

A meeting of the AWERB was held at 11:00 on Tuesday 23rd September 2025

Location:

Online

Summary of actions

Item	Action	Due
2	Update July 2025 minutes - Item 1, 2 nd bullet point 'have' to change to 'has'	September 2025

Minutes

	Agenda item	AWERB Decision	
1.	<p>11:00 (10 mins)</p> <p>Welcome and apologies Apologies were noted. New additions and members to AWERB were announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> welcome to two new academic members, specialising in rodents and fish The new Head of REG&C attended first meeting 		
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 1, 2nd bullet point 'have' to change to 'has' <p>Minutes were agreed as accurate and approved for publishing.</p>	<i>Approved</i>	AWERB/2526/01
3.	<p>Matters Arising/Actions All actions for 24/25 are complete. There are some outstanding actions from 23/24 regarding policies, which are still being developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025/26 ToR and Membership <p>Terms of Reference and membership 2025/26 were circulated with minor amendments for review which were approved by AWERB.</p> <p><u>SWARM allocation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AWERB Chair is pushing for AWERB SWARM hours allocation to be recognised by faculty HoDs. Meetings are on-going. 	<i>Approved</i>	AWERB/2526/02 AWERB/2526/03a,b
4.	<p>11:10 (40 mins)</p> <p>PPL review</p> <p><u>New PPL AWERB/2526/04 was reviewed by AWERB.</u> This is a new PPL intended to replace the applicant's current one. The protocols remain largely unchanged.</p> <p>Summary of presentation: The researcher presented their study on the factors involving bodyweight and metabolism. Scientific background, aims and funding were discussed. The applicant outlined the strategy for searching non-animal alternatives and the reasons why the animal model is still needed. The experimental design was</p>	<i>Revision required</i>	AWERB/2526/04

	<p>explained. This included the experimental groups, sample size determination and the use of the EDA. The harm- benefit analysis was discussed and of the potential benefits of project were. The applicant explained how their study addresses the principles of the 3Rs.</p> <p>Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation and clarity of documents was praised. • A discussion took place about single-housing rodents. A member discussed the challenges of re-introduction and asked for clarification of the proportions of those re-introduced. • Discussions took place on training rodents to be individually fed. The applicant explained that due to rodent social hierarchies individual feeding would become artificial and could affect the end result. • AWERB discussed with the applicant the number of animals used. The applicant clarified that the number of animals to be used. • A discussion took place regarding the use of the term 'perfusion' and whether further clarification is needed. • The applicant was asked to justify the figures for sample sizes. Applicant clarified that the sample sizes were estimates based on previous PPL's. Funding was discussed which will have bearing on what will/won't be possible. • NVS advised that some minor revisions are required which were to be discussed outside of the meeting. • Discussions took place on attempted timed matings. <p>The applicant is to revise their PPL, and detailed feedback will be provided.</p>		
5. 11:50 (40 mins)	<p>PPL review New PPL AWERB/2526/05 was reviewed by AWERB. This is a new PPL and first licence for the applicant.</p> <p>Summary of presentation: The researcher presented their study on marine fish and ecology. Scientific background, aims and funding were discussed. The applicant outlined the strategy for searching non-animal alternatives and the reasons why the animal model is still needed. The experimental design was explained. This included the experimental groups, sample size determination and EDA not used as project involves wild animals and as such structured experimental design features of EDA are less applicable. The harm- benefit analysis was discussed and of the potential benefits of project. The applicant explained how their study addresses the principles of the 3R.</p>	Revision required	AWERB/2526/05

	<p>Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion took place about the need for specificity despite applying for a broad license. AWERB were concerned with the lack of specificity of species, with no way of knowing, for example, whether the right tag is on the correct species. Applicant had started with specific species which then moved to targeted 'family level'. • NVS advised to hone down the specifics of species involved in this study. They recommended to specify based on need whether that is most common/least common • The applicant was asked to clarify whether there is a minimum sample size and to update their PPL accordingly. • Tissue sampling and Insertion of electronic device was discussed. Applicant to edit where mention of ABL for electronic device insertion was incorrectly placed under tissue sampling. Applicant advised if placing under the skin, analgesics should be used. • Member recommended not using the term oxygenated and instead use the term aerated. • It was advised to not use the term 'aged animal' as that has a specific meaning in laboratories. • AWERB asked for further elaboration on cloacal swabbing. For example; what are the limits of that? How long? Distress? How often? Applicant provided further information to AWERB on the technique which will only be used on certain sizes with the aim to do every animal that is suitable. • The applicant was asked to justify the practicalities of suturing on a boat. • The applicant was asked to clarify the location of the project. Lay member asked to document this earlier in the PPL. • Clarification was also requested regarding the phrasing of 'devices will eventually detach from individuals and release into the wild'. AWERB member asked to document this clarification in the PPL. • A discussion took place regarding the term 'aseptic technique'. <p>Overall AWERB agreed that more work and further discussion is needed with named persons to add detail to the application.</p>		
<p>6. 12:30 (15 mins)</p>	<p>Mid-Term Review PPL mid-term form was reviewed by AWERB.</p>	<p><i>Endorsed but with</i></p>	<p>AWERB/2526/06</p>

	<p>Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWERB praised that this was a very thorough mid-term review form. • A discrepancy was noted in the amendments. The increase in numbers was not included in the latest amendment. • Lay member mentioned that it was unclear what a triogene was. Could be amplified at the first mention. <p>Endorsed with condition that minor changes to be addressed</p>	<p><i>condition that minor changes are addressed</i></p>	
<p>7. 12:45 (10 mins)</p>	<p>General updates</p> <p><u>Establishment Licence updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There has been a change in NACWO responsibilities within the rodent facilities. ○ One of the NVS' has been removed from the PEL licence following departure. A second NVS to be added to the Establishment once recruitment completed. <p><u>Standard Condition 18 reports</u></p> <p>SC18 – One male mouse was found dead in its cage. The animal had not undergone any regulated procedures beyond genetic alteration. The cause of death remains unclear.</p> <p>SC18 – a female mouse was found deceased. The animal had not undergone any regulated procedures beyond genetic alteration. The cause of death remains unclear.</p> <p>The mouse line is being monitored closely, The NVS have been involved with discussions with the PIL, along with NACWO.</p> <p><u>Compliance issues</u></p> <p>There has been a recent bin fire and although not on HO designated side of the facility and did not involve any animal facilities, it effected stored consumables which are being removed and disposed (donated elsewhere).</p> <p>Working through finalisation of UoE Compliance Policy for PEL Holder.</p> <p>PEL/ PPL/ PIL Training sessions for Standard Conditions are being organised for early next year and will be run annually.</p> <p>Reporting of Potential Non-compliance (from May) – 61 juvenile seabass found dead or moribund state, which were subsequently humanely euthanised. Immediate corrective actions were taken, and a series of preventative measures have been proposed to avoid recurrence. After providing the HO with supporting information, the HO decision was to deal with administratively by means of a letter of reprimand.</p> <p><u>Updates from Named Persons Meeting</u></p> <p>Rodent Facilities:</p>		<p>AWERB/2526/07</p>

- facility is now operational after refurbishment
- HSE inspection for irradiator completed successfully; minor follow-ups required.
- Strategies being explored to address overgrooming.
- High temperatures noted in rodent rooms.
- PIL Holders noted 'banking' cages before Sch1, to be addressed by NACWOs

Fish facilities:

Site 1

- Preparations underway for a complex seabass study.
- Positive health status may allow reduction in sentinel animals and embryo disinfecting in ZF
- Cryopreservation efforts progressing.
- Discussion over single housing and 72h standard text in new PPLs.

Site 2

- Guppy project progressing; tagging issues addressed.
- Ice Slurry SOP under development with site-specific adjustments.
- Lab roof now replaced.

Wildlife Research:

- Anonymous concerns raised over bird project, all licensing in place.
- Monitoring Avian Flu status; exploring NE support.

Training NTCO:

- High volume of training record sign-offs.
- another university's staff trained at UoE; positive feedback received.
- PIL and PPL courses ongoing; colony management course upcoming.
- Current animal management system to be used for training record management.
- New PIL continuation (Opt-in process) being implemented to reduce unnecessary costs.

3Rs initiatives/updates

- 3R's Working Group

The Working group agreed to map out what size and scope, and knowledge there is on the 3Rs at Exeter. A Questionnaire been developed by academic and facility manager and has PELh approval. This will be sent round all relevant staff in September to aid in developing the 3Rs Strategy for Exeter.

- 3Rs reporting:
 - All SRFs for each facility capturing progress of 3Rs and a 3Rs progress table on 3Rs projects has been developed.
 - Discussions with NACWOs to discuss 3Rs and progress to complete the reporting spreadsheet monthly.
 - AWERB Mid Term Review AWERB form also captures 3RS.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3Rs mandatory training being developed. ○ 3Rs UK Wide <p>HoBRF leading a GW4 Home Office working group, which will be mapping the capability of the GW4 and also an action plan on better coloration and sharing resources between the GW4. One of the outcomes is likely to be 3Rs collaboration.</p> <p>GW4 member institution are planning a 3Rs symposium this autumn with Exeter’s NIO assisting the other institution’s NIO in the planning stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update from BSU Board meeting (<i>JW</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Nothing discussed at the meeting has a direct impact to AWERB</i> ○ Estates (<i>DH</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>No update given</i> 		
8.	12:55 (5 mins)	<p>Named Veterinary Surgeon’s (NVS) visit (<i>verbal update</i>)</p> <p>Aging colony of GA mice nearing scientific end point. Some have developed superficial dermatitis, being managed.</p> <p>Backcrossing Hector GA line near completion, data being collated to check success of this reducing adverse phenotypes. Currently backcross colony shows 3% loss due to adverse phenotypes, colony pre- backcross showed 5% loss. Numbers to be reviewed again once backcross fully completed.</p> <p>Facility staff planning study on efficacy of different methods to manage overgrooming in mice.</p> <p>Ongoing study in involving seabass, where some fish were euthanised after developing a skin condition.</p> <p>Due to the nature of some of the procedures involved there has been discussion between the group, NACWOs and NVS about the monitoring involved for this work, which is a combination of remote monitoring and attendance by staff.</p>		
9.	13:00	End		

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 21st October 2025. Online