



University Court

Minutes of Welfare and Ethical Use of Animals Committee

A meeting of the Committee was held on 24th April 2025.

Present: The Convener, Establishment Licence Holder (ELH), the Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS), two Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers (NACWO), the Named Information Officer (NIO), Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO) one scientist Personal Licence (PIL) holder, two Project Licence (PPL) holders (also PIL holders), two scientists, three lay members and two observers.

Apologies: Seven members had sent apologies.

1 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The last meeting was held on 23rd January 2025, and the Minutes were approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING

- a. The committee reviewed Retrospective Reviews from three project licence holders (PPLh) whose licences are due to expire in 2025. Each PPLh attended the meeting to summarise their activity over the past 4 years and to answer questions from the committee. They also summarised their plans for PPL renewal. The importance of recording 3Rs progress in the lifetime of a PPL in new applications was highlighted by the committee to each PPLh.

One PPLh commented that the variability observed in their research had reduced following the strategic merger of school facilities.

The committee have requested that the retrospective review form is amended to provide clarification on the total number of animals used in each protocol and the method of exportation of GA strains for collaboration.

- b. Institutional 3Rs strategy. The Convener and NIO discussed the University of Dundee Spring 3Rs day held on the 23rd April 2025 and initiated discussions on the development and implementation of an institutional 3Rs strategy. The NIO will share the Replacing Animal Research Replacement Checklist discussed at this meeting with the committee.

The Convenor noted the substantial progress being made in 3Rs work by technicians and researchers and stated that it is important that the institution must have a vision, agreed at Establishment level, and a strategy for implementation of the 3Rs. All stakeholders should be involved in formulation of a strategy with the 3Rs Champions Team providing a starting point for information. The committee agrees that 3Rs progress should continue to be communicated quarterly by the NIO but also that an annual report of progress should be produced.

- c. A representative from Teaching initiated discussions on the use of surplus rat tissue for teaching practicals. The representative provided a comprehensive argument for the use of animal tissue and detailed the limitations of computer simulations. The committee agreed for the use of surplus rats already housed within the facility. However, animals will not be specifically purchased for teaching purposes, and alternatives must be investigated further. Should breeding within the facility cease, one of the WEC members indicated that tissue that would be suitable might be available from animals used in their studies.

- d. Spotlight article on the AWERB and Convenor to increase transparency on the use of animals in research in Dundee. The committee agreed that the benefits of sharing the article internally via student/staff newsletters and on the university web page. Convenor asked PEL holder to check they were happy to share the Spotlight article; this was confirmed after the meeting, and the article has been shared as above.

3 REPORTS FROM THE NVS AND NACWO ON ANIMAL WELFARE

[Standing agenda item]

The NACWO and NVS reported as follows since the last meeting:

- There has been one environmental incident in one facility which resulted in the death of one animal. The issue is being resolved with the equipment supplier.
- Six incidents were added to the near miss register. All were human error and have been resolved with improved systems and communications in place.
- A system to clarify humane endpoints and when the moderate severity limit has been reached has been developed by the technicians, NVS and PPLh for a GA mouse strain where the phenotype develops over time.
- Data on pup losses is being gathered by the NIO in response to concerns that there might be an increase in pup losses in the animal facility. Data shows that the pup loss rate in line with previous years and has reduced since comparable periods in 2024. The current loss rate is steady around 14%, and in line with expected loss across the sector. Data collection will be useful to monitor deviations in future.
- Addition of a supplemented diet appears to have resolved the welfare issue in a GA strain prone to stress induced by transport.

4 REPORT FROM THE UVS ON COMPLIANCE

[Standing agenda item]

The UVS provided a comprehensive report for the committee.

- There were no cases of non-compliance since the last meeting.
- There were five Standard Condition 18 reports submitted to the Home Office since the last meeting. Internal reviews have been conducted with remedial actions agreed for four cases and discussions progressing on the remaining case on how best to proceed with the study. The Home Office have indicated that they will not respond to SC18 reports unless they identify non-compliance, so no response is expected.
- There was one Standard Condition 18 report submitted to the Home Office from a PPLh with secondary availability held at a different establishment. A phenotype may be present in the GA strain affected and investigations are ongoing to mitigate harm via modified husbandry practices. AWERBs and NVSs at both establishments are continuing with discussion.

5 REPORT FROM THE TRAINING COORDINATOR

[standing agenda item]

A new NTCO has recently been appointed. The updates provided cover the period October 2024 to April 2025.

- The 2 PPLs who were unable to attend one of the three mandatory CPD sessions in 2024 completed the RAT UK legislation and ethics modules. 100% of all licensees are compliant in attendance at mandatory annual CPD
- 13 DOPS assessments were completed
- 2 new PIL A/B licences issued
- 1 ongoing PIL A/B/C
- 1 ongoing PIL A/B
- 3 new facility registrations
- 68 PIL renewals for 2025 and 13 PILs to be revoked
- The process of reviewing and updating current DOPS is ongoing
- Annual CPD will be held later this year with a focus on non-compliance and severity assessment. Should a PIL/PPL holder not be able to attend, we will identify a suitable alternative, possibly RAT module 25 project evaluator.
- Two surgical training sessions will be held (if required) during 2025, one in springtime and one in autumn, dates TBC. Any training required out with these periods will be conducted by an external provider.
- Attendance at the EFAT/ESLAV webinars was encouraged. Many PILs attended.
- 42 PILs (out of 81) attending the Research governance and 3R's held on the 26th of February.

6 REPORT FROM THE NIO ON 3Rs

[standing agenda item]

A summary of the progress from the 3Rs Champions group, 3Rs activities, web page updates and public engagement activities was presented to the committee.

- Reductions in the numbers of animals used during research has been possible by using ex breeder stocks for tissue collections. Further reductions have been possible by immediate cessation of breeding for one GA strain where an unwanted genetic recombination event was identified quickly through genetic analysis.
- Three research groups are now actively researching use of voluntary administration methods either as an alternative to oral gavage or positive reinforcement training techniques. The NIO will share internal videos of voluntary administration with the committee.
- A new method of additional environmental enrichment and plans to create an image and video library for reference purposes were outlined.
- Web Page Update. The annual statistics have been uploaded to the web page. Case studies for the 3Rs is planned to be uploaded during 2025. The committee agreed for Minutes from WEC meetings to be added annually.

Events since last WEC Meeting: University of Dundee Spring 3R's Day (23.04.2025), Scottish AWERB Hub 3Rs discussion (13.03.2025), Research Governance and the 3Rs webinar, organised with the Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews (26.02.2025), Public Engagement/Outreach Event (30.01.2025)

NVS external activities. Invited speaker at 4th Congress of Croatian Laboratory Animal Science Association (CroLASA) and 3rd joint CroLASA and Society for Laboratory Animals of Slovenia (SLAS), 1st American Association of Laboratory Animal Enrichment, EFAT/ ESLAV webinar series for techs and vets, IAT Congress, University of Strasbourg Symposium of Culture of Care in Animal Research.

7 REPORT FROM THE DBS ON LICENSING MATTERS

[standing agenda item]

A comprehensive review of progress of each application reviewed by the committee and submitted to the Home Office since the last meeting was discussed.

8 AOCB

a. Policy document has been updated and approved. Currently with registered users to sign by 1st July.

d. The NVS highlighted to the committee the Sex Inclusive Research Framework for evaluating the justification for research proposals involving single sex studies. The document from Nature Communications and the associated web page details have been shared with the research community. The NIO will share these details with the committee. The webpage includes a tool to check whether use of a single sex is justified for a study.

e. The NVS shared that in response to the Animals in Science Committee (ASC) call for evidence in Leading Practise, the University has contributed to the response from the Scottish AWERB hub as well as submission of an individual response (NVS) and an establishment response.

e. The DBS has expressed concern that the current travel ban is impacting the CPD of animal facility staff by severely limiting attendance at training and networking events, where no remote access is possible. The NVS commented that the committee does have a responsibility to ensure that staff involved in the care and welfare of animals are competent and aware of the latest developments in the field. The Convenor, whilst appreciating current difficulties at the Institution, also supported this position. Sources of alternative external funding for travel and meeting attendance was discussed.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

3rd July 2025.

2nd October 2025.

10 ACTION LOG

	Actions	Responsibility	Update
04/07/2024 Item 6 And 23/01/25 Item 6	Replacements. To compile a list of non-animal methods and replacements in the University with the aim to share case studies on the web page	NIO/DBS/ Scientists	Ongoing
31/10/24 Item 3a	To arrange tours of the Facility for committee members who have not yet done so	DBS	Dates shared; awaiting uptake
24/04/25 Item 2a	Update the retrospective review template	DBS/NIO	Completed 30/04/2025. Filed for future use.
24/04/25 Item 2b	Replacing Animal Research Replacement Checklist to be shared with the committee	NIO	30/04/25 Shared via email
24/04/25 Item 6	Videos of voluntary dosing to be shared with the committee	NIO	30/04/25 Shared via email
24/04/25	Share the Sex Inclusive Research Network with the committee	NIO	30/04/25 Shared via email