

Self-assessment for AWERBs

It is important for AWERBs to assess how effectively they are operating, including whether they are fulfilling all of their tasks, to ensure they are achieving their objectives relating to the 3Rs, animal welfare and the Culture of Care. These example self-assessment questions could be reviewed by individuals or small groups, or used as meeting agenda items.

The role, tasks and composition of the AWERB

- ☐ Does the AWERB have defined Terms of Reference and an annual work plan, including objectives relating to all its tasks?
- ☐ Is the AWERB effectively implementing all of its tasks?
- ☐ Does the AWERB include the requisite competencies to ensure that it is functioning effectively?
- ☐ Does the AWERB have a good collective understanding of each of the 3Rs, and does it advise on *all* of these (including Replacement)?
- ☐ Are AWERB members aware that there is more to 'doing ethics' than applying the 3Rs?
- ☐ Does the AWERB conduct a harm-benefit analysis of proposed projects, in a way that is understandable to all?
- ☐ Do members know about the Culture of Care, and the role of the AWERB in helping to define, develop and maintain this locally?
- ☐ Is enough time devoted to planning and holding meetings?
- ☐ Are there effective channels of information into the AWERB, and do people who are responsible for accessing and providing information, either to staff dealing with animals or to the AWERB, have the resources they need?
- ☐ Is the Chair adequately supported, and supportive of the AWERB and its members? For example, do they ensure that all of the above are achieved and that all members are able to participate fully?

Experiences of AWERB members

- ☐ Are members well informed about the establishment's own animal use?
- ☐ Are discussions balanced, with all members feeling that they are able to speak and will be listened to?
- ☐ Is adequate induction and training provided for all members, including the chair?
- ☐ How do AWERB members feel about their individual workloads?

Communications, engagement and support

- ☐ Is the AWERB well supported by senior management?
- ☐ Are communications, and engagement, good between the AWERB and the rest of the establishment?
- ☐ Do researchers view the AWERB positively and are they prepared to act on its advice?
- ☐ Are staff rewarded for participating in the AWERB and its activities?
- ☐ Is the AWERB fully involved in the regional AWERB Hub network set up by the Animals in Science Committee?

- ☐ What role does the AWERB play with respect to internal and external openness?

Resources to help with the above:

The above list is based on the Appendix to the chapter on Ethical Review in the UFAW Handbook on the Care and Management of Laboratory and Other Research Animals, 9th edition ([to be published soon](#))

RSPCA/LASA [Guiding Principles on Good Practice for AWERBs](#) has a stand-alone chapter on each task

[Delivering Effective Ethical Review: the AWERB as a 'Forum for Discussion'](#)

[European Commission Working Document on Animal Welfare Bodies and National](#)

[Committees](#); see especially the section on achieving a successful AW(ER)B on pp 18-19

[RSPCA/LASA Guiding Principles on Developing Induction Materials](#) for

AWERB Members includes examples of induction activities and a self-assessment checklist for members. [This supplement](#) addresses inductions into AWERBs run fully or partly online

The Norwegian National Platform for the 3Rs (Norecopa) hosts the web page for the [International Culture of Care Network](#), which will help your AWERB to fulfil tasks relating to the Culture of Care and includes some resources on assessing the Culture of Care, many aspects of which are relevant to AWERB tasks