

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of meeting held on 8 July 2025

11 AWERB members attended the meeting, with 4 people in attendance. Apologies were received from 5 members.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

24/67 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 20 March 2025 (AWERB/24/30) were approved.

Matters arising

24/68 Minute 24/63 – The Annual Statistical Report had been updated to include details of non-regulated work and was subsequently re-circulated to the AWERB.

Schedule of business

24/69 Members noted the schedule of business (AWERB/24/31) for the 2025/26 session.

Establishment Licence Holder/Named Veterinary Surgeon update

24/70 The Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) provided the following update since the circulation of paper AWERB/24/32:

- a) Following the installation of isocages within the CBS quarantine room, an initial screening returned a positive result showing the space was free from pathogens. Further screening and testing of the space would be undertaken in the coming weeks;
- b) The Bradford facility had submitted two standard condition 18 reports relating to the same area of research. Whilst no concerns were raised following a health screening, the matter was deemed to be unusual and would be discussed at the Bradford AWERB;
- c) The Home Office had announced plans to reject unsatisfactory project licence applications, as opposed to returning comments (depending on the strength of the application).

Animal Facility Manager's update

24/71 Members noted the information contained within the Animal Facilities Manager's Report (AWERB/24/33):

- a) Inspections of the animal facilities were being undertaken in advance of the ASRU (Animals in Science Regulation Unit) Audit planned on the 22 July 2025. Colleagues noted that the Facility Manager, NVS, NACWOs and Named Information Officer had all met with relevant academics responsible for external rooms and offered advice ahead of the audit. Furthermore a number of new Standard Operating Procedures were currently being drafted in preparation, whilst Estates issues were also being addressed;
- b) Estate Services were planning to undertake five-yearly electrical testing within the CBS facility, across a period of 2.5 days. Dates were yet to be agreed, however colleagues were assured that the testing would not impact any active experiments;
- c) As part of the refurbishment works at SJUH, alternative data storage solutions were being explored for historic financial and animal data previously held at SBS.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

24/72 The AWERB noted the information set out in the NACWO Report (as set out paper AWERB/24/34). The NACWO updated colleagues following the successful implementation of refinements applied during a recent pig study.

24/73 Further to the discussion at the previous meeting (minute 24/58b) facility users had undertaken refined handling training, delivered by colleagues from Newcastle University. Practical training and assessment (overseen by the NACWOs) was now underway in preparation of the full transition to refined handling in September.

Animal Facility User Group report

24/74 Existing CBS User Group Co-Chairs informed the AWERB of their plans to step down from the role, a new Chair and Co-Chair had been identified.

24/75 The AWERB discussed at length a potential issue concerning the long-term viability of the use of the Bradford animal unit. A further meeting was scheduled during the week to clarify the issues and ascertain the future arrangement. A further update would be provided in due course.

University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee

24/76 The AWERB were supportive of the University of Leeds' Biomedical Services Committee's suggested Chair.

Project Licence (PPL) mid term reviews

24/77 Members were presented with two PPL mid-term reviews (AWERB/24/35 and AWERB/24/36) for the continuation of previous work. Although content with the information provided, both applications required further information in relation to the 3R's. The AWERB agreed that the updated protocols could be considered and approved via email.

24/78 The proforma would be updated to separate the 'animal welfare' and '3R' sections. It was also suggested that the inclusion of a space to provide a short lay narrative would be helpful.

Review of PPL subcommittee process

24/79 Members reviewed 3 proposed procedural models for the review of PPL applications (AWERB/24/37) as part of the ongoing evaluation of AWERB's operations. In discussion, the AWERB agreed to continue with the current sub-committee structure (option 2) with a view to widening the pool of lay and scientific members able to participate. The incoming Chair would write to PPL holders to remind them of their responsibilities in contributing to the PPL sub-committee process.

Proposal for non-regulated work

24/80 Members considered a proposal for non-regulated work (AWERB/24/38) to be undertaken at the University of Malaya (an AAALAC accredited institution) given the pathogen status of Leeds' facility and cost pressures of conducting the study at an alternative UK university.

24/81 Noting that the study would have been approved if undertaken in the UK, the AWERB agreed to endorse the proposal, subject to satisfactory assurances that the institution's facilities will meet or exceed UK standards for animal care.

Standard Operating Procedures

24/82 Further to the discussions at a previous meeting (minute 24/52) the AWERB received – and subsequently endorsed – a draft Standard Operating Procedure, prepared by the NVS, which describes the procedure of euthanasia by intraperitoneal injection in rats and mice (AWERB/24/39).

AWERB member survey themes and recommendations

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24/83 Members noted the key themes and recommendations set out in the AWERB members' survey (AWERB/24/40) which, due to lack of time, would be carried forward to the September meeting.

24/84 Members were agreeable however to the recommendation to invite a further member of the University Executive Group to a future meeting to deepen the understanding on the University's work in relation to animals.

Annual review of training

24/85 An annual summary of training provided for the 2024-25 session (AWERB/24/41) was presented and noted by the Committee.

External training

24/86 The Establishment Licence (PEL) Holder provided a summary from the national PEL Holder Committee held during the previous week. Colleagues noted that the discussion centered around the consolidation of facilities and how institutions might mitigate challenges, i.e. VAT charging between institutions. It was anticipated that future discussions would focus on the reduction in the use of animals (i.e. reduction in breeding and increase in technological alternatives).

Any other business

24/87 This meeting marked the Chair's final meeting in the role. On behalf of the AWERB, the PEL Holder extended their sincere thanks to the Chair for their leadership and service. In turn, the Chair expressed gratitude to the committee for its support and collaboration.

Date of next meeting

24/88 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held at 10am 2pm on 18 September via Teams.