assessor Course provided by [REDACTED]. Assessments are made using Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) forms.
- Culture of Care - The BRU were looking to promote a culture of care and make it the centre of work. The NTCO had attended a meeting at [REDACTED] focused on culture of care and had completed a course titled "Establishing a culture of care in research animal facilities" provided by [REDACTED].

The AWERB asked that a definition of culture of care be agreed and brought back to its next meeting.

**Action:** [REDACTED]

24/07 Communications Strategy

The AWERB received and noted:

- Revised ASRU Guidance – Guidance on the operation of the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 with effect from 20.12.23

24/08 Items for future meetings

The AWERB noted that in regard to rehoming ASPA had published an advice note in 2015 which included a decision tree within it along with notes on practicalities. It was agreed that this would be submitted to the meeting for consideration.

**Action:** [REDACTED]

In regard to compassion fatigue and mental health challenges it was suggested that [REDACTED] talk further with colleagues, NACWOs and NVS on this matter and report back to the next meeting. This piece of work fitted well with the Culture of Care work and could be joined up with that.

**Action:** [REDACTED]

24/09 Dates of meetings in the Session 2023-24

Thursday 9 May 2024 at 10.00 am