MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2025

Present: [redacted]

Apologies: [redacted]

In attendance: [redacted]

1. Minutes

Agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2025 were approved.

The Chair highlighted to the committee that the agenda headings had been changed this month to use the language of AAALAC, where appropriate, and enable the committee to better demonstrate how it is meeting expectations.

2. Applications for New Project Licences

2.1. [redacted], Mechanisms and treatment of metabolic disorder-associated cardiovascular disease

Considered: A completed AWERB form, PPL application and presentation.

Interviewed: [redacted]

Committee discussion:

- The Chair confirmed that in their absence, the statistician was supportive of the experimental design and the Compliance and Licensing Manager was satisfied with how the pre-AWERB meeting had gone.

Discussed with applicant:

- The animal facility director explained that in her experience STZ administration can be difficult with some animals showing dramatic symptoms. She asked the researcher what alternative approaches had been considered and was assured that alternatives had been considered and on balance the STZ model is the best one for the researcher compared to a genetic model of type 1 diabetes which would, among other issues, increase the animal numbers.
- Single housing was discussed with the researcher and the circumstances when this would take place, for instance after implantation of a mini pump whereby the wound on the animal may need to be protected from other animals.
- The Chair asked the researcher for more information on the exercise tolerance test, with the researcher explaining that animals are given practice sessions a few days before the test to get used to the automatic treadmill, and also have warm up sessions before the test. If the animal does not run checks will be done to see if it is because of cardiovascular reasons and if not, animals will be encouraged to run by being gently blown on. If they still don't run they will not be made to.

Revisions: It was explained to the applicant that the committee had provided comments to the Secretariat prior to the meeting and while some would be discussed in the meeting, the list below includes all the comments whether they were raised in the meeting or not.

- Could the title be revised to explain what the project aims to do achieve in non-technical language, here one might add a verb to give a sense of doing. Perhaps 'Investigating…'? You could also consider removing the technical language so something like "Investigating the impact of diabetes on heart disease and improving treatment'.
- The Cat A form needs to be revised explain your approach to making raw data available where possible, including you approach to making available data that did not confirm your hypothesis (sometimes referred to as 'negative' data), such as in supplementary sections of papers or lower impact journals.
- Tables showing maximum volumes for administration of substances is good to see, but are these take from guidance notes/paper? If so, a reference is needed.
- In a number of places it is not entirely clear how many instances of injections, recovery anaesthesia etc an animal could experience. You need to state maximum possible instances.
- Page 5 – some more details on the exercise tolerance test would be helpful. Acclimatisation or habituation are both used – if you mean the same thing then we would recommend being consistent with the term. We discussed at interview the '3Hs' (see https://www.3hs-initiative.co.uk/the-3hs/habituation) and whether this was your meaning when you use habituation. If so, could positive reward be a further refinement? If this would not interfere with the science we suggest you might consider it.
- Page 35 - "Animals with metabolic profiles altered will be housed separately" - please confirm if this means singly housed, and if so how long typically would an animal be singly housed for. Please also explain briefly what steps you will take to mitigate harms of isolation such as environmental enrichment.
- Page 40 - For induction of diabetes it says 'microsamples of blood taken' but does not state how. Please include this information.

- Page 40 – Humane End Points should be more specific. For example, there is variance between 'rapid' loss of 10% (p.43, p.44, p.46) and just "10% body weight" (p.40) - what is rapid in this context?
- Page 40 - Would all STZ animals have polyuria? If so do you need to control for this?
- Page 42 – please seek advice from the Named Persons on whether you need to include how issues from gavage will be recognised and managed.
- Page 43 - "laceration of abdominal organs, internal bleeding or peritonitis occurs post i.p. injection" This should be modified to say "can occur".
- Page 44 - Some attention is required for the sentence beginning "For IP at early post-natal stage...."
- Page 58 - You propose 50% animals on protocol 3 will experience moderate severity, but only 20% will get the minipump - you mention the CV assessment falls into mild severity, so why 50% moderate instead of 20%? Please check the wording for this.
- A number of comments were made regarding your Non-Technical Summary which are listed below. Please update your NTS based on the comments and send it to the following lay members for their review ([redacted])
    - Page 2 - "particular, better understand the gene function..." – is there a missing word between particular and better?
    - Page 3 - "The study will have both scientific and clinical/translational impacts informing the pathogenesis and therapeutic potential of heart failure, occurring clinically in patients with metabolic disorders" - will the clinical benefits occur within the timeframe of this project? It would be good to see a clear indication of whether the short, mid and long term are expected to be achieved within the timeframe of the project or whether long-term clinical impacts will occur after?
    - Page 6 - Have you considered any alternatives to oral gavage - which can be stressful - what are the alternatives that are implied (as you say that oral gavage will only be used when there are no suitable alternatives?) Injection? osmotic pumps?
    - Page 6 – 'mice are subjected to the stress' - how? what is the stressor? Is it exercise? Or is it the stress of the metabolic condition? It may be wise to be very clear about this to avoid misreadings.
    - Page 7 – 'to model cardiovascular remodelling' - this is quite hard to follow for the non-expert reader. Please try to revise.
    - Page 8 - In which situations would you use control data from previous experiments? It may be helpful to include a brief explanation here.
    - Page 8 - the answer to 'How have you estimated the numbers of animals you will use?' is a bit overly detailed. It might be best to answer the question as opposed to begin by discussing randomization/blinding strategy.
    - Page 9 - Use of low dose STZ 5x is described as a refinement causing less harmful stress, what has this been modified from?
    - Page 9 - "Blood collection and administration of pharmacological agents by injection/oral performed with pain relief or local anaesthetic" - this wording implies pain relief will be given in all these instances, which isn't true. Please revise accordingly.
    - Page 10 - It is stated that modified diet has been refined - in what way?

Outcome:

- Members to discussed and confirmed they were satisfied with the harm – benefit analysis and implementation of the 3Rs.
- The study was given provisional approval based on the applicant making the changes/clarifications listed above to the satisfaction of the Chair/AWERB.

3. Report on licences processed from 09/04/2025 to 13/05/2025

The following amendments were approved by the executive committee.

3.1. Amendments to Project Licences

[redacted], Immune Control of Parasite Infection & Tissue Injury
[redacted], Studying the Biology of Brain Tumours
[redacted], Defining Critical Regulatory Pathways Controlling Local & Distal Immune Responses During Health & Inflammation of Barrier Surfaces.
[redacted], Studying Cognitive Function in Animal Models of Brain Disorders
[redacted], How Immune Responses Regulate Metastasis & The Evaluation of Immunotherapies
[redacted], Investigating New Therapeutics for Eczema

3.2. Amendments to Project Licence [redacted], Breeding and Maintenance of Genetically Altered Rodents

[redacted], Generation of CTGF-mNeonGreen-Luc Mouse Model Using CRISPR
[redacted] Generation of TMPRSS13 Flox Mouse Model Using CRISPR

4. Update on applications outstanding from previous meetings and upcoming Project Licence applications

4.1. The committee were provided with a document showing the status of applications considered previously and those pencilled in for future meetings.

4.2. The Chair noted that the committee will be seeing two Project Licence applications at the next meeting and thanked the Compliance and Licensing Manager for successfully re-arranging the schedules of the upcoming meetings for the academic year.

5. Estates and Physical Infrastructure

5.1. The committee were provided with a document circulated from Estates, their quarterly report to the Establishment Licence Holder's Assurance Group (EAG), which contains a [redacted] Action Tracker'.

5.2. [redacted]

5.3. The Chair asked the committee how often they believe they should be presented with the information. The committee agreed that the report should be shared quarterly at the same time as the Director's report, so that all members are aware of ongoing activities.

Action: The Estates and Physical Infrastructure is to become a quarterly agenda item, on the same month at the Director's Report. The committee will be provided with the latest report that Estates provide to EAG. On occasion, where EAG does not synchronise with the allocated AWERB meeting, we would consider the report at the earliest opportunity after the EAG. Should the report be deemed no longer required by EAG it will continue to be provided to AWERB.

5.4. The Chair noted he was pleased to see the improvements to AWERBs concerns being implemented by Estates, highlighting that there are now custom-made spare parts on campus, which will allow [redacted] staff and the Estates team to respond to incidents quicker than happened in January.

5.5. [redacted]

Action: [redacted]

6. Director's report

6.1. [redacted]

6.2. The Director also noted the visit from [redacted],

6.3. [redacted]

6.4. [redacted]

The Director also commended [redacted] for his presentation on 'Gene Therapy for Urofacial syndrome, a Devastating Genetic Bladder Condition'.

6.5. The Director updated the Committee on the MPV infection containment and future preventative measures. Due to lack of positive findings beyond initial cases, the unit has resumed normal operations, and the planned move to the [redacted] has been cancelled, as other enhanced biosecurity measures are being implemented across the facility. The Director thanked [redacted] staff for their excellent support in containing the infection.

6.6. The Director noted that the [redacted] Workshop was held on 23 May and relevant stakeholders were able to discuss future plans, clarify user expectations, explore emerging trends in animal research, and develop [redacted] in vivo strategy.

6.7. The Chair queried whether the Director had received the report from [redacted] who inspected the [redacted] on behalf of [redacted] on 3 April. The Director confirmed that she

expects to receive the full report by the end of June but highlighted that the inspectors initial feedback was positive.

6.8. The Chair expressed the committee's congratulations to the two [redacted] staff members who have been awarded the exceptional performance award for sustained performance and expressed that the Director should pass this on to them at the [redacted] staff meeting.

6.9. The Chair stated that he was reassured by the [redacted] Disaster Plan Exercises, and the committee will look forward to receiving the findings from these and assisting on any areas for future improvement.

7. Culture of Care

7.1. The committee were provided a document updating them on the latest Culture of Care developments.

7.2. The Chair noted the committee's congratulations to [redacted] on her award and asked if this could be passed on at the [redacted] staff meeting.

8. Establishment Licence Holder's Assurance Group (EAG) Quarterly Meeting

8.1. The Chair explained the purpose of the EAG and highlighted that the material presented to the EAG has already been considered by AWERB in detail. Nonetheless, going forward, the minutes and papers from EAG will be available to all members on SharePoint. The Chair will continue to provide a verbal update for the proposed resolutions to key issues.

9. Any other business

9.1. Reminder to Respond to the Animals in Science Committee Request

The Chair reminded the committee to respond to the ASC call for evidence on improving Non-technical Summaries and Retrospective Assessments by the end of Friday 30th May. The Chair highlighted that responding to ASC requests is one of the committee's core responsibilities.

9.2. Comment from the Establishment Licence Holder

The Establishment Licence Holder thanked the committee for their hard work and stated that he is always impressed with the level of input from committee members to AWERB work. He noted that he leaves AWERB meetings reassured as the committee not only focuses on compliance but also emphasises the importance of enrichment and enhancement.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 26 June 2025 at 10am-12.30pm.

Dates of meetings for the 2024/2025 academic year are:
31 July 2025
August break

Dates of meetings for the 2025/2026 academic year are:
25 September 2025

23 October 2025
20 November 2025
18 December 2025
29 January 2026
26 February 2026
26 March 2026
30 April 2026
28 May 2026
25 June 2026
30 July 2026

Dates of meetings for the 2026/2027 academic year are:
24 September 2026
22 October 2026
19 November 2026
17 December 2026
28 January 2027
25 February 2027
25 March 2027
29 April 2027
27 May 2027
24 June 2027
29 July 2027