



Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB) Minutes 28/03/2023

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

Minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held 28/03/2023
Microsoft Teams

Welcome Chair welcomes everyone to the in person meeting separate attendance log

Minutes of Meeting held on 28/02/2023: approved

(a) Project licences under consideration:

Presentation: A29-23: PPL Transfer

Applicant is taking over a licence from another PPLh who has left the establishment. They have extensive experience of the species and model and have been an independent PI since 2020 and their own lab. It was noted that once the transfer is approved the licence will be amended to remove obsolete protocols.

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

PL13-23

This is a large licence which still requires significant work and currently is not suitable for submission. It was agreed that the applicant should focus just on what is specifically required in the proposed grant application. Any future work can be added by means of an amendment. The committee appreciates that this licence is smaller than the previous licence, however more work remains.

The committee would like to re-review the application at the May AWERB meeting, It is aware that time is pressing to complete the renewal, however if the licence cannot be approved, breeding lines could be transferred onto the establishment service licence and experimental work stopped.

Comments on individual sections are below:

- The aims given are very broad, applicant must make a slimmer, more considered licence, and expand with amendments in the future. This document should function as a road map for lab members this must be addressed before AWERB can give ethical approval to this application.
- Background section needs development.
- Breeding & Maintenance protocol has 30% of animals at moderate severity –this seems high and could well be reduced with good management.
- Experimental protocols - animal numbers are very high [REDACTED] on one severe protocol, we would need much better justification for these numbers at this severity. [REDACTED]



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- Experimental protocols are very complex, with a great deal of possible optional steps, so more detail will be required in the animal experience, such as maximal possible experience instead of just likely experience.
- End points need to be consistent and much better defined within experimental protocols. There is no discussion of what happens to animals that don't respond as desired to the stimulus, such as those that develop tumours in other body areas or those that don't develop tumours at all. Weight as an endpoint may well not be the most appropriate for [REDACTED].
- Protocol 3 - an imaging step appears to be lacking
- Routes of administration are broad and any not being currently used would need a full justification, including predicted adverse effects and how these effects would be controlled or managed.
- The NTS is not written at an appropriate level for lay people and animal numbers between the NTS and the main licence do not match.

PL15-23

This is a very large and complex licence, and reviewers need more time to fully assess it. Licence will be further reviewed by subcommittee and will only come back to next full AWERB if there are further problems that can't be resolved via final sub-committee review. application is scientifically well justified and streamlined compared to the current licence however it needs refinement. Applicant is asked to consider the amount of work performed on the previous licence to determine if all protocols and options are required

Points for consideration

- Review severity banding for some models considering the potential for comorbidities.

- It was noted by [REDACTED] in discussion of the PPL applications that a review from PPLh on protocol usage and procedures performed 3.5 or 4 years in to a project could enable better reflection when preparing licence renewals

A29-23: PPL Transfer

. Transfer is approved, with plans for a future amendment to remove a number of redundant protocols. [REDACTED] has no issues with the plan. Committee happy to approve

A30-23: PPL Transfer:

The Current PPLh has three licences, it has always been the plan to transfer this licence to applicant once their training PPL is complete and is now in a good position to take it over. Amendment will be submitted after transfer is complete. Committee happy to approve.

(b) Amendments – for consideration by full committee:



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A08-23 [REDACTED]

Approved: the committee noted that this was a clear refinement to a severe protocol

Applications submitted and considered by the amendment Sub-Committee

Approved:

A12-223 [REDACTED] **A13-23** [REDACTED] **A17-23** [REDACTED]

Updates to the AWERB:

4. BVS director update to the committee

FOI requests received for animal numbers culled at the establishment. [REDACTED]

Meeting with fish users is scheduled to talk about a number of current issues

[REDACTED] will be closing in next few years and exploring possibility of embryo rederivation program to move lines to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] – meetings are being held to discuss possibly introducing this new model.

5. BVS Deputy director update to the committee

13 people attended IAT Congress. The technician session about IAT education focused on the modern apprenticeship scheme, this has been a particular focus and success at our establishment.

There was an interesting presentation on the psychological contract – as an employee what you expect from your employer This will be fed back into the 3Rs/Culture of Care committee for discussion.

Rat playrooms: this was highlighted and has also been discussed at the 3Rs/CoC committee.

The Home Office update revealed that decapods will become protected species, this will affect our establishment as decapods are a model in use here. The Home Office has not yet finished guidance on SC18s. They report they're working within their timelines and are going to update ASPA to remove all references to EU. Every establishment will be audited every 3 years. Unannounced visits will still occur.



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Keynote on assisted reproductive technology – specifically freezing down sperm.
Looking at dessication as an alternative method

6. NVS update to the committee

A new chairperson has been appointed for the environmental enrichment group. The committee is looking at setting up rat playpens at two sites. Work by one research group using the Habitat will inform the design for the playpens. There may be a NC3Rs tech newsletter article on the Habitat which would be very positive.

Rehoming group is going well, have set out general principles with a second meeting specifically about rodents. Progress has been made and some rats from the habitat may be able to be rehomed soon. HOLC has looked into rehoming forms. Other species meetings being set up also.

3Rs and CoC have made a poster summary of the group's discussions for distribution to the facilities. Have also set up a Teams page to share information more effectively.

SC18s reports from the last month: 1 incident of [REDACTED]. This licence has had several SC18 reports in the last year. They are a very diligent group, careful and transparent in their working, as are their collaborators. HO is aware but have not given any guidance on the matter.

ACTION: the NVS [REDACTED] will engage with the PPLh to explore the incidences further, and determine what proportion of procedures are ending in SC18. The NVS will request a report for AWERB about the incidences, to include how many animals are culled due to reaching a humane endpoint.

The Director suggests tracking core temperature as this may be a good indicator of health and condition. Some RFID chips monitor temperature, could put animals in HCA cages to monitor. .

Further SC18 animal had received [REDACTED], the study had to be terminated due to adverse effects that hadn't been listed in the PPL. Valuable data was still recovered.

There was a discussion within the committee on requirements from the Home Office, journals and grant bodies on attrition, blinding and randomisation of experiments. The PPL application form requires applicants to discuss randomisation and blinding of experiments.

7. NACWO update to the committee

[REDACTED]

Import/exports are taking longer due to Brexit due to the need for individual health certificates depending on the country. This is an added work load for vets and others. This has directly impacted imports and caused delay, in one case sperm samples were destroyed



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8. NTCO update to the committee

Recent PIL course with 57 applicants. Most passed, some resits. Large animal course will have 9 people in April.

Zebrafish – analgesia is now on SOP for zebrafish.

PIL audit will be completed on Thursday. The establishment currently has [REDACTED] PILs which is the least we've had in a long time.

9. HOLC update to the committee

[REDACTED] designation is now complete. 16 PPLs and 30 amendments completed so far this year. We have 20 PPLs in ASPeL waiting to be approved.

New HOI – some licences are being pulled out of system ahead of the queue and being given to new HOI. Turnaround in general has been quicker.

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

Two licences were discussed.

[REDACTED]

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11. Presentation of Return of Procedure data for 2022

Total number of procedures is 10% lower than 2021, mostly driven by a decrease in the number of subthreshold procedures.

12. Overseas Research application: summary of submissions

The November AWERB discussed criteria for informing AWERB about overseas research, particularly around [REDACTED] species. The website has been rebuilt with a form for people planning work overseas. AWERB will conduct a full review of special species and anything endangered

4 applications have been received since researchers were reminded about the need to tell us about overseas research. [REDACTED]

ACTION: [REDACTED] Add question to overseas form on outline of the study question including procedures.

The Director reports that the [REDACTED] group is going to integrate ethical review across human animal and medical review. It looks like [REDACTED] have already done exactly that and there may be no overlap between [REDACTED] group and [REDACTED], potentially leading to conflicting advice.

13. A.O.C.B



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Tamoxifen administration– a small pilot study from a research group on tamoxifen by oral gavage instead of IP has found the oral gavage to be as effective as IP. From this the group is intending to continue with oral gavage for now.

Date of next meeting 2nd May 2023 MS teams 10am