

Agenda Items:

Meeting:	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)		
Date:	14 March 2025	Time:	13:30-16:30
Location:	Online		
Members present:	AWERB Chair / Named Information Officer (NIO) Deputy AWERB Chair Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) (on-line) NACWO Chair of BRF User Forum NASPA Chair PIL representative Head of Assurance representative Independent, external lay member Communication's team representative Academic/staff with relevant experience (x4)		
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 SAGE-AR – Self-Assessment for Governance and Ethics – Animal Research URIC – University Research and Innovation Committee UAR – Understanding Animal Research		

Item		Action #
1.	Welcome and Apologies Apologies received from: NEER Officer, Deputy NVS Chair welcomed all members, which included 3 new members.	Apologies for absence to be sent to Chair in advance of meetings. (ALL)
2.	Approval of minutes and update on action log Previous meeting minutes reviewed – No major corrections were identified. Members were given until 19/03/25, to provide any feedback on inaccuracies before the minutes are finalized. 8/24: Tissue sharing database – A new Teams-based platform is being developed for researchers to share tissue availability. This platform aims to facilitate real-time communication between researchers who may have excess tissue and those in need. Concerns discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy and ethical considerations – who should have access? • Logistical issues – should it be open to all university staff, or limited to AWERB members? Admin staff can advise on electronic distribution routes • Approval mechanisms – how can it be ensured that shared tissues are used ethically? 10/24: Webpage working group. Chair reported an additional volunteer has been recruited to help improve content. BRF manager explained how improvements had been made to the website so that there was an improved listing of how animals had been used. Working group will meet to set some goals. 19/24: Communication planning on Animal ethics (University-wide campaign to raise awareness). This is on-hold. 20/24: Recruitment campaign was successful, with four new members joining NASPA and three new AWERB members onboarded. New members were encouraged to provide feedback to the Chair on the induction process to improve future onboarding. 21/24: New PIL representative has been recruited. They will job-share the role with the existing representative. 1/25: No updates were received from the communications representative about BARN digest. 3/25 NEER Officer to report on usefulness of “AI and Score Sheets” article. 5/25: NIO has updated the Induction Pack and this has been shared with new members.	On-going On-going On-going Carried forward Closed Closed On-going Carried forward Closed
3.	Named persons reports – key points only from:	

	<p>NVS/NACWO: Facility has successfully switched to a new health screening provider following the current provider's cessation of operations.</p> <p>NTCO: No updates.</p> <p>HOLC: Annual Home Office returns were submitted on time. The Home Office is undergoing internal restructuring, causing delays in processing applications. Changes to Project Licence Applications (PPLs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New predefined protocols will be introduced to streamline applications. • Targeted audits will focus on compliance with specific ASPA regulations, such as Standard Condition 18. <p>NIO: Report highlighted upcoming events and some recent publications including for use of rodent cancer models and impact of aging on female rodents.</p> <p>NASPA Chair: Recent NASPA applications have covered a range of research projects, including animal-derived materials and veterinary teaching practices. An update to the Standard Operating Procedures for canine use in veterinary education was approved.</p> <p>NEER Officer: No report due to connectivity issues.</p> <p>User Forum Chair: Chair reported a number of items will be discussed at next User Forum meeting. Tissue sharing plans are being progressed as well as updates to pre-start documents following publication of ARRIVE Study plans.</p>	
4.	<p>Ethical Review of Work Performed Elsewhere - Key Discussion Points:</p> <p>The Chair gave a brief presentation on how activities involving animals is reviewed across AWERB, NASPA and in the NEER process. The committee were asked to reflect on some case examples to aid thinking about how/where practice can be streamlined and improved.</p> <p>Some key questions included how we should ethically evaluate research conducted internationally? For example, what documentation should be required to verify ethical compliance? How can we ensure ethical standards are consistent across different countries?</p> <p>Following presentation of some case examples, the committee reflected that they would want clear detailed information in relation to how animals were kept and would be used; if any local approvals were in place; who would be performing the animal activities and their training; why studies couldn't be performed in the UK; whether work was funded; other relevant regulations (e.g. compliance with Nagoya protocol, Material transfer agreements). Example 2: Veterinary clinical trials conducted overseas under different regulatory frameworks.</p>	

	Based on discussions, the AWERB and NASPA Chairs and the NEER officer will meet to agree behind-the-scenes processes to ensure an appropriate level of ethical review is applied.	8/25 Chair
	Break	
5.	<p>3Rs and Culture of care items:</p> <p>Understanding Animal Research 10-Year Concordat Survey The Concordat on Openness on Animal Research which was set up by Understanding Animal Research (UAR), has been in place for 10 years. UAR are now seeking feedback on the Concordat's impact at an institutional level. They have asked all UAR members to complete a survey to collate data and help shape the Concordat going forward. The committee looked at the survey questions together and provided feedback to the Chair about their views. As time was short, committee were also encouraged to look at the survey questions outside of the meeting and provide any additional feedback to the Chair. The Chair will collate the responses and submit the survey by the deadline.</p> <p>RSPCA replacement in academia feedback The User Forum Chair attended the RSCPA-led workshop and provided detailed feedback on activities. One key aspect related to providing information about Non-Animal Methods (NAMs) early in scientists careers so that they were more aware. It was discussed that there was a need for more training and support for researchers transitioning to non-animal alternatives. Members also highlighted that at present there are some cases where alternatives do not exist or are insufficient due to the lack of complexity in artificial/mathematical models compared to nature. The workshop has led to the publication of various documents including a Replacement Check list and these have been shared across relevant parts of the University.</p>	9/25 Chair
6.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The following Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were recorded: FOI-630-4R858C4QCA (related to animal usage data) FOI-634-YB7T364T3N (related to phasing out animal research)</p>	

Next AWERB Committee Meeting

06 May 2025 1.30 - 4:30pm (In Person – Room TBC)	
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