

**UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**

**ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY**

Minutes of the meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 20 October 2025.

**PRESENT:** [REDACTED] (Chair)

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

[REDACTED]

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**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from [REDACTED]

**2 NEW DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY**

The Committee noted that there were no new declarations of interest.

**3 ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING ORDERS**

The Committee noted the Standing Orders of the Academic Board, which could be found at the following link:

[https://www.herts.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/255882/2024-10-01-AB-Standing-Orders.pdf](https://www.herts.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/255882/2024-10-01-AB-Standing-Orders.pdf)

**4 TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP**

4.1 The Committee noted the Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership.

**4.2 Category 14 - Representative of the School of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (HML)**

The Committee welcomed [REDACTED], as a Representative of [REDACTED].

**4.3 Student representative**

A new student representative had not been elected following the resignation of the previous representative. An additional recommendation was made, and the prospective candidate would be contacted. **CLERK**

(Confidential Agenda Paper 4, refers.)

**5 MINUTES - 7 MAY 2025**

The Minutes of the meeting of 7 May 2025 were approved and signed.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 5, refers.)

**6 REDACTED AWERB MINUTES, MINUTE 37, 7 MAY 2025, REFERS**

The redacted AWERB minutes of 7 May 2025 were **approved**.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 6, refers.)

7 **██ USE OF ANIMAL TISSUE IN STUDENT PROJECTS - MINUTE 36, 7 MAY 2025, REFERS**

7.1 The Committee **considered** the response from ██████████ to the proposed use of animal tissue in student projects.

7.2 The AWERB requested that the following issues were addressed in relation to the use of animal tissue in ██████████ student projects:

a) **Change of species from Rabbit to Rat**

The AWERB required a time-line for the transition from the use of rabbits to rats. This was in line with AVMA guidelines that ██████████ follow: Rats were preferable to rabbits in line with replacement (lower phylogenetically), reduction (rats have more established pharmacological data allowing for better translation to UH curriculum, experimental design, a smaller sample size and higher statistical power) and refinement (rats adapted well to laboratory housing, handling and procedures).

b) **Adoption of a Secondary Humane Killing Method**

The Committee noted that the work proposed by ██████████ was not covered under A(SP)A 1986 Schedule 1.

██████████ were proposing to use a primary method of killing by way of an overdose of anaesthetic using a route and anaesthetic agent appropriate for the size and species of animal. A secondary killing method was considered good practice.

The AWERB **agreed** that assurance should be sought from ██████████ that a secondary method to confirm death would be used.

c) **Submission of an annual report to AWERB on use of animal tissue at ██████████**

The AWERB required the submission of an annual report to AWERB via the Research Lead in the ██████████, regarding the use of animal tissue at ██████████.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 7, Parts 1-3, refers.)

8 **REPORT OF THE NAMED VETERINARY SURGEON (NVS)**

8.1 The Committee **received** an oral report from the Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS), ██████████.

8.2 The NVS continued to visit the animal facility on a monthly basis, noting that it was spotlessly clean and well-maintained, and the animals were healthy.

8.3 Health screening had been conducted as part of the monitoring of a long-term colony of aging mice: The test results were negative, which was as expected. The NVS thanked all involved for keeping the barrier impregnable.

9 **REPORT OF THE NAMED ANIMAL CARE AND WELFARE OFFICER (NACWO)**

- 9.1 The Committee **received** a report from the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), [REDACTED].
- 9.2 There had been no home office inspection of the animal facility since the last meeting of AWERB.
- 9.3 The Summary of Home Office Procedures (SHOP) form had been revised to *version 2*. This superseded all previous SHOP versions and was required to be submitted and endorsed for every study conducted within the animal unit. The SHOP form was not a legal document but a checklist to ensure that all aspects of the licence were covered and that all licensees operating under a licence were aware of the parameters of the licence.
- 9.3 The AWERB noted a request to insert a link on the SHOP form to Standard Condition 18 (SC18), highlighting that if a PELh sent SC18 they must copy in the PELh to ensure that there was a record of this within the institution. **NACWO**
- 9.4 The NACWO and the NVS continued to liaise to ensure the health and welfare of animals by way of monthly facility clinical rounds, phone, and MS Teams correspondence to facilitate clinical support as well as pre- and post-study meetings.
- 9.5 Higher levels of humidity had been experienced in the animal facility, following a routine service of the humidifiers. The engineers would need to return to modify this as damp external conditions were exasperating the humidity levels within the facility which could potentially have an adverse effect on animals' diet etc.
- 9.6 No issues had been experienced with the lighting since the refurbishment of the lighting system.
- 9.7 The Killing register had been updated (*version 40*) and submitted to PELh and NTCO on 24th April 2025.
- 9.8 The [REDACTED] had agreed to fund the repurposing and modification of redundant Guinea Pig floor pens *into* rat playpens. This would facilitate supervised play sessions for long-term experimental rats with no access to gang cages. The Deputy NACWO had liaised with [REDACTED] engineers to make further modifications, including a roof (a cover was required in the event of an emergency), with the intention of completing the project before the end of 2025. Modified equipment e.g. gang cages had to be inspected by a Home Office inspector. The Committee noted that improved animal housing led to enrichment and healthier animals.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 9, refers.)

10 **REPORT OF THE NAMED TRAINING AND COMPETENCE OFFICER (NTCO) AND HOME OFFICE LIAISON CONTACT (HOLC)**

- 10.1 The Committee received a report from the Named Training and Competence Officer (NTCO) and Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC), [REDACTED].
- 10.2 The report provided an update on Personal Licences (PILs) and Project Licences (PPLS), training and staffing changes within the unit, Home Office Updates and Freedom of Information Requests.
- 10.3 An in-person Legislative and Ethics bespoke training update would take place on the 24 November 2025 for all members of AWERB, Project and Personal Licence holders and Technical Staff in the animal unit and the Department of [REDACTED]. The training took place every three years and was the most efficient way to ensure that relevant members of staff were kept updated with legislation and ethical issues related to animal studies.
- 10.4 ASRU have introduced a new Licences and compliance page on gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals>. This site was designed to provide clearer guidance and more up to date information on required processes. Concerns had been raised by the animal research community that best practice should continue to be treated as such, rather than fixed/non-negotiable.
- 10.5 ASRU were piloting a risk profiling scorecard as part of its reforms. This was designed to assist ASRU to better fulfil its requirements as a Regulator. It was designed to consider relevant data to determine where the greatest risks of non-compliance were likely to be found in the regulated community. These scorecards were for the internal use of ASRU only, and not for public disclosure or disclosure to establishments. The intention was that establishments assessed as potentially higher risk would be audited more frequently and in greater depth, with a focus on the areas of risk identified as appropriate.
- 10.6 Freedom of Information (FO) requests were directed to the animal pages on the UH website where possible.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 10, refers.)

## 11 **REPORT FROM [REDACTED]**

- 11.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] project licence.
- 11.2 The report provided an update on compliance with the conditions of the licence, current projects, lessons learned, good practice, funding, benefits and impact.
- 11.3 No studies had been undertaken by the PPLh from the period of May 2025 – October 2025. There were two PhD students working under the licence.
- 11.4 [REDACTED] also supervised 4 PhD Research projects undertaking clinical diabetes research and non-diabetes translational research that did not require work under the project licence. These research projects included examining data from diabetic patients and researching the effects of psychoactive substances (psychopharmacology) and provided examples of how [REDACTED] research deviated into the 3Rs and other non-animal methods.
- 11.5 A PhD student had shared mouse tissues from [REDACTED] with a MSc taught student for training, a good example of sharing.
- 11.6 Funding had been obtained to undertake drug efficacy prediction by using machine learning techniques in collaboration with [REDACTED] another example of reduction as more information could be obtained from the animal data.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 11, refers.)

12 **REPORT FROM [REDACTED]**

12.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] project licence.

12.2 The report provided an update on compliance with the conditions of the licence, current projects, lessons learned, good practice, funding, benefits and impact.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 12, refers.)

13 **REPORT FROM [REDACTED]**

13.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] project licence.

13.2 The project had finished and the data would be analysed in due course. Overall, it had gone very well.

13.3 Health data was available for older animals (18 months) which could potentially be analysed by a student. Providing enrichment such as three-dimensional cages and training wheels etc. had resulted in healthier, more content animals.

13.4 The Committee considered whether the animals' activities could be monitored in further studies which could lead to Refinement in terms of the 3Rs, noting that although a disease model had been used for this project the animals under the project were no different from 'normal' animals in terms of their daily activities – mice in the wild were known to travel up to five kilometres a night.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 13, refers.)

14 **CONCORDAT ON OPENNESS ON ANIMAL RESEARCH**

- 14.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding the activities of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research.
- 14.2 The report contained updates on the sector and internal and external communications.
- 14.3 Total web page views were in line with the previous period with most views to the landing page.
- 14.4 There had been a social media post on ImmuONE, co-created by a former PhD student where she essentially created a 'lung in a dish'. ImmuONE was the result of a successful Innovation to Commercialisation of University Research (ICUR) programme: ImmuONE was a successful example of a non-animal replacement model.
- 14.5 Improvements were carried over from 2024/25 into this academic year under Commitment One which embedded 'Ethics and application of the 3Rs' into bioscience programme (L4-7) practical proformas.
- 14.6 Tours of the animal unit for staff/students/volunteers/researchers beyond those working with animals could be booked on the animal pages of the website. Tours would take place once a term and there a limit would be set on the number of participants who could join the tour.
- 14.7 The promotion of the tour at events such as the [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] could reach a wider cross-section of UH students/staff.
- 14.8 The Committee discussed whether the frequency of website updates was sufficient or not in terms of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research.
- 14.9 The Committee agreed that the benefits of impactful research could be showcased more effectively, together with ongoing work related to improving the 3Rs.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers.)

## 15 **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD 2024-25**

- 15.1 The Committee **received** and **approved** the Annual Report for 2024-25.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers.)

## 16 **CLERK'S REPORT**

16.1 The Committee **noted** the following items included in the Clerk's report:

16.2 The following items had been circulated since the previous meeting:

8 May 2025	Animals in Science Committee Call for evidence on improving non-technical summaries and retrospective assessments
14 May 2025	RSPCA Animals in Science newsletter: May 2025
21 May 2025	2025 LASA Establishment Licence Holders Autumn Meeting
5 Jun 2025	UKRIO - Ethical Framework for Obtaining Materials from Sentient Animals
10 Jul 2025	Reminder - LASA PEL Forum 21st October Central London
24 Sep 2025	Presentation from the HOLTIF meeting with ASRU on Monday 7th July
24 Sep 2025	Animals in Science Regulation Unit September Operational Newsletter
24 Sep 2025	RSPCA Animals in Science newsletter: September 2025
8 Oct 2025	AWERB Hub Workshop Rehoming (ASC)

16.2.1 **Ethical framework published by UKRIO to guide the responsible sourcing of animal materials & User Guide:**  
<https://ukrio.org/news/new-ethical-framework-published-for-obtaining-materials-from-sentient-animals/>

16.2.2 **RSPCA - New resource for AWERB members on the task of providing ethical advice, including an online thought starter to help identify ethical issues arising from the use of animals in science**

16.3 **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2025/26**



(Confidential Agenda Paper 16, Parts 1 – 4 refers.)

17 **EMERGENCY BUSINESS**

There was no emergency business discussed.