

**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 7 May 2025.

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

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

[REDACTED]

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**33 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

**34 MEMBERSHIP**

**34.1 Category 14 - Up to 2 (Two) Representative of the School of [REDACTED]**

The Committee thanked [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for their contributions to the Committee as Representatives of the School of [REDACTED]. The Committee noted that this would be the last meeting that [REDACTED] attended.

The Committee welcomed the Dean of the newly created School of [REDACTED], [REDACTED], to the meeting.

**34.2 Student Representative**

The Committee thanked [REDACTED], the outgoing student representative for [REDACTED] contribution to the Committee.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 2, refers.)

**35 MINUTES - 16 JANUARY 2025**

The Minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2025 were approved and signed.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 3, refers.)

**36 [REDACTED] USE OF ANIMAL TISSUE IN STUDENT PROJECTS, MINUTE 22, 16 JAN 2025, REFERS**

36.1 The Committee **noted** the approved set of questions regarding the use of animal tissue in [REDACTED] student projects, following comments by members of AWERB. These questions had been agreed with [REDACTED], with the intention of providing feedback to [REDACTED].

36.2 The Committee noted further that [REDACTED] was no longer [REDACTED] [REDACTED], due to a merger with [REDACTED] to form the School of [REDACTED].

36.3 No further action had been taken and the Committee agreed to take this item off the agenda until such time as it could be reinstated.

36.4 An **action** was taken for the Chair to inform [REDACTED], the new [REDACTED], of this decision. **ACTION: CHAIR**

(Confidential Agenda Paper 4, refers.)

### 37 **FOI REQUESTS - PUBLISHING AWERB MINUTES/NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARIES ON THE UH WEBSITE, MINUTE 23, 16 JAN 2025, REFERS**

37.1 The Committee **noted** that a request by the Chair to publish redacted AWERB minutes on the externally facing UH website had received approval from Academic Board.

37.2 The Committee sought further advice from [REDACTED] and agreed to implement the following actions:

- Clerk to redact the minutes;
  - NTCO to check redacted minutes before publication on the website;
    - The redacted minute and the unredacted minute to be approved at the next meeting of AWERB;
    - Once approved, redacted minutes/non-technical summaries would be published on a subpage (under a sub heading 'AWERB') of the UH animal research webpage: <https://www.herts.ac.uk/research/research-management/ethics-and-research-integrity/animal-research/regulation-and-review> [REDACTED] had acquired web page editing rights on the animal research webpages and could upload redacted minutes on the webpage.
- ACTION: CLERK, NTCO, [REDACTED]**

37.3 The Committee further agreed to:

- Inform visiting researchers of the decision to publish the full (redacted) minutes on the website, so that they are aware the information would be made public;
- Revisit the decision to publish redacted minutes if Committee members request the Clerk 'not to minute' elements of the discussion, because of the approach to publication - it remained critical that UH retained a good record of the discussion that took place at meetings.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 5, refers.)

### 38 **REPORT OF THE NAMED VETERINARY SURGEON**

- 38.1 The Committee **received** an oral report from the Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS), [REDACTED]
- 38.2 The NVS continued to visit the [REDACTED] on a monthly basis, noting that the animal facility was spotlessly clean and well-maintained, and the animals were healthy.
- 38.3 The mice were ageing well in enriched cages which were beneficial to their welfare.
- 38.4 Rats left over from a previous batch of animals had been used for tissues.
- 38.5 Members of AWERB had undertaken a tour of the animal facility on the 7 May 2025.
- 38.6 The Committee thanked the NACWO, [REDACTED] and the Deputy NACWO, [REDACTED] for the professionalism and dedication they showed in running the unit, noting that a culture of care was embedded in all that they did.
- 38.7 The Committee noted the innovative approaches that were taken with refinement which was ongoing and included the implementation of rat gang cages, behavioural measuring boxes, a new play pen and lighting system. One of the members commented: “ ... it's about the detail that's taken with the equipment, ...it's refinement right the way through... Easier and more efficient and more caring ways to do things all the way through.”

#### 39 **REPORT OF THE NAMED ANIMAL CARE AND WELFARE OFFICER**

- 39.1 The Committee **received** a report from the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), [REDACTED].
- 39.2 There had been no home office inspection of the [REDACTED] since the last meeting of AWERB.
- 39.3 There had been no environmental issues.
- 39.4 The Killing Register had been updated and submitted to PELh and NTCO on 24th April 2025.
- 39.5 [REDACTED] REG 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. This was in progress with plans for completion by the end of the year. The Home Office and Health and Safety requirements needed to be fulfilled in the event of an emergency: Animals should be left securely, ensuring there was no entrapment and escape was a possibility.
- 39.6 The Committee noted that data regarding refinement on the aging study would be captured as another output of the study; the input of technical and professional staff members' input was built into the Impact narrative which fed into the Research Excellence Framework (REF)2029.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 7, refers.)

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

- 40.1 The Committee **received** a report from the Named Training and Competence Officer (NTCO) and Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC), [REDACTED] [REDACTED].
- 40.2 The report provided an update on Personal Licences (PILs) and Project Licences, training and staffing changes within the unit, Home Office Updates and Freedom of Information Requests.
- 40.3 ASRU have informed establishments that during their transition period, SC18 reports should continue to be submitted where required. Notification to the Home Office should be as soon as possible, if the constraints on the severity limits, or observance of other controls described in the Licence had been breached, or were likely to be breached.
- 40.4 ASRU would prioritise SC18 reports where non-compliance or any enforcement action was required. If it was found that there was no enforcement action or non-compliance, then the licence holder was unlikely to receive a response: Certain institutions had reported delays in receiving a response.
- 40.5 Keep Alive requests had now been re-named 'Requests to remain in breach temporarily'. The process remained the same via SC18 notification. The 'Request to remain in breach temporarily' should be included in the subject heading of the e-mail sent to ASRU, if a decision was urgently required.
- 40.6 A request to remain in breach would require the input of the NVS, together with other named persons such as the NACWO and NTCO for a decision to be made quickly. The PELH would also need to be fully informed and satisfied that the correct procedures had been followed.
- 40.7 These processes would be documented and an SC18 report would be noted at the next meeting of AWERB. The AWERB would require reassurance that actions arising from lessons learnt had been implemented.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 8, refers.)

41 **REPORT FROM [REDACTED]**

- 41.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] project licence.
- 41.2 The report provided an update on compliance with the conditions of the licence, current projects, lessons learned, good practice, funding, benefits and impact.
- 41.3 No studies had been undertaken for the period January – May 2025.
- 41.4 A PhD student had shared mice tissues with a BSc student project, a good example of 3Rs reduction.
- 41.5 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in the process of submitting three research papers for journal publication which would be of high impact and contribute to REF2029.
- 41.6 [REDACTED] had provided an independent report for [REDACTED] on the impact of Organ On a Chip (OCC), from a marketing perspective. OCC was a non-animal replacement method.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 9, refers.)

42 **REPORT FROM [REDACTED]**

- 42.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] project licence.
- 42.2 The report provided an update on compliance with the conditions of the licence, current projects, lessons learned, good practice, funding, benefits and impact
- 42.3 The PPLh thanked the NVS and BSU colleagues for their assistance in carrying out experiments under the project licence using osmotic minipumps, a major refinement, as their use eliminated the need for daily subcutaneous drug administration.
- 42.4 A number of journal articles/papers were in progress and there had been two PhDs awarded.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 10, refers.)

43 **REPORT FROM [REDACTED]**

- 43.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding [REDACTED] project licence.
- 43.2 The report provided an update on compliance with the conditions of the licence, current projects, lessons learned, good practice, funding, benefits and impact.
- 43.3 The licence was activated when the animals reached twelve months. A consideration for studies related to aging was that older animals were required half-way through the study to check if the hypothesis was working; this was a lesson for any future projects on ageing.
- 43.4 There were no issues with the animals and they would continue to be monitored. The project was currently using the twelve month animals and would begin using the eighteen month animals in the summer as a final piece of this project. Results regarding the changing physiology of the animals would only be available at the end of study and would be reported on at the next meeting of AWERB.
- 43.5 Abstracts had been accepted for conferences in May and June 2025.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 11, refers.)

44 **CONCORDAT ON OPENNESS ON ANIMAL RESEARCH**

- 44.1 The Committee **received** a report from [REDACTED] regarding the activities of the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research.
- 44.2 The report contained updates on the sector and internal and external engagement.
- 44.3 The total views for the period January – May 2025 were 50% lower than the previous period in the year before. However, views to the landing page were comparable. An action was taken to link the FAQs to the landing page.

**ACTION** [REDACTED]

- 44.4 A query had been received from the Marketing Team regarding rehoming: The response did not include a link to a recent FAQ on rehoming. In order to promote greater awareness amongst members of the Marketing Team a link would be sent to the team to attend a tour of the animal facility. **ACTION** [REDACTED]
- 44.5 A tour of the facility would be offered each semester to UH staff and students with a link under the [FAQ](#) section to complete the two minute expression of interest survey.
- 44.6 Communication improvements implemented in academic year 2024/2025 included:  
Internal improvements:
- 10-minute video on the 'how, why and when of animals in research' recorded for Level 4 bioscience students during programme induction.
  - Embedding 'Ethics and application of the 3Rs' into all bioscience programme (L4-7) practical proformas to ensure consistency in engaging students and staff with ethical science and research integrity (ongoing).
  - L7 taught biosciences masters students & L6 [REDACTED] students signed up for an [REDACTED] openness tour (21/10/24 & 12/11/24)
  - Embed an ethics and 3Rs tutorial within [REDACTED] level 5 tutorial in semester B (24/25) academic year (ongoing)
  - 'AWERB invited' Annual talk about impact & benefits incl. 3Rs of animal research at UH as part of [REDACTED] seminar series e.g. invite speaker from NC3Rs research funded [REDACTED] research e.g. [REDACTED] (supported by REG)
- External improvements:
- Redacted AWERB minutes would be uploaded on the UH animal research pages.
- 44.6.1 The Committee agreed that the AWERB had made good progress in terms of greater openness related to animal research at UH.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 12, Part 1-2, refers.)

45 **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD 2023-24**

The Committee **received** and **approved** the Annual Report 2023/24.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 13, refers.)

46 **RSPCA: SUPPORTING REPLACEMENT IN ACADEMIA WORKSHOP, 29 JAN 2025**

- 46.1 The Committee **received** and **noted** a report from the Student Representative, [REDACTED] who had attended a workshop on Supporting Replacement in Academia (RSPCA).
- 46.2 The Committee noted that the report was extremely useful: The Chair had signed up for a forthcoming workshop and was currently on the waiting list.

(Confidential Agenda Paper 14, refers.)

47 **CLERK'S REPORT**

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

The following items had been circulated since the previous meeting:

28 Jan 2025	IAT Newsletter January 2025
11 Mar 2025	RSPCA Animals in Science newsletter: March 2025
27 Mar 2025	2025 LASA Establishment Licence Holders Autumn Meeting - Lc - 21.10.2025
9 Apr 2025	UKRIO - guidance on the use of live animals in research (outsid A(SP)A) <a href="https://ukrio.org/ukrio-resources/animal-materials-worki&lt;br/&gt;group/">https://ukrio.org/ukrio-resources/animal-materials-worki group/</a>
10 Apr 2025	EMBO workshop unconventional models for biomedicine
23 Apr 2025	Experimental design for in vivo research (HOLTIF)
30 Apr 2025	ASRUs Privacy Notice (ASRU Operational Relationship Manage

(Confidential Agenda Paper 15, refers.)

48 **EMERGENCY BUSINESS**

There was no emergency business discussed.