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THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY (AWERB)

13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Stanley Barnes Meeting Room, Medical School

MINUTES

25/02-01	<u>Apologies</u>
25/02-02	<u>Minutes</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 were considered by the Committee and were approved.
25/02-03	<u>Matters Arising</u> 25/01-07-01 <i>Understanding and preventing chemotherapy induced neurotoxicity</i> . This has now been submitted to ASRU.
25/02-04	<u>Chairperson's Items</u> Sadly, the Chair of AWERB suddenly and unexpectedly passed away on 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2025. The Committee took some time to consider all of the work undertaken by the Chair during their 50 years' service to the University and passed on condolences to the family. The Deputy Chair has stepped into the role of Interim Chair whilst a new Chair is formalised.
25/02-05	<u>Verbal Reports from the Director of BMSU, NVS and NACWOs</u> <u>Director:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An invitation from the RSPCA has been received to present at the FELASA Conference in Athens. The talk will focus on the university's Retrospective Review Process as an example of best practice.</li><li>• ASRU has commissioned the Animals in Science Committee to undertake a review of the following areas: AWERB effectiveness, advice on the Named Information Officer role (currently held by the Director of BMSU at UoB), strengthening and leading practice in the 3Rs, and improving the quality of the non-technical summaries in applications and retrospective assessments.</li></ul> <u>NVS:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rodent health monitoring is being reviewed, and BMSU will be moving to use an alternative provider. A handover procedure is being implemented.</li></ul> <u>NACWOs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aquatic health screening samples have been sent off and the results will be known within 2 weeks.</li></ul> <u>NTCO:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training records remain up to date, main BMSU induction booklets have been updated, and work is being undertaken to produce a theatre induction booklet and also an aquatic induction booklet.</li></ul>
25/02-06	<u>Report from the Fast-Track Procedure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All fast-track applications are uploaded to Teams for comments by AWERB.</li><li>• Discussions took place around animal work which has taken place overseas where the work has not been to AWERB for prior approval. Whilst processes are in place to capture work undertaken collaboratively, the current situation has indicated that there is a need to increase awareness within the research community of this requirement. A letter will be sent to all College Heads of Research and the PVC for Research reiterating what needs to come to AWERB. This should clarify that if a researcher is undertaking animal-based research collaboratively elsewhere then AWERB need to be informed.</li><li>• The committee agreed that formal escalation processes and guidance documents need to be put in place where the committee does not approve requests for animal-based research to be</li></ul>

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	<p>undertaken collaboratively elsewhere. This will be done collaboration with the Research Ethics and Integrity Board.</p>
<p>25/02-07-01</p>	<p><u>Project Licence applications:</u> <i>Reconsolidation of memories underlying approach behaviour</i> Summary The project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare whether two different drugs have similar effects in impairing food-related memories. There is already partial evidence for one of the drugs (MK-801), which is an experimental drug, and the aim of this application is to compare this to a clinically relevant drug (Propranolol).</li> <li>• Previous research has shown that when previously learned memories are reminded, they can be impaired by drug treatment. However, there are some important conflicting findings in the literature concerning the effect of Propranolol on sucrose memories.</li> <li>• The wider relevance of the work is that the specific memory model that will be used involves approach behaviour. Such approach behaviour underpins some parts of problematic reward-seeking behaviour in conditions such as drug addiction.</li> </ul> <p>The following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a small PPL application with one distinct aim to be undertaken within a 12-month period. There was a query regarding the animal experience when using MK-810 drug compared to propranolol. It was explained that MK-810 could have a brain-wide effect, similar to the effect of ketamine, but the animals will only receive a single injection so this effect was not expected under this PPL. Prior experience has shown that animals have not exhibited any clinical symptoms for a 2-week period following injection. There have been several previous studies which have used similar doses of MK-810 with the same response successfully replicated across other laboratories.</li> <li>• The side effects of the drugs were discussed. In literature, it states that animals may be temporarily hyperactive, but this has not been observed within BMSU. As the measure is behavioural, the experiment is designed to establish whether the observed behaviour is a side-effect of receiving a drug treatment rather than an effect of the drug itself.</li> <li>• The issue of memory disruption was discussed. Rodents are naturally inquisitive and will naturally approach things. This study aims to look at any reduction in behaviours.</li> <li>• It was queried whether this is an isolated project, or whether the aim is to continue to apply for further funding to follow on the research. It was stated that the current aim is to have this as an isolated project.</li> <li>• The strain of rat was discussed. At present, there is insufficient evidence in the literature to show differences in drug effect between strains. The strain selected is the one that performs best in the behavioural tests, and so any difference is more likely to be detected and involve fewer rats.</li> <li>• Route of delivery of the MK-810 was discussed, and whether an injection is appropriate. It was explained that the timing of the dose is critical, and so it cannot be delivered via food or water.</li> <li>• Within the NTS, the project aims includes the phrase ‘translational viability’ and it was stated that this is not sufficiently lay and the NTS needs to be simplified further.</li> <li>• The study only uses male rats, and it was queried why females were not used. There is no evidence that there is any difference between male and female in memory-related research, however, the existing data set used male only animals. If females were to be used at this stage more animals would be required to ensure the additional replication of data, hence the focus is on male rats only.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision: The Committee agreed that the application should be amended following discussion between the NVS, BMSU, NACWO and PI before being submitted to ASRU.</b></p>
<p>25/02-08</p>	<p><u>Application referred from Fast Track</u> <i>The use of PEPITEM and its novel peptido-mimetics for the treatment of autoimmune and chronic inflammatory diseases</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A manuscript involving animal research undertaken collaboratively in Italy has been published without prior ethical approval from AWERB.</li> <li>• The AWERB had several reservations and felt that had the committee reviewed the application prior to the work taking place, then additional measures would have been requested to refine the approaches taken.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The committee also raised that the manuscript was not ARRIVE compliant, although this did not impact on the decision to decline approval.</li></ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Director of BMSU, Interim Chair of AWERB and AWERB legal representative to draft correspondence to the PI explaining why this proposal has not been approved, and instruct that any communications relating to the publication emphasise that the animal work was carried out in Italy, not at UoB. The letter will also provide advice as to how to ensure that future manuscripts are ARRIVE compliant.</p>
25/02-09	<p><u>Matters relating to the 3Rs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A replacement checklist (produced by Replacing Animal Research) has been uploaded to the Teams site. Whilst some of the advice is more focussed on the PI rather than the AWERB, a slide deck template will be utilised for PPL applicants, informed by the checklist, to ensure the relevant information is provided to AWERB.</li></ul>
25/02-10	<p><u>Condition 18 Reports</u></p> <p>There have been no Condition 18 reports since the last meeting.</p> <p>A response has been received from ASRU following the non-compliance back in July 2024 (and reported to the AWERB previously). The PILh has received a letter of reprimand and the matter is now considered closed. However, this remains on the record of the PILh for 5 years and could be taken into consideration if there is a further breach by the PILh.</p>
25/02-11	<p><u>Retrospective Review</u></p> <p>There have been no licences that have expired which legally require a retrospective assessment.</p> <p>The UoB retrospective review process for all licences remains in place with the reports uploaded to the AWERB Teams site for awareness.</p>
25/02-12	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There was no further business.</p>
25/02-13	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>10<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – Stanley Barnes Meeting Room, Medical School 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025 - online 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 - online</p> <p>All will be from 10am until 1pm.</p>

## CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

### GLOSSARY

3Rs	Replacement, Reduction and Refinement
ARRIVE	Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments
ASPA	Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
ASRU	Animals in Science Regulation Unit
AWERB	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
BMSU	Biomedical Services Unit
FELASA	Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations
IAT	Institute of Animal Technology
IVM	Intravital Microscopy
NC3Rs	National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research
NCTO	Named Competency and Training Officer
NACWO	Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer
NIO	Named Information Officer
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
NVS	Named Veterinary Surgeon
PEL	Establishment Licence
PI	Principal Investigator
PIL	Personal licence (Procedure Individual Licence)
PPLs	Project licence (Procedure Project Licence)
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
UoB	University of Birmingham