

E is for Ethics

In the context of animal research and testing, there is more to 'ethics' than implementing the 3Rs. 'Doing ethics' also encompasses the harm-benefit assessment and [wider issues](#) around what, all things considered, ought to be done.

Many AWERB members say that they do not find identifying and considering ethical issues easy. Unlike the 3Rs, which are practical and usually based on factual information, the definition of an 'ethical issue' can be unclear and there may be reluctance to tackle issues that are viewed as not directly relevant to current practices. It can also be difficult to introduce ethical considerations during project licence review.

However, the legislation requires ethical considerations to be taken into account when evaluating projects, and the 'E' in AWERB is for Ethics. It is essential to raise the issue with your AWERB if you feel that ethical issues are not being effectively identified, discussed or acted on.

Points to consider:

- Would you say that your AWERB 'does ethics'?
- Does your AWERB need any additional perspectives, or training, to enable it to identify, discuss and address ethical issues?
- Could you ask for discussions of relevant topics outside of specific projects, to help the AWERB become more familiar with identifying and critically analysing ethical issues?
- What would your AWERB, as a body, expect to happen as outcomes of the ethical review of projects, and ethical discussions in general?

Resources to help with the above:

RSPCA/LASA [Guiding Principles to Help Deliver the Ethics Learning Outcomes of Module 2 for Personal Licensees](#) - includes further discussion as to what 'ethics' is, and is not, with examples of training exercises that AWERB members might like to do themselves

[Delivering Effective Ethical Review: The AWERB as a 'Forum for Discussion'](#) sets out how to fulfil the task of providing a 'forum for discussion and development of ethical advice to the establishment licence holder on all matters related to animal welfare, care and use at the establishment'

[Putting Ethics into the AWERB](#) - outcome of an RSPCA/LASA/LAVA/IAT AWERB-UK meeting which aimed to help AWERBs that were having difficulty 'doing ethics'

[A Resource Book for Lay Members of Ethical Review and Similar Bodies Worldwide](#) has an appendix on ethics