



The Open University

## ANIMAL ETHICS ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the Animal Ethics Advisory Group held on **Monday 8 December 2008**

Present:

In Attendance:

### 1 APOLOGIES

### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AEAG/08/3/M

Amendment to AEAG/08/2, added to the attendance list. The AEAG approved the remaining minutes as a correct record of the last meeting held on Tuesday 7 October 2008.

### 3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

### 4 LICENCE APPLICATION

AEAG/08/04/1

#### 4.1 – new project licence

gave a presentation and comprehensive overview of proposed research and answered questions posed by AEAG members. These are listed below plus other points of discussion:



- vi. AEAG members commented that the licence was very well put together.

## 5 SUCCESSION PLANNING AND AEAG MEMBERSHIP

5.1 has agreed to serve with AEAG for another year.

5.2 will continue to be a member of AEAG

5.3, therefore the Dean of Science will be approached by the AEAG secretary to suggest candidates as a suitable replacement. The Chair thanked for all her work for AEAG.

## 6 FILMING ANIMAL PROCEDURES

6.1 The Research Defence Society (RDS), now called Understanding Animal Research, <http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/>, has made an initial approach to the OU about filming research carried out in the OU Biological Research Unit (BRU). RDS has approached a variety of organisations and would only film ongoing research, i.e. no research would be carried out solely for the sake of filming. Short video clips would then be posted on their web site with information about the importance of research involving the animals.

6.2 The would contact RDS with an invitation to visit the OU in order to explain the context of the filming. This would follow on from the RDS seminar held at the OU in January 2008 (<http://intranet.open.ac.uk/strategy-unit/offices/ethics/Newsandevents.shtml>). If the filming were to be agreed by the BRU and the Life Sciences Department there may be further discussions required with other interested parties (e.g. Estates and the PVC (Research and Enterprise)).

6.3 The comment was made that such filming does occur in other organisations. Also that it could raise the awareness of OU research using animals, both positively and negatively. Concern was raised as to the wide distribution of the clips and whether they would be kept in context. In addition, would the OU support researchers if the filming goes ahead?



- 6.4 The Life Sciences Management team will discuss the matter further and report back at the next AEAG meeting.

## 7 OPENNESS IN ANIMAL RESEARCH AEAG/08/5/3

- 7.1 This paper was first discussed at AEAG/08/3 and feedback invited from the AEAG. Members commented on the lack of awareness within the Open University on research that involved the use of animals. This may be perceived by some that the Open University is intentionally "hiding" such research from the public and members of staff.
- 7.2 AEAG members commented that if the profile of research that involves the use of animals were raised whether this would be supported by the Open University.
- 7.3 It was **agreed** that the paper needed to be updated and the Chair and Deputy Chair would discuss this and report back to AEAG.

## 8 CONFIDENTIALITY – AEAG BEST PRACTICE

- 8.1 The Deputy Chair tabled a document 'Useful notes on the use of Life Sciences web resources' which contains sections on 'Dealing with confidential information' and 'Passwords – good practice'. These contain information on encrypting electronic documents. Reference was also made to the Information Commissioner's Office document (see Data Protection FAQ - <http://www.open.ac.uk/research-ethics/p2.shtml>).
- 8.2 It was **agreed** that all AEAG documents should contain a confidentiality header or footer or watermark. Also that all AEAG Confidential documents, e.g. research licences, should be left in the meeting room for shredding by the AEAG Secretary or destroyed by individual AEAG members as soon as possible following the meeting.
- 8.3 It was also **agreed** that the Deputy Chair would produce a confidentiality document which all AEAG members would sign.

## 9 AEAG TERMS OF REFERENCE AEAG/08/5/4

It was **agreed** that an AEAG sub-group would meet to discuss the Terms and how they should be updated. The sub-group would comprise:

- They would report to AEAG at the next meeting.

## 10 THE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE UNIT (BRU)

- 10.1 reported that problems with the BRU humidity controls continue and the issue had been noted by the Home Office Inspector. The BRU chiller will need to be replaced next year but there has been some good news in that it will be replaced with two chillers – one as a back up. Work will begin in January 2009.
- 10.2 reported that interviews are taking place to fill the vacancy for a BRU Technician.
- 10.3 application for a project licence has been signed by the University Secretary and sent to the Home Office. It is expected back very soon. Once this has been



received and the animals needed for the research can be ordered. agreed,

## 11 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

11.1 The AEAG Chair asked members to send any information on relevant events or training to the AEAG Secretary for dissemination to the rest of the Group.

11.2 reported that had recently attended a European Coalition for Biomedical Research meeting to address concerns about the revision of the European Directive that regulates the use of animals in medical research (see <http://www.ecbr.eu/> for further information).

## 12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The AEAG Chair extended thanks to on AEAG work. In particular, independent views and contributions to the AEAG

## 12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Week beginning 27 April 2009

Secretary to AEAG  
10 March 2009