
Minutes: AWERB

Status: Chair approved

Meeting held: 10 July 2019

Present

Attendees: 11 plus 1 in attendance, 5 by invitation, 6 apologies.

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including a junior technician who was attending the meeting as an observer.

2 NC3RS PROGRAMME MANAGER: INTRODUCTION OF ROLE

The new NC3Rs Programme Manager (which was a joint position with several other London Universities) was welcomed to the meeting. Her role was to provide dedicated advice and support on the 3Rs at the project, research group, departmental and institutional levels. She would be engaging with researchers to provide a wide range of support to researchers, such as addressing the 3Rs in grant and project licence applications. She would also be attending AWERB meetings as an observer. She had over 12 years' research experience in the biosciences, using a range of *in vitro*, *ex vivo* and *in vivo* models.

3 NEW PROJECT LICENCE HOLDER APPLICATION

The meeting were reminded that this project licence had originally been reviewed at the June meeting. Several concerns had been raised though, namely:

- the planned approach was too broad and tried to cover every possible angle.
- The project licence was very wordy and vague.
- There were concerns about the immunology side and what could be achieved. The background provided did not match the protocols and the questions that they aimed to answer.

AWERB had therefore recommended that further discussions were needed in order to get the project licence more focused and to ensure that there were defined humane end points. These discussions had been held and a revised project licence circulated. The project licence holder had also been invited to attend to discuss the project licence further. The project licence explained that she had revised the project licence so that the adverse effects were more schematised. Exact steps were set out as well as the humane end points. Each protocol now had a clear indication of the main adverse effects and how they should be dealt with. These were set out using bullet points so were clearer and less wordy.

The project licence holder advised that the compounds chosen were those that were the best candidates that were likely to make it to the medicine stage. The researchers were usually guided by literature in terms of mode of action in relation to compounds and what made sense to combine.

There was a discussion about the process that was followed to determine whether something was unacceptable; the criteria used to determine if a compound had been successful and what safety considerations were made. The proposed numbers of animals to be used was also discussed. Information on systematic variation which avoided the need for duplicate experiments (so avoiding doubling animals numbers, time and money) whilst still maximising reproducibility would be sent to the Project Licence Holder.

A question was asked whether the NC3Rs Experimental Design Assistant had been used when writing the project licence. It was suggested that the diagrams the system created would be useful to include in the project licence as it provided a stepwise visual representation of the proposed experiments.

AWERB confirmed that they were much happier with the project licence and could tell a lot of work had gone into the humane end points, ensuring that they were better defined. All that was needed now was a few tweaks in relation to 3Rs and a justification of the numbers. As AWERB had not much opportunity to review the amended project licence prior to the meeting they would now do this and any further questions would be forwarded on.

4 NEW PROJECT LICENCE DISCUSSION

The project licence holder was welcomed to the meeting. He explained that his project licence had already been approved by the Home Office as it was a straight forward licence, but he had been invited to attend to give an update on the work that he was planning to do under this project licence. The work would involve assessing whether it was possible to induce a mucosal and systemic immune response to an inactivated *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* strain expressing BVDV protein given orally from the first day of life on in suckling, non-ruminating calves with either the colostrum or milk replacers. This would provide an easy-to-apply and potentially cheaper alternative to injectable vaccines, which would allow for mass-administration and would in addition eliminate the risk of inappropriate storage, such as interrupted cooling chain or in general sub-optimal storage. The approach would reduce the number of injections needed, could potentially boost the neonates immune response, specifically on mucosal surfaces, in the presence of maternal antibodies, and would potentially reduce the pathogen-pressure on mucosal surfaces. Furthermore, if the construct was seen to be immunogenic (and subsequently proven to be protective), sequencing the antibody repertoire produced by B cells of “immunised” animals would enable for recombinant antibodies to be produced.

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019 were agreed to be an accurate record.

6 MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Item 1: Project licence amendment (June 2019 meeting)

The project licence holder had been e-mailed with a list of humane endpoints that needed to be reviewed.

6.2 Item 7.1: Rat cages – welfare project (June 2019 meeting)

Play time enrichment for the rats was a project that was being taken forward. Data were being recorded now so that it could be compared with data recordings taken after the changes have been implemented.

6.3 Item 9: Companion Animals (June 2019 meeting)

A trial had been held to see how a pig had reacted to being individually housed. The pig had been video monitored as well as regular checks taken. The pig had seemed to be very happy, with no sign

of stress. A process was being created setting out those circumstances where it was acceptable to individually house a pig for up to 72 hours.

The options of using a plastic pig was also being looked into.

A query was raised about whether pigs generally got stressed if the companion animal that was used was one that they were not familiar with. Could this cause more stress? It was confirmed that ideally when using companion animals the pigs should be bought in together so they were familiar with each other.

6.4 Item 7: Checklist for reviewing project licences (April 2019 meeting)

A query was raised about what the purpose of doing this was: was it for AWERB reviewers or for those writing the project licences. It was confirmed that it was for both. It was noted that a set generic questions to ask PPL Holders had been put together previously and it was suggested that this could be used as a starting point for this exercise.

6.5 Item 7: Welfare projects (April 2019 meeting)

The following projects were underway: rat caging; outside pens for the large animals which needed rejuvenation and zebrafish enrichment. There was also a summer studentship that was comparing different types of shelter for mice. An abstract would be submitted to LASA for the work that had been done on mouse nesting materials.

6.6 Item 8: Dog Rehoming (April 2019 meeting)

The pamphlet to be given to new owners explaining the dogs' background was being drafted.

6.7 Item 3.2: PPL Refresher training and culture of care workshops (March 2019 meeting)

The culture of care workshop would be a half day course. The PPL refresher training would incorporate mid-term and end of project reviews.

7 FOSTERING OF PUPPIES

This was an item that had been raised at the June meeting. What was AWERB's view about when there were too many puppies for one bitch, was it acceptable and sensible to foster some of the puppies to another bitch to make the litter sizes more manageable? Advice was sought from someone who was experienced in this area. The advice provided was that it needed to be decided on an individual basis as it depended on the dog's temperament. If it was decided to foster a puppy it needed to be done as early as possible in the process and the dogs closely monitored. It had been done previously on a successful basis but she was also aware of occasions where it had not gone well.

8 NVS REPORT

8.1 Camden

It was important to acquire larger and taller cages for the long term rats so that they were more suitable for the large pair housed males.

8.2 Animal Suppliers

Following the delivery of a horse that turned out to be unwell, a new process for dealing with animal suppliers was being set up. A SOP and questionnaire asking for information about how their animals were treated and veterinary care availability for the animals would be sent to all suppliers used by the College. The SOP also set out that the RVC had the right to visit them to see in person how the animals were being kept.

9 MEETINGS ATTENDED

This item was deferred to the September meeting.

10 NEW PROJECT LICENCES GRANTED

AWERB noted that there had been one project licence granted by the Home Office since the previous meeting.

11 AMENDED PROJECT LICENCES APPROVED BY THE HOME OFFICE

AWERB noted that three amendments to project licences had been approved by the Home Office including one that had secondary availability at the College.

12 ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE

AWERB noted that an amendment to the Establishment Licence had been approved by the Home Office.

13 STUDY REQUESTS APPROVED

AWERB noted that two study requests had been approved since the last meeting.

14 MID TERM REVIEW

One mid-term review had been reviewed. It was felt that the report was well written and there were no concerns.

15 ASSESSORS LIST REVIEW

The list had not been changed since the previous review. An assessors course had been scheduled for the end of July so hopefully there would be more names to go on the list after that course.

16 SURVEYS

16.1 Concordat on Openness survey response

It was a requirement under commitment 4 of the Concordat that all signatories report annually on their progress. This was done via a web-survey. The latest annual report was submitted in June. If AWERB had suggestions on areas that the College could improve on in this area or could make more of then to put these forward as it was important to consider how the College could improve openness in the future with public and students.

A query was raised about how the virtual tour of the BSUs was developing. This was still work in progress though it was hoped that it would be finished soon.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was scheduled for 3 September 2019 at 2pm.

Secretary
19 July 2019