

DRAFT

CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
BIOMEDICAL ETHICAL REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE (BERSC)

10th November 2016

MINUTES

Present:

16/11-01 Apologies

16/11-02 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2016 were considered by the Committee and were approved subject to amendments.

16/11-03 Matters Arising

Rat lung pathology – previous minute 16/09-05

The Committee was updated on the potential issue relating to lung pathology recently discovered in BMSU's rat colony. Screening has established that the infected rat had an inhaled pneumonia. No further problems have been experienced since and further screenings have been clear – this will be monitored closely going forwards. As previously noted, all rats are bought in rather than being bred in-house.

Establishment Licence Holder's annual risk assessment meeting with the Home Office Inspector – previous minute 16/09-05

The recently held annual risk assessment meeting between the Home Office Inspector and the Establishment Licence Holder went extremely well and the Home Office Inspector was very positive about all aspects of BMSU activity. The overall risk rating remains as moderate due to the nature of the work undertaken.

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16/11-04

Chairperson's Items

There were no Chairperson's items to report.

16/11-05

Verbal Reports from the Director of BMSU and Named Persons

Report from the Director of BMSU:

- Activity within BMSU is generally running smoothly. It was noted that there have been a few issues with the ARMIS system (the management software used within BMSU) due to recent software upgrades.
- The refurbishment of part of the aquatics area is due to be completed within days.
- The changing facilities for researchers within BMSU are soon to be refurbished, which may result in a short period of inconvenience but will hopefully result in a considerable long-term improvement.
- One member of BMSU staff has recently gone part-time and a new member of staff has been recruited to backfill the relevant hours.
- The Home Office Inspector is working through the applications in the system, but there are still some delays including projects from July which are awaiting feedback.

Report from the Named Veterinary Surgeon:

- Routine screening has shown a couple of positive results for pinworm. A treatment regime is underway and animals will now be routinely treated using a topical treatment every 6 months. All other health screening is clear.
- Training on aseptic technique is being provided to staff within BMSU, with the aim of empowering them to take a proactive stance on this to provide support to the researchers.

Report from the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers:

No further items to report.

16/11-06

Report from the Fast Track Procedure

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The fast track procedure is up-to-date.

16/11-07

Introduction from the NC3Rs Midland Programme Manager

The Midlands Regional programme manager introduced herself to the Committee as the newly appointed NC3Rs Midland Programme Manager. Her time will be shared between the Universities of Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham. The main purpose of her post is to share best practice in relation to the 3Rs and she has already identified a number of mutual issues and needs in relation to the 3Rs across the three Universities.

She was previously a researcher and has held both Personal and Project Licences, meaning that she understands the challenges faced by both researchers and technicians.

The Directors of the animal facilities at all three Universities have agreed on the initial activities which the NC3Rs regional manager will undertake.

She emphasised that she is available to offer help and support and that researchers should contact her if there is anything they wish to discuss or share.

An interactive workshop on the NC3Rs' Experimental Design Assistant (EDA) is planned for 12th January 2017. Key individuals will be invited to this, with the intention that they then go back to their research groups and share the knowledge they have learned. The workshop is intended for those who are entirely new to the EDA and will involve some hands-on work with it during the session. It is hoped that researchers will then use the EDA when preparing their Project Licence applications.

It was noted that she will usually be at Birmingham on Thursdays, but this is flexible.

16/11-08

Update on 'The Ascension Island Ocean Sanctuary (ASIOS): planning for the Atlantic's largest marine reserve'

The Investigator gave a presentation to the Committee about his work on the Ascension Island Ocean Sanctuary.

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It was noted that it was helpful to understand more about the context of his work with free-living birds as the Committee reviews a number of applications relating to similar projects via the fast track procedure.

16/11-08

Any Other Business

- Another FOI request has been received and has been answered.
- The Press Office has been working closely with other leading Universities to provide useful information to the press about the use of animals in research.

16/11-10

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 15th December 2016.

GLOSSARY

3Rs	Replacement, Reduction and Refinement
ARMIS	Biological services management software used within BMSU
ASIOS	Ascension Island Ocean Sanctuary
BERSC	Biomedical Ethical Review Sub-Committee
BMSU	Biomedical Services Unit
EDA	Experimental Design Assistant
FOI	Freedom of Information
NC3Rs	National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research