

AWERB Minutes December 2024 January 25 meeting

The University of Edinburgh
Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986



Meeting of Edinburgh AWERB on Tuesday 17th December and 14th January 2025
(Emergency) [REDACTED]

■ Introduction, Apologies for absence and minutes approved

2. Matters Arising - <confidentiality reminder>

3. (a) To consider and advise the Establishment licence holder (PEL) on new Project licence Applications

PL34-24 (transfer)	This licence has been reviewed locally and no objections have been received. Anything in this licence that is outwith local regulations will be dealt with at the level of NVS review (ERF).
PL37-24 (renewal)	committee approves this renewal subject to applicant addressing the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal numbers need double checking between action plan and summary table.• 4 protocols mentioned in action plan, 3 in summary table.• [REDACTED] in protocol 1 mentioned, then not mentioned again.• More information on monitoring is required, for instance thresholds and frequency of monitoring.• P2 more scientific justification required for temporary water restriction
PL38-24 (renewal)	The committee requires this application to be transferred to a person based here. Since the named applicant will therefore be changing, and due to the number of edits required, the PPL will need to be rereviewed at a future AWERB, once the points below have been addressed. A point-by-point rebuttal will be required. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Humane Endpoints need to be better defined, a scoring sheet would be an excellent addition.• [REDACTED] – moderate in this application, but in other licences here it is considered [REDACTED].• In the final protocol, combined adverse effects due to genetic models combined with procedures here need to be clearly described.• Animal experience section needs to be more fully completed• More information on statistical methods required.
PL39-24 (renewal)	Committee approves, subject to completion of the minor revisions below. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NTS requires clarification of terms used, and 3Rs needs better justification for numbers used. More detail in some sections• Study design would benefit from better information on statistical methods• Project plan –If there is more up-to-date research it would be good for the applicant to mention this

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PL01-25	<p>Committee approves, subject to completion of the revisions below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of identifiers and acronyms in NTS.• Incorporation of [REDACTED] monitoring/scoring sheet.• Protocols require review to include mandatory steps (2 and 3).• Severities in relation to weight loss limits require revision.• Justification of severity limits and more detail in the animal experience section is required.• Fate section: this requires revision to identify what happens to specific groups of animals.• General proof reading is needed throughout.
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(b) **Amendments – for consideration by full committee:**
none

Applications submitted and considered by the amendment Sub-Committee

Approved:
A72-24

Updates to the AWERB:

4. BVS Director report

- [REDACTED] has a new NACWO who started with us as a modern apprentice
- Manager at WGH is retiring after a long career here, they will be greatly missed. Recruitment to replace them is ongoing.
- 31/10 was Culture of Care day. Focus on people, talks from the university on support offered, acupuncture, support dogs, yoga, and support ponies were all highlights.
- HO inspection in [REDACTED] raised comments about cleanliness. We've now recruited a domestic to address this.
- We've just had a private external audit. They visited LFR, and were very thorough. They were pleased with training and SOPs.

5. NVS update to the committee

- Guidance on breeding of GA animals is in preparation.

6. NACWO update to the committee

- The health status of the spiny mouse colony restricts them from being moved to other facilities so we're looking to re-derive them, this will happen in the new year. The committee had an informative discussion on handling challenges of spiny mice.

7. NTCO update to the committee

- Last course of year is completed. Around 260 people have completed their PIL training this year.

8. HOLC update to the committee

- Several large licences have been granted by the HO in the last week.
- Issue with a small amendment that necessitates a [REDACTED] Comments were raised by the inspector about the granted licence, not the amendment itself.
- ASRU have considerable staffing challenges at present..They have identified vets who work for the government in other areas who would be willing to be redeployed in ASRU.
- Many thanks to all the reviewers for all the ethical reviews, we managed 42 project licences and 90 amendments this year

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9. BVS Deputy Director (Vets/home office) Roslin AWERB report

- Feedback about the [REDACTED] incident. ASRU decided not to pursue it as a non-compliance on the grounds that we as an establishment thoroughly investigated and took appropriate action. ASRU were complementary about the culture of care and compliance we have at the establishment.
- [REDACTED] related to training. A technician had completed modular training but performed a regulated procedure before their PIL was granted. We are working with employees to ensure that everyone is aware of the issue and to prevent this from recurring.
- [REDACTED]: Ethical questions raised over cryopreservation of chickens. [REDACTED] There were informative conversations over public acceptance.
- Recently had a group that came to perform work in [REDACTED], but there were concerns over the possibility of an [REDACTED] project starting but not being able to finish due to financial limitations. The question of underwriting of external groups was discussed. There was discussion of the need to follow procedures around timely signing of contracts – these processes are currently being revised. New academic lead just been appointed at [REDACTED] this should improve the situation. Further discussions required.

10. Retrospective Review (PL21-19)

Licence revoked early, 10% of predicted animal numbers actually used
Clarification given around why not all the aims were achieved and translational aspects discussed.

10. Retrospective Review (PL13-19)

Approved

11. A.O.C.B

Review of AWERB processes:

- Going forward applicants will be asked for a formal point-by-point rebuttal after AWERB review.
- The processes around returning a licence to sub-committee will be formalised.
- These changes and clarifications will be communicated to applicants.
- The AWERB email address will be used for communications to reduce individual exposure.
- The committee agrees that a regular update to heads of institutes and heads of colleges around the issues at ASRU (from an AWERB perspective) would be helpful.
- There was a discussion about how to help applicants maximise the quality of their applications. Early career researchers and chancellors fellows could be invited to co-review applications with an NVS, or attend AWERB as an observer (and be sent all the associated paperwork)
- Another suggestion was to ask institute directors to nominate people (with their permission) to join the committee or review some licences in a rotating manner, for example for a period of year.
- Newer members of AWERB could be asked to discuss the benefits of being on the committee at the yearly roadshow.

3Rs and Culture of Care committee update:

A summary of recent activity within the 3Rs/culture of care committee was given to the committee:

- A project is ongoing about ultrasonic rat vocalisations to aid refinement of handling
- Our animal rehoming program was presented at the AWERB hub meeting, and was very well received

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Emergency meeting: held 14/01/2025

Date of next meeting: 25th February 10am MS teams