

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

21/21 A meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) was held via teams on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 10.00 am.

Present: [Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]
[Redacted. Sec.40]

Apologies were received from [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40].

welcomed [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40] to the meeting.

21/22 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 13 May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

21/23 Matters Arising

21/12 Mid/End of Term Project Reviews

The revised schedule for Mid/End of Project Reviews was shared. No more than two reviews would be circulated to each meeting.

21/12 LASA Review of lessons learnt

It was noted that the latest version had been circulated.

21/14 Demonstration on Campus

It was noted that the old data was to be refreshed.

21/15 Zebrafish Fry

It was noted that samples of the fish and the water had been sent for analysis; nothing out of the ordinary had been discovered. The Home Office Inspector had reviewed the results and was content.

Colleagues had spoken with the fish expert at the RSPCA as well as an expert at the University of Exeter to seek their advice. As a result the way in which the embryos were reared had been changed and processes had been refined; to date these changes seemed to be successful.

21/17 Animals in Science – Culture of Care

It was noted that [Redacted. Sec.40] were running a training day on this item and University staff had been invited to join.

It was agreed that a report on the meeting should be submitted to the next meeting.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

21/19 Input around animal free innovations

[Redacted. Sec.40] agreed to provide an update to the next meeting.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

21/24 UAR Leaders in Openness Scheme

The AWERB noted that the application for the *Leader in Openness* kitemark with Understanding Animal Research (UAR) had been successful and on Friday 14 May 2021 Reading was announced as the 14th institution to be awarded leadership status and the only institution to receive such an award in 2021.

The University had now received feedback from UAR on its award. This feedback would be incorporated into the communications plan so that the University could capitalise on its achievements and expand content.

21/25 Mid-Term Review

The Board received a presentation from [Redacted. Sec.40] in respect of her current Project Licence – The effects of iron and/or zinc supplementation at the immune metabolic microbial interface. [Redacted. Sec.40] outlined the study and the following points were noted:

- The study investigated what happens when different forms of iron were given to piglets, e.g. injection, oral. The control group of piglets would become anaemic.
- Zinc was used at weaning because of its antimicrobial properties. The EU were to ban the use of zinc in 2022 and there were concerns as to the possible impacts of that, for e.g. increased antibiotic use. The study was looking at ways to mitigate this impact.
- The AWERB asked [Redacted. Sec.40] whether the use of in vivo techniques had been reduced. [Redacted. Sec.40] confirmed that there was screening and in vivo models used ahead of any in vivo techniques on the piglets; numbers were according to plan. She confirmed that the team were also looking at 3D tissue models in collaboration with the University of Surrey; this might present opportunities in future to reduce the number of animals involved.
- The AWERB noted that it was expected that 100 animals would be used but that so far figures were projected at 48-72. [Redacted. Sec.40] confirmed that as the project was a 5-year project in order to give some flexibility an element of caution had been included at the project definition stage.
- The AWERB enquired as to the piglets experiences and the reasons for the severity level being set at moderate. [Redacted. Sec.40] explained that the severity level was due to the anaemia. It was reported that there were several reasons for piglets becoming anaemic generally: the increase in the average size of litters; that there was little iron in sow milk; the rapid growth of piglets; being reared inside.
- The AWERB enquired at what point the piglets were housed singularly. [Redacted. Sec.40] confirmed that it was important that in the first few hours after birth that the piglets received colostrum from the sow and that after around 20 hours old, they would be transferred to unit. Although they were separated into treatment groups, they were housed with mesh divides between each pen with a heat lamp aligned across; the piglets were able to see and be close to each other although physically separate.
- The AWERB enquired as to how clinical anaemia was judged and what would be the critical point in terms of haemoglobin levels. [Redacted. Sec.40] confirmed that this was via blood samples; as the experiment was for 4 weeks it was only towards the end of this period that the anaemia increased. No alarming clinical or behavioural symptoms were noticed in fact the control group piglets gained weight at the same rate as the piglets receiving iron. It was noted that bleeding of the piglets could only take place under [Redacted. Sec.40]'s supervision.
- [Redacted. Sec.40] informed the AWERB that the group were trying to get as much out of the trials as possible through storing samples that could be reanalysed at a later date or for further studies.

The AWERB thanked [Redacted. Sec.40] for a clear presentation.

The AWERB agreed that it would be helpful in future reviews to include diagrams and/or photos to help the AWERB in its understanding.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

The AWERB noted that research using pigs was likely to increase in the future through a mix of University research/collaborative research/contract work. It was

agreed that [Redacted. Sec.40], [Redacted. Sec.40] and [Redacted. Sec.40] would discuss the facilities permissions given in regard to the piggery with colleagues from the Farm; if needed this item could be discussed further via email or raised at the next meeting.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40], [Redacted. Sec.40], [Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40] agreed to enquire about the use of 3D modelling at Surrey and to report back.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

21/26 Report from Technical Services

The AWERB noted that the [Redacted. Sec.40] had now signed off the new unit.

It was noted that:

- There had been a long process of fixing the boilers in the Health and Life Sciences (HLS) Building which supplied the animal unit with humidity and steam for the cage washer and autoclave facilities. This work was finally completed to satisfaction and that of the [Redacted. Sec.40] in August.
- The HLS animal unit had been added to the establishment licence.
- The electric boiler had broken again and had taken three weeks to fix. A pipe above the cage washer also failed at the same time. This had just been fixed.
- Work was now in hand to commence with washing all equipment in the unit and testing the functionality of all systems together. During this period colleagues would also be alert for any other snagging issues which needed rectifying.
- There were still a number of issues outstanding which were sitting with the project team:
 - There was a boiler alarm panel (PM5) which when sounded was very high pitched. There was a concern about what frequency this was and how far it would travel to affect animals. This had been raised with the project team.
 - There were not yet any phones fitted in the unit.
 - Booking of the deep clean companies for the pre-opening sterilisation of the whole facility was required.
 - Small defects such as some light timers were not operating correctly.
- The washing and testing phase would lead into a period of training and inductions for all users of the facility.
- The remaining fish racks were being moved into place and commissioned. This would mean all fish work stopping in the AMS BRU.
- If there were no more delays then this would mean a November 2021 date for the deep clean of the unit.
- After the clean colleagues would start stocking the fish racks with a few sentinel wildtypes to start seeding the bio filter.
- Within the AMS BRU animal numbers were remaining low, but groups were continuing to carry on with work and planning experiments. This was in

consultation with the BRU management about when work should stop. The mice had been moved into a different area of the BRU after a burst pipe caused issues with the temperature control of the main holding room. Although the issues were fixed now it was planned to keep the mice where they were until the full HLS move was complete.

The AWERB enquired when the strains at Harwell would be woken up. It was reported that it would take 3 months to receive the animals from Harwell. Further work was still required to commission the unit before this could take place.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to capture a lessons learnt from the project that could possibly be shared at an AWERB hub.

A communications piece about the opening of the facility would also be shared in due course.

21/27 Animal Research Policy

[Redacted. Sec.40] confirmed that he was still working on the revised draft and would circulate this once complete.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

21/28 Communications

The AWERB received the ASRU Operational Newsletters from 16 August and 27 September 2021.

The AWERB discussed the changes in ways of working at the Home Office and the possible impact of this. It was noted that so far interactions around administrative processes had been smooth and that applications were being processed more quickly. However, there were concerns that speed was sacrificing quality and consistency with inconsistent advice being given and colleagues being passed around by the Home Office.

The AWERB noted the standards that would be applied to audits and the considerable amount of work that this would involve. It was suggested that a small group meet outside of the meeting to discuss this matter further.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40] reported that condition 18 training and establishment wide protocols would also need consideration. [Redacted. Sec.40] was asked to look into this further.

Action: [Redacted. Sec.40]

[Redacted. Sec.40] reported that Surrey were also meeting to discuss these issues further. There was a concern at other institutions around the resource requirements to centralise all of the data requirements likely to be requested by various bodies.

21/30 Dates of meetings in the Session 2021-22

Monday 7 February 2022 at 10.00 am

Thursday 12 May 2022 at 10.00 am