

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of meeting held on 23 July 2024

Ten members attended the meeting, with four joining in attendance. Apologies were received from three individuals.

Welcome

23/160 The Chair welcomed the newly appointed Biomedical Services Assistant who joined the meeting in an observational capacity.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

23/161 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 8 May 2024 (AWERB/23/46) were approved.

Matters arising

23/162 Minute 23/156 – Following the discussion at the 30 January meeting (minute 23/102), colleagues noted that the revised form – focusing only on the animal aspects of non-regulated work – was awaited. The Chair would progress the matter outside of the meeting.

23/163 Minute 23/149 – The University of Leeds' Biomedical Services (ULBS) Committee had briefly discussed the financial modelling of larger animal work at its meeting on 4 June, at which time it had been agreed to convene a group in June 2025 when the current provision would be reviewed.

Establishment Licence (PEL) holder update

23/164 Members received the PEL Holder's update (AWERB/23/47) and noted that:

- a) The PEL Holder had been alerted (via the NVS) to an issue regarding a Licence Holder's lack of adherence to protocols. The issue was being followed up as a matter of priority and there were no animal welfare concerns;
- b) Following discussions at the previous meetings, there had been a low take up of the Severity Assessment training provided in June. The PEL Holder and Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation would take further action to ensure that all Project Licence Holders undertake the mandatory training in accordance with the ASRU Facilities Audit Report.

Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) update

23/165 In introducing the report (AWERB/23/48), the Named Veterinary Surgeon reported:

- a) There were no major health or welfare concerns since the previous reporting period;
- b) An investigation was underway following the loss of 4 rats whilst under anaesthetic. Whilst there were no healthcare concerns, further postmortem examinations were being undertaken to determine the likely cause.

Animal Facility Manager's update

23/166 Members noted the information contained within the Animal Facilities Manager's Report (AWERB/23/56).

Use of animal facilities at Bradford University

23/167 Contract negotiations continued to take place between the respective facilities managers to enable the planned relocation of licensed work to the Bradford

University Animal Unit on 1 September 2024. In the meantime, all research activity at the SBS facility would cease on 31 August 2024. No further breeding would be undertaken to ensure the safe movement of animals, where needed.

23/168 In response to a query, the Animal Facility Manager explained that the space allocation at Bradford could be reviewed and extended, following a six-month period, should activity increase going forward.

23/169 The Animal Facility Manager outlined the review process of licenses to be reviewed by Bradford University's AWERB, the details of which would be shared with relevant colleagues following the meeting. The NVS advised that users should anticipate an approximate 2-week window for the Home Office to approve secondary availability applications, following endorsement by Bradford's AWERB.

23/170 Colleagues were informed of a proposal to form a small User Group comprising of academics and technical staff working at the Bradford facility.
University steam

23/171 Following the discussion at the previous meeting, the Animal Facilities Manager advised that a business case was currently being developed to replace the cage wash and autoclave with electrically powered systems, when the University ceases its steam supply in 2025.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

23/172 In presenting their report (AWERB/23/57), the NACWOs reported that:

- a) Following the panel modifications, there had been no environmental/lighting issues within the CBS facility;
- b) Further refinements had been undertaken improve the pig pens (as detailed in the report) in preparation for the studies planned to commence in August.

Housing, Handling and Habituation (3Hs)

23/173 Following their attendance at the 3H's webinar earlier in the year, the NACWO Technician provided a detailed summary of the proposed refinements to the handling and habituation of rodents to improve procedures and the experience of animals. In welcoming the update, the Committee agreed to cease the use of tail handling within a 12-month period. Alternative handling methods and training would be considered outside of the meeting and an update would be provided at a subsequent meeting.

CBS Facility User Group Report

23/174 In response to the TRAC costing issue set out in paper AWERB/23/58, the Animal Facility Manager provided reassurance that – despite initial concerns following changes within the research facilities costing model – license holders would be able to complete animal work within the existing funding arrangements. The matter would be monitored closely to ensure that the University could continue to complete projects in accordance with the accountabilities and responsibilities set out by the Home Office.

SBS User Group report

23/175 Members noted that research activity was nearing completion within the SBS facility, ahead of the planned relocation of PPL work to the Bradford University animal facility on 1 September.

23/176 In response to a question, the Animal Facilities Manager explained that logistics – including; the transport of animals and equipment , technical assistance and clarification on costings – were currently under negotiation and information would be shared with respective colleagues at the earliest opportunity.

University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report

23/177 Members of the Committee noted the University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (AWERB/23/59).

Project License (PPL) reviews

23/178 The Committee reviewed protocols AWERB/23/60 and AWERB/23/61 and were supportive of the NVS' decision to endorse.

23/179 Following a short discussion about the level of detail included within the mid-term review applications, the NVS agreed to amend the protocol template to encourage applicants to include explicit detail relating to replacement, reduction and refinement actions.

Project License (PPL) application

23/180 Members were presented with a PPL application (AWERB/23/62) which had been updated following the feedback received by the subcommittee. The AWERB were content with the information received and the application was endorsed.

Project Licence (PPL) changes – secondary availability

23/181 The Committee received – and approved – seven PPL applications for secondary availability (AWERB/23/49, AWERB/23/50, AWERB/23/51, AWERB/23/52, AWERB/23/53, AWERB/23/54 and AWERB/23/55).

Annual review of the routine Schedule of Business

23/182 In considering the AWERB's routine Schedule of Business (AWERB/23/63), members agreed that Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (3Rs) should be included as a standing agenda item of business going forward. The Schedule of Business would be updated accordingly (see Appendix).

External meetings

23/183 Members were asked to share information about external meetings/training attended, or in planning. Colleagues noted that:

- a) Three technicians would undertake the Institute of Animal Technologists training workshop on 10 September University;
- b) The Universities of Bradford, York and Sheffield were working in liaison to develop training around the understanding of medical research and how this is communicated externally. The details would be shared with relevant colleagues in due course.

Any Other Business

23/184 A member raised concern in relation to the length of time currently expected to complete License training. In response, the Named Training and Competence Officer would liaise with the relevant colleagues to address the matter.

23/185 In discussion about the Committee's membership, it was suggested that it would be helpful to include a further statistician within the AWERB membership, bringing the total number up to two.

Date of next meeting

23/186 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held at 13.30-15.30 on 9 September 2024, via MS Teams.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY
Routine Schedule of Business, September 2024 onwards

Standing Agenda items:

- 1) Establishment Licence Holder update
- 2) Named Veterinary Surgeon update
- 3) Animal Facility Manager update
- 4) NACWOs' Report
- 5) Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (3Rs) Report
- 6) Animal Facility User Group report
- 7) Any PPL applications referred by sub-committees (NTS & lay summary paragraphs for reviewed applications for information)
- 8) Any PPL reviews and amendments (as appropriate)
- 9) Any animal facilities update (as appropriate)
- 10) External meetings

Additional Agenda items:

Septemberⁱ

- 1) Membership review
- 2) University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (min 3 times p/a)

November

- 1) University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (min 3 times p/a)
- 2) Farm veterinary report update
- 3) Statement for Research Ethics Committee chairs
- 4) Environmental controls
- 5) AWERB survey discussion

January

- 1) University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (min 3 times p/a)
- 2) Membership and Terms of Reference (annual review)
- 3) Annual Farm veterinary report
- 4) Review of AWERB openness & policy statement
- 5) Additional enrichment SOP's
- 6) 3R's Champion report

March

- 1) University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (min 3 times p/a)
- 2) Annual statistical report, procedures and licences (when available March/May)
- 3) Review of AWERB application sub-committees, the process for mid-term reviews and the impact on levels of AWERB business

May

- 1) Animal Care and Welfare sub-group report
- 2) Annual review of training for 2023-24 provided by The Learning Curve
- 3) Review of environmental enrichment

July

- 1) University of Leeds Biomedical Services Committee Report (min 3 times p/a)
- 3) Schedule of Business (annual review)

ⁱ Review of relevant SOPs every two years to align practices – bring up in September 2025