

The AWERB Dictionary

A handy guide for AWERB members

1

Quick guide to Acronyms

Use this section to look up any acronyms that come up in AWERB meetings and Project Licences.

2

Definitions for Project Licence reviews

This section contains short definitions of terms that you need to understand to read and review Project Licences.

3

Who's who

This section provides short descriptions of the roles of Named Persons and other key roles working under the ASPA.

More resources for AWERB members can be found in our [AWERB Directory](#).

1

Quick guide to Acronyms

3Rs	The principle of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement
ASC	Animals in Science Committee
ASPA	Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
ASPeL	Animals (Scientific Procedures) e-Licensing system
ASRU	Animals in Science Regulation Unit
AWERB	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
ELH	Establishment Licence Holder - see Who's Who
HBA	Harm-Benefit Analysis
HOI	Home Office Inspector - see Who's Who
HOLC	Home Office Liaison Contact - see Who's Who
HOLTIF	Home Office Liaison, Training, and Information Forum
IAT	Institute of Animal Technology
LASA	Laboratory Animal Science Association
LAVA	Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association
NACWO	Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer - see Who's Who
NIO	Named Information Officer - see Who's Who
NPRC	Named Person Responsible for Compliance - see Who's Who
NTCO	Named Training and Competency Officer - see Who's Who
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
NVS	Named Veterinary Surgeon - see Who's Who
PEL	Establishment Licence
PIL	Personal Licence
POLE	Place Other than a Licensed Establishment
PPL	Project Licence
SC18	Standard condition 18
Sch1	Schedule 1

Definitions

for Project Licence review

ASC	Animals in Science Committee. An independent, statutory body under ASPA which advises the Home Office and AWERBs.
ASRU	Animals in Science Regulation Unit. The unit of the Home Office responsible for implementing ASPA on behalf of the Secretary of State. It comprises inspectors, licensing officers, and those responsible for policy.
Cumulative effect, or cumulative severity	The net impact of a series of events on the welfare of the animals over a period of time, or their entire lifetime. This includes both positive and negative effects of husbandry and experimental procedures. Cumulative effects can have a significant impact on overall severity, e.g. if an animal becomes sensitised to procedures, or habituated ('used to them').
Establishment Licence	Licence granted under ASPA which allows an establishment to carry out regulated procedures and/or the breeding and supply of laboratory animals. Under this licence, the establishment must have at least one Named Veterinary Surgeon, Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer, Named Training and Competency Officer, and Named Information Officer.
Humane endpoint	Clear, predictable criteria that define the point at which pain and/or distress is alleviated (e.g. by ending the experiment or euthanising the animal). The aim is to prevent avoidable suffering whilst still meeting the experimental objectives.
Mild (severity classification)	Procedures in which the animal is likely to experience short-term mild pain, suffering or distress, and no significant impairment to their well-being or general condition. Some examples include: taking a blood sample or non-invasive imaging such as an MRI scan.
Moderate (severity classification)	Procedures in which the animal is likely to experience short-term moderate pain, suffering or distress, or long-lasting mild pain, suffering or distress, or moderate impairment to their well-being or general condition. Some examples include: surgery under general anaesthetic or having daily injections of a drug that causes pain/irritation over a month.
Non-compliance	A breach of the provisions of the ASPA, or a breach of the conditions applied to a licence (e.g. the standard conditions applied to all personal, project, and establishment licences, or additional conditions applied to specific licences).
Non-recovery procedure	A procedure during which the animal is placed under general anaesthetic before the start of the procedure and is humanely killed following the procedure, without ever regaining consciousness.
Personal Licence	A licence issued to an individual conducting regulated animal research procedures. It specifies the species used, the procedures that can be done, and the establishment at which the licensee can carry out animal procedures.

Definitions for Project Licence review

Project Licence	Any research project including regulated procedures on animals must have a Project Licence. This contains background information and scientific justification for the study, and lists which procedures can be done, the species and numbers of animals that can be used, and how the 3Rs will be implemented.
Protected animal	Under ASPA, 'protected animals' are all living vertebrates (other than humans) including certain immature forms, and cephalopods (e.g. octopus, cuttlefish, squid). Mammals, birds, and reptiles are 'protected' once they reach the last third of their gestation/incubation period. Larval fish and amphibians are 'protected' once they can feed independently, and cephalopods are 'protected' when they hatch.
Protocol	A procedure or series of procedures carried out for a particular purpose as part of an authorised project. A Project Licence will often comprise several distinct protocols.
Regulated procedure	Any procedure performed on a 'protected' animal covered by ASPA, considered to cause a similar or greater level of pain, suffering, distress, or lasting harm as the introduction of a hypodermic needle through the skin.
Reduction	Ensuring that the minimum number of animals is used to answer the scientific question, using effective experimental design and statistical analysis to optimise numbers and avoid wasting animals.
Refinement	Reducing suffering and improving welfare throughout animals' lives, including procedures, housing, husbandry and care.
Replacement	Methods which avoid or replace animal use, such as cell culture or new technologies like organ-on-a-chip, or computer-based methods.
Retrospective assessment	The formal retrospective assessment of selected projects, which must be submitted to the Home Office. This includes all projects using dogs, cats, horses, and non-human primates, and projects using any species that include 'severe' procedures. The assessment includes a review of actual harms to animals, whether the objectives were achieved, and elements that could further contribute to the 3Rs.
Retrospective review	The requirement to follow the development and outcomes of all projects, taking into account the effect on the animals used, and to identify and advise on elements that could further contribute to the 3Rs. This is one of the tasks of the AWERB.
Standard Condition 18	This project licence standard condition requires the licence holder to notify the Secretary of State if the severity limits permitted in the Project Licence, have been or are likely to be, breached.

Definitions

for Project Licence review

Schedule 1	The list of appropriate methods that may be used to humanely kill animals covered by the ASPA, based on species and life-stage.
Severe (severity category)	Procedures in which the animal is likely to experience severe pain, suffering or distress, or long-lasting moderate pain, suffering or distress, or severe impairment of their well-being or general condition. Examples include: Any test where the endpoint (end of the study) is the death of the animal, a disease/disorder in which the animal feels severe or chronic pain that cannot be appropriately controlled with pain relief.
Severity category	This is assigned to a protocol based on the highest level of pain, suffering, distress, or lasting harm likely to be experienced by any animal in that protocol, after applying all appropriate refinement techniques.
Specially protected species	Cats, dogs, non-human primates, and equids. These species are subject to additional regulations under ASPA and must not be used if any other animal species could be used instead.
Standard conditions	Each type of Licence (Establishment, Project, and Personal) is granted subject to a list of standard conditions which lay out specific requirements and restrictions.
Sub-threshold	Procedures that are below the threshold for regulation under the ASPA - i.e. causing pain, suffering, distress, or lasting harm that is less than the introduction of a hypodermic needle through the skin.

Who's who



Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO)

NACWOs are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day care and welfare of the animals in the establishment. They are likely to be the first point of contact for any welfare-related issues at the establishment and should be active members at the AWERB.

Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS)

The NVS is a designated vet with expertise in lab animal medicine. The NVS should be very familiar with the species used at the establishment and will provide veterinary care where needed, as well as advising on implementation of the 3Rs and improving the well-being of the animals.



Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO)

The NTCO is responsible for ensuring that everyone working with animals at the establishments is adequately educated, competent and continuously trained. This includes supervising staff until they are competent to work alone.

Establishment Licence Holder (ELH)

The ELH (or PELh) is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the ASPA and the conditions of the establishment licence are complied with. They receive advice from the local AWERB. The ELH usually also holds the role of **Named Person Responsible for Compliance (NPRC)**.



Named Information Officer (NIO)

The NIO ensures that staff working with animals have access to all the up-to-date information they require, e.g. about caring for animals, performing procedures, the 3Rs, non-animal methods, and regulations.

Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC)

The HOLC is involved in administrative management and can act as the central point of communication between the establishment and the Home Office to facilitate the smooth running of the licensing system at the establishment. Note: this role is not legally required.



Home Office Inspector (HOI)

The HOI advises the Secretary of State on applications for ASPA licences, visits licensed establishments to assure standards comply with ASPA, reviews non-compliances and recommends which actions should be taken.