

A meeting of the AWERB was held at 11:00 on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Location:** Online

### Summary of actions

Item	Action	Due
6	To develop guidance on what needs to be covered in the replacement section of the PPL and the presentation.	Jul 2025

### Minutes

		Agenda item	AWERB Decision	
1.	11:00 (10 mins)	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b> Apologies were noted. An academic member will be stepping down due to other commitments. AWERB agreed that another rodent representative is needed.</p>		
2.		<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b> Minutes were agreed as accurate and approved for publishing.</p>	<i>Approved</i>	AWERB/2425/40
3.		<p><b>Matters Arising/Actions</b> Ongoing actions regarding policies are in progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy for maintaining protected animals and Policy on training and competency - Minor amendments were made and approved by Chair's action.</li> <li>• Policy for maintaining breeding colonies – Will be reviewed and brought back at the next month's meeting.</li> <li>• Animal policy amendments - These have been brought back for review at the current meeting.</li> </ul>		AWERB/2425/41
4.	11:10 (35 mins)	<p><b>New PPL review</b> <u>New PPL AWERB/2425/42 was reviewed by AWERB.</u></p> <p>Summary of presentation: The researcher presented their study on the use of ZF as an alternative model for aiding human drug discovery and development. Scientific background, aims and funding were discussed. The researcher outlined the strategy for finding 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 the use of the EDA. Most procedures are mild or moderate, and only two protocols out of nine are severe. The study adheres to the principles of the 3Rs, with clear strategies in place to enhance the replacement, refinement, and reduction of live animal use.</p> <p>Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWERB praised the clarity of the presentation and commended the PPL draft, particularly highlighting the benefits section and the thorough consideration of refinements.</li> </ul>	<i>Revision required</i>	AWERB/2425/42

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A discussion took place on heat shock, and it was agreed that no further changes were needed.</li> <li>• AWERB member noted the high number of animals and asked whether they included non-regulated species. Additional discussion took place on the classification of ZF use as a refinement.</li> <li>• Lay member advised on minor typos and asked for clarification on the two research strands.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant is to revise their PPL, and detailed feedback will be provided.</p>		
5.	11:45 (15 mins)	<p><b>PPL Amendment</b>  <u>PPL Amendment AWERB/2425/43a,b was reviewed by AWERB.</u></p> <p>Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A discussion took place on the frequency of intravaginal infections.</li> <li>• AWERB requested clarification on the intravaginal sampling method and the route of administration that it requires.</li> <li>• A discussion took place on the difficulty in interpreting the lay summary due to technical language and lack of context. It was clarified that this amendment is part of a broader, previously approved project, which may account for the lack of detailed background information.</li> <li>• AWERB acknowledged the effort in compiling this into a single amendment rather than submitting multiple separate ones.</li> </ul> <p>AWERB concluded that the amendment is approved.</p>	Approved	AWERB/2425/43a, b
6.	12:00 (20 mins)	<p><b>General updates</b>  <u>Establishment Licence updates</u>  None.</p> <p><u>Standard Condition 18 reports</u>  There have been 3 SC18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six mice showed unexpected adverse effects following incorrect dosing and were euthanised</li> <li>• A mouse was found dead</li> <li>• A mouse showed unexpected adverse effects and was euthanised</li> </ul> <p><u>Compliance issues</u>  No issues.</p> <p>AWERB were updated on the upcoming HO audit. The audit involves assessing the establishment's compliance with the standard conditions on the PEL Licence and ASPA Code of Practice. It will include inspection of the facilities and the interview of NIO, NTCO and NVS. The inspection audit report will be sent to the PEL Holder after the audit.</p> <p><u>Updates from Named Persons Meeting</u></p>		AWERB/2425/44 a,b

There were discussions about:

- Audit preparations.
- A new Event log to be in place for BRF facilities.
- The whistleblowing policy.
- Security for facilities and access to information.
- The 3Rs.

Update from BSU Board meeting

There has been no BSU Board meeting since the last AWERB.

Estates

Estates have been supporting the preparation for the HO audit. AWERB was also informed of some work taking place with the gas bottle system in the fish facility and the fire alarms in a BSU facility.

NTCO update

Training and Competency Assessments

- Animal handling refresher training – mice
- Schedule 1 training and competency sign off – mice and small fish
- Training and trainers competency sign off in Intravenous administrations – mice
- Training and trainers competency sign off in subcutaneous administrations – mice
- Training and trainers competency sign off in oral gavage administrations – mice
- Competency assessment for fin clipping - Zebrafish

PIL courses

- 1 x candidate attending PIL A/B course this week
- 2x fish PIL practical's and 2 x rodent practical's to be arranged

Other courses

- 3 x candidates attended module KD course
- Local module sessions running monthly
- Final assessments due for the NACWOs that took part in the assessor's course

Courses coming up

- People taking care of animal's course for fish and rodent technicians
- Course on IVC equipment focused on cage wash and logistics

HOLC update

- ASC AWERB Hub Workshop - replacement was the main focus and discussion took place on what AWERB should be asking the new PPL applicants regarding replacement, to give AWERB assurance that replacement has been sufficiently addressed. The ASC AWERB Hub presentations were emailed recently to AWERB members.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AWERB discussed whether it would be beneficial to create a form using the replacement checklist questions (as per the RSPCA and RAR examples) to be answered by the applicant as part of their new PPL review submission documentation.</li> <li>• A discussion took place on the necessity of including the checklist. Two members disagree as the current practice already covers most points and a checklist might be too rigid. Other members saw potential benefits, noting that the Government requirements for evidence on replacement are increasing, and some applicants currently provide insufficient information on this aspect.</li> <li>• An AWERB member proposed offering clearer guidance for the replacement section of the PPL and the presentations rather than introducing a new checklist. It was agreed that guidance will be developed instead (<i>ACTION</i>).</li> </ul>		
7.	12:20 (5 mins)	<p><b>Named Veterinary Surgeon's visit</b> (<i>verbal update</i>) NVS gave verbal update of their activities since last meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rodent health screen was clear.</li> <li>• Body Condition Score training took place with a few rodent PILhs</li> <li>• Sticklebacks brought into fish facility had white spot and were successfully treated.</li> <li>• It is being considered to test imported trout and salmon for pathogens. This will be discussed with researchers at the study request stage.</li> <li>• Some imported mice had eye issues. More detailed information will be asked in the future before importing animals to prevent transport of animals</li> <li>• NVS have been involved in rehoming several batches of guppies.</li> </ul>		
8.	12:25 (10 mins)	<p><b>Culture of Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Animal Technologist Month was celebrated with a lot of activities and events, including an awards lunch and researcher feedback session.</li> <li>• The second CoC working day took place in April and was very successful. There was time to reflect on last year's actions. The suggestions raised at this meeting have been addressed by a CoC committee, leading to actions to improve communication and the integration between technicians and researchers, along with several other projects. The second half of the meeting was dedicated to coming up with new ideas and suggestions for this year.</li> <li>• There will be a social get-together in May.</li> </ul>		AWERB/2425/45
9.	12:35 (10 mins)	<p><b>3Rs initiatives/updates</b> Some updates from the Named Persons meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 3Rs Working Group is established to drive the University's 3Rs strategy.</li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A spreadsheet will be used to record activities/ advances in the 3Rs.</li> <li>• The awareness that collaboration with other institutions can help enhance the 3Rs (recent example with sharing SOPs on Killifish).</li> <li>• The rodent facility has incorporated a 3Rs section in the Study Request Form and their Teams meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Some other examples and initiatives of 3Rs were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of noise in breeding rooms</li> <li>• Refinements have been made to the CO2 Schedule 1 equipment to reduce the stress in mice.</li> <li>• The use of non-animal health screening in rodents and fish.</li> <li>• Plans to reduce wastage, including setting up tissue banks and sharing animal tissues</li> <li>• Review of Lux Levels in rodent facility</li> <li>• Review with Estates about emergency lighting tests in animal rooms across BRF</li> <li>• Rehoming of guppies</li> <li>• Biopsy/Skin swabbing as an alternative to fin clipping</li> <li>• Needle re-use when tagging Guppies</li> <li>• Set up of mortality records to review with NVS and NACWOs</li> </ul>		
10.	12:45 (5 mins)	<p><b>Updated Summary of amendment proposals to current animal policies</b></p> <p>The current animal policies have been combined in a single document. This has now been updated and was brought to AWERB for approval before it is forwarded for further consultation. Discussion summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification was requested regarding the next consultation stage of policy development, due to the significant impact on teaching activities.</li> <li>• AWERB member expressed concern that, due to the UoE's lack of access to human cadavers for medical teaching, animal tissue is currently required. They noted that the new policy might restrict this practice. The Head of BRF assured that the policy will have wide consultation including the teaching teams and impact of such a policy.</li> </ul> <p>AWERB approved the updated Summary of amendment proposals to the current animal policies to move forward to the next consultation stage.</p>	Approved for onward consultation	AWERB/2425/46a, b
11.	12:50 (5 mins)	<p><b>Update on Chair's Action</b></p> <p><b><u>ASPA regulated</u></b></p> <p>Recently endorsed are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2x New PPL</li> <li>• 2x PPL amendment</li> <li>• 2x guppy rehoming requests</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Non-ASPA</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2x overseas applications endorsed, one using Wild fish in Jersey and the other tagging Sharks in the Caribbean</li> </ul>		
12.	12:55 (5 mins)	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None.</p>		

13.	13:00	End		
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**Date of next meeting:**

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May. Online