

# Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

23/19 A meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) was held via Teams on Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 10.00 am.

Present:

[Redacted list of attendees]

NACWO = Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer

NVS = Named Veterinary Surgeon

In attendance:

[Redacted] (for Minute 23/22 only)

[Redacted] (for Minute 23/22 only)

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

AWERB noted that this was likely to be the last meeting attended by [Redacted] as NVS. After [Redacted] years as the University's [Redacted] NVS, [Redacted] was handing over day-to-day responsibilities to [Redacted]. The AWERB thanked [Redacted] for all [Redacted] support and advice to colleagues and wished [Redacted] well in the future.

The AWERB noted that [Redacted] would [Redacted], the AWERB recorded its thanks to [Redacted] for [Redacted] contributions and advice. The AWERB welcomed [Redacted] to the meeting.

AWERB discussed whether to increase its membership to include more academics from relevant Schools or from the 3Rs community. It was suggested that a list of those holding licences could be produced and circulated to the Heads of School for comment.

Action: [Redacted]

23/20 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

23/21 Matters Arising

All matters arising were covered below.

23/22 Mid Term Review

The AWERB received a presentation from [REDACTED] in respect of the current projects licences for:

- Microvesicles and the prevention of tissue wasting.

The objective of the project is to explore the clinical benefit of stem cell secretory factors on age related degenerative diseases and those associated with cancer treatment. To facilitate the safe translation of pre-clinical testing to human clinical testing, animal testing is necessary in this project. There were two objectives 1) to determine whether stem cell derived factors can reverse or attenuate muscle and tissue wasting effects in models of chemotherapy-induced cachexia 2) Determining whether stem cells or factors contained in conditioned media produced by stem cells were capable of reversing the molecular, cellular, tissue and organismal effects of ageing. There were four protocols 1) breeding of genetically altered animals 2) breeding of progeric mice 3) Ageing 4) Cachexia

- Intestinal failure in neonates and adults: mechanisms, protection, and repair

The overall aim of the project was to further understanding of the pathophysiology of intestinal failure and test the efficacy of novel stem cell derived therapeutic strategies that might have implications for the treatment of these conditions in humans. There were two objectives 1) to determine whether stem cell derived factors could reverse or attenuate ischemic-reperfusion injury 2) to determine whether stem cell derived factors could reverse or attenuate a model of necrotising enterocolitis. Three protocols were used 1) The effects of stem cell-based therapeutics on a model of intestinal ischaemic-reperfusion (IR) injury 2) The effects of stem cell-based therapeutics on a model of necrotising enterocolitis 3) Assessing impact of stem cell originating therapies on the short-term survival of NEC neonates.

The following points and questions were noted:

- Why was a caesarean section used? In order to induce the condition the maturity of the intestine needed to be low, pups collected after birth would have a more mature gut.
- The first-round caesarean section delivery had the unfortunate outcome of all pups being delivered dead. This was attributed mainly to the level of anaesthesia being too high – a Section 18 report had been submitted.
- Changes had been made to the NEC protocol to incorporate use of pups from Sch1 mothers. The method had been used by colleagues at UCL.
- How long do the pups survive? The pups were kept away from the female, they were kept for 9 days in the first instance.
- In vivo work had been used in the development of the MRG compound.
- The commonly reported ageing model based on d-Gal injection had failed to show any effect on age-related markers for 8-week-old SD male rats. However, for 12-week-old SD

male rates the modified ageing model based on d-Gal injection showed many effects on age-related markers. This output should be reported. Given the body of evidence for 8 week old accelerated rat ageing this could be down to the type/supply of SD rats used – an inbred strain might give better results.

- The use of pilot studies had helped the 3Rs rather than simply going straight into experiments.

AWERB thanked [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for the presentation.

AWERB discussed whether any amendments were required to the mid-term review form, particularly to enhance reporting around the animal experience. It was agreed that further consideration would be given to this by the [REDACTED].

**Action:** [REDACTED]

### 23/23 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.

The AWERB were supportive of the approach taken in the work plan. Consideration should be given as to the criteria for classifying activities from amber to green.

**Action:** [REDACTED]

### 23/24 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 work to date had included:

- Establishment of the 3Rs group and its terms of reference
- Recruitment of additional licence holder and '3Rs champions'
- Development of a 3Rs workplan

AWERB noted that [REDACTED] would continue to work on 3Rs group for the time being. It was suggested that the Heads of School for SAPD, SBS and SCFP could help in identifying and engaging colleagues on the 3R agenda.

### 23/25 Audit of facilities

The AWERB received and noted the reports from the Home Office inspections in respect of the BRU and the Farm. The ASRU Audit Team had confirmed that all actions identified had been actioned.

23/26 Annual Review of AWERB's activity

The AWERB received a paper on its annual self-assessment on whether it was adequately performing the minimum and additional tasks required of it. The self-assessment exercise would provide evidence in relation to the Establishment Licence holder's compliance with PEL standard condition 6.

The paper detailed the 'minimum' and 'recommended additional' tasks which a properly constituted and functioning AWERB should undertake.

In respect of points e) and l) it was noted that a small sub-group of the AWERB would need to undertake these actions.

Action: [REDACTED]

23/27 Animal Policy

The AWERB received the revised Animal Policy.

It was agreed that a commitment to the 3Rs should be more strongly worded in the policy.

Action: [REDACTED]

23/28 Report from Technical Services

The AWERB received and noted the training and competency process for the BRU. The AWERB welcomed the approach taken. The document could be circulated to those colleagues holding licences.

23/29 Communications Strategy

There was no report on this occasion. The Chair agreed to speak further with MCE in regard to this item.

23/30 Communications

The AWERB received and noted:

- A note in respect of Continuous Improvement of the Animal in Science Regulator
- Guiding Principles for Named Persons working under ASPA

23/31 Items for future meetings

The AWERB agreed that future topics remained rehoming, compassion fatigue and mental health challenges.

23/32 Dates of meetings in the Session 2023-24

Monday 5 February 2024 at 10.00 am

Thursday 9 May 2024 at 10.00 am