

Meeting:	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)		
Date:	6th May 2025	Time:	13:30-16:30
Location:	In-person		
Members present:	AWERB Chair / Named Information Officer (NIO) Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) NACWO Chair of BRF User Forum NASPA Chair PIL representative Independent, external lay member Academic/staff with relevant experience (x2)		
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		

Agenda Items:

Item		Action #
1.	Welcome and Apologies Chair welcomed all members. Apologies received from: NEER Officer, Deputy NVS, Deputy Chair, Communications and Public Affairs representative	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 for accuracy and members given to 13/05/25 to provide any feedback before the minutes are finalized for posting. 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: • 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 • Use SAGE-AR to capture the previous and future use cases of the tissue where ethical approval may be required and standard SOPs would not be sufficient. 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. 1/25: No updates were received from the communications representative about BARN digest. Chair to chase. 3/25 NEER Officer to report on usefulness of “AI and Score Sheets” article. 8/25: AWERB/NASPA/NEER agreement of the behind-the-scenes logistics of supporting ethical review of activities performed elsewhere. 9/25: Submission of UAR Concordat survey	Complete On-going Carried forward Carried forward On-going Agenda item On-going Closed
3.	Named persons reports – key points only from: NVS/NACWO: nothing to report. NTCO: No updates.	

	HOLC: No ethical concerns to report. See report for general issues. NIO: No ethical concerns to report. See report for general issues. NASPA Chair: See report for details. 1. Animal Tissue Audit – Activity risk list and Compliance feasibility ongoing. 2. Induction and onboarding carried out for four new NASPA members. NEER Officer: one active review on the project entitled “Analysis of brain function and development in malnourished and healthy rats” (OUT090). First round of review has completed and follow on questions have been sent to the applicant. One new request for NEER review came in, and NEER is awaiting the completed review forms to come in and will initiate full review after that. It would be good to find a deputy for NEER, or new lead (lead would become deputy). 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.	10/25 Chair: volunteer needed
4.	PPL 00000000 Amendment Amendment relates to making the current establishment the primary establishment on the PPL. PPL holder has moved and taken up an academic position here. The PPL was initially reviewed by NVS, NACWO and NIO, and small changes made to the Licence to improve clarity. The PPL holder presented to the committee and described how the Licence supported their program of research. Committee members asked for more information on: i) the likelihood of trialling the drugs in humans (the PPL holder stated that human clinical trials were in planning and would likely occur within 5yrs), ii) the provision of training for individuals working on the Licence (the PPL holder would train individuals. The expected failure rate of the surgical step is low (1%) and the PPL holder is experienced in the technique); iii) the impact of using sutures versus glue to ensure eye closure during the behaviour test (this had been discussed with the NVS and glue was deemed as the most appropriate intervention. The PPL had been revised to indicate this, with suture only being considered if the glue failed); iv) cumulative severity as it was not fully reflected in the animal experience section. This section	

	will be revised. It was felt that 48 hours was a long time for acute pain and that local anaesthetics and painkillers, analgesics should be used; v) threshold for culling if animal showed signs of suffering and vi) how the approach taken to induce nerve damage corresponds to human conditions. The committee requested the above points to be addressed in the Licence. Subject to this being completed, the members voted to provide a favourable ethical opinion on the amendment.	11/25 Chair
	Break.	
5.	3Rs and Culture of Care item i. OBSERVE guidelines Two researchers provided a critique of the OBSERVE guidelines as they relate to orthotopic tumour models. Researchers found the OBSERVE guidelines useful for providing examples of clinical signs and for detailing the best approach for measuring the size of tumours using callipers. The researchers compared their PPL clinical score sheets to the guidelines and found that all relevant markers were listed. It was noted that the researchers had an additional marker (e.g. coat condition) that they felt was also relevant. ii. Use of Artificial intelligence (AI) to generate clinical scoring NIO presented the AI paper, which trialled the use of three large language models to generate clinical score sheets for inflammatory bowel disease. The author provided the same criteria and instructions to each model and assessed the outputs using a scoring system. The models completed the task with varying degrees of success. The author concluded that while useful as a starting point, the AI generated score sheets needed veterinary/welfare input to ensure they were fit for purpose. iii. 3Rs strategy planning A lack of time prevented extensive discussion of this item. Chair noted that some champions were no longer available and additional individuals are needed, especially for replacement. Chair encouraged the team to take ownership of the strategy document and try to progress some items.	
6.	Any other business	

	The current Chair will be stepping down as they are taking up a new role at the University. They will remain as the NIO. A transition period with the new Chair, once appointed, will take place.	
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Next AWERB committee meeting: 24 th June 2025 (virtual)	
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