



UNIVERSITY
SUSSEX

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Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

The 74th Meeting of the AWERB was held on
Tuesday 30th January 2024
9am – 11am, MS Teams

MINUTES

PART I – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Present: [REDACTED]

Apologies: [REDACTED]

In Attendance: [REDACTED] (NACWO for Fish), [REDACTED] (Secretary)
[REDACTED] (licence holder and guest), [REDACTED]

2. Minutes - (AWERB/73/M)

2.1 The AWERB **APPROVED** the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th December 2023.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes - (AWERB/74/01)

3.1 The AWERB **DISCUSSED** the Matters arising, most items are now closed, with several longer term projects which are in progress.

PART II – MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

**4. Retrospective Review – ‘Neuronal Cell Development and Survival’ by [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (AWERB/74/02)**

4.1 The AWERB **RECEIVED** the presentation from the Principal Investigator and **DISCUSSED** the review.

- 4.2 The main findings of the research project were that in ALS the transport of proteins along axons by dynein is impeded. Dynein knock-downs in mice show clear phenotypes, such as an abnormal gait. Further funding would allow a more extensive mechanistic and translational investigation, again working with animal models.
- 4.3 Mice were observed for 70-90 days and sometimes 130 days to allow for the phenotypes to develop prior to culling. Weight loss was noted although the mice were still feeding. Some muscle wasting is also seen.
The project incorporated methods that both refined and reduced the need for animal models.

5. Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer and Named Training and Competency Officer Report - (AWERB/74/03)

- 5.1 The AWERB **RECEIVED** and **DISCUSSED** the report.
- 5.2 ■ drew attention to Appendix 2, which lists the Home Office Liaison, Training and Information Forum (HOLTIF) questions for the meeting with the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU). Concerns were raised over the consistency of PPL reviews.
- 5.3 The phasing plan for refurbishment to the facility was submitted to the Home Office and a standard response received. The AWERB viewed plans with changes that are currently being considered with some new room designations. Drilling and noise may be an issue; measurements have been made where the rating was below the highest acceptable rating for welfare although this might not be suitable for behavioural studies. Fewer animals will be able to be housed, but the main intent is to keep the facility operational. We remain committed to maintaining the highest standard of animal welfare. A planning document has been submitted where phases have been outlined with motivation for the changes and how management intend to maintain welfare standards.
Concerns around down-time for research were voiced by academic representation in AWERB. The potential for requests to funders for no-cost extension possibly coming from the University was discussed. ■ agreed that this should be considered with the possibility of using other facilities.
A draft business case is to potentially be approved in March with meetings being convened to define time-lines. This will give some definition around how the funders might be approached.
Facility to be kept operational as far as possible with planning for approximately half of it to be closed for around 16 weeks.
- 5.4 A grade 8 facility manager will be recruited.
- 5.5 Three Animal Care Technician apprenticeships from Leeds City College are due to start in April/May 2024.
- 5.6 The numbers of singly-housed mice have decreased, but this does align with a decrease in research group numbers.
- 5.7 The Home Office will audit the facility on 19th March. ■ will lead on preparations for the audit; the need for support was discussed and ■ will request it from the Research Governance and the VC's offices if required. ■ will contact the licence holders to ensure that records are complete and within date.
- 5.8 No concerns regarding fish welfare.

6. Research Ethics and Governance Framework Review (AWERB/74/04)

- 6.1 The AWERB **RECEIVED** and **DISCUSSED** the AWERB section of the Review.
- 6.2 Section 5 of the review affects AWERB and three recommendations are pertinent: 15-17.
- 6.3 Recommendation 15 is uncontentious; the current use of SussexBox is an improvement, but not an ideal solution so a more tailored solution would be welcome. The procurement of an electronic ethics management for university is currently underway and would affect the type of data storage system offered.
- 6.4 Recommendation 16 was agreed. Broadening AWERB membership, especially for project licence reviews (ARG membership) is needed, however identifying willing reviewers with the required expertise is an obstacle. Recruitment could emphasise the importance of membership of university committees in terms of career development for ECRs.
- 6.5 Recommendation 17 was agreed and discussion included the need for online and drop in sessions to include the raising of awareness of AWERB's role in order to promote recruitment.

PART III – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

7. Concordat on Openness in Animal Research Action Plan (AWERB/74/05)

- 7.1 The AWERB **NOTED** the COAR Action Plan.
 - 7.2 In terms of public engagement, BSMS plan to hold work experience week which will include a tour of the facility. [REDACTED] plans to hold a career enrichment day, which will also include tour of the facility.
 - 7.3 Apprenticeships will be included in 'The Technician Commitment' which is being managed by [REDACTED].
8. **Date of the next meeting** to be moved to 30th April to allow for the report from the Home Office Inspection to be received and discussed.

AWERB Membership

Ex-officio

- AWERB Chair and Representative of the Biomedical Research Facility User Group: [REDACTED]
- Establishment Licence Holder: [REDACTED]
- Named Veterinary Surgeon: [REDACTED]
- Named Animal Care & Welfare Officer (NACWO) and BRF Manager: [REDACTED]
- Named Training and Competency Officer (NCTO): [REDACTED]

Representative members

- Two lay members, at least one of whom should have no responsibility under the Act:
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
- Project Licence Holders representative: [REDACTED]
- Personal Licence Holders representative: [REDACTED]

- School of Psychology representative: [REDACTED]
- Brighton and Sussex Medical School representative: [REDACTED]
- Member: **VACANT**

In attendance

- Chair of the BRF Management Forum (at the invitation of the Chair as appropriate but to attend at least one meeting per academic year.)
- Head of Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- Secretary to the AWERB: [REDACTED]

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