

Ethical review of Non ASPA Activities at the University of Sussex

Andy Cunningham 24th February 2021



About me

- 40 years experience – Manager for 35 years
- Worked in all sectors – Pharma, Supplier, Contract Research, Academia, and Agrochemical
- Worked with all common laboratory animals and wildlife species
- Active on IAT Council for many years
- Development of staff, promoting role of animal technologists, ethical and welfare aspects of role
- University of Sussex since March 2018
- Member of SE AWERB HUB and previously NE HUB

Introduction

Ethical Review

- Aspiration for the University to review all Non ASPA submissions and use of animal derived materials in teaching and research internally and externally
- Principle that all animal research needs ethics review embedded in University Code of Practice for Research
- Policy – The Management and Review of Research and Teaching Activities Involving Animals – (Non ASPA)
- AWERB reports into Research Governance and Quality Assurance Committee (RGQAC)

Introduction

Ethical Review

- AWERB – meets four times a year
- Applications Review Group (ARG) – new PPL applications, amendments, Non ASPA where applicable (ad – hoc)
- Scope : Research and Teaching in Schools of Life Sciences and Psychology and Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS)

Process

Pre Application to determine approval requirements

Streamline process – review by NVS/NACWO

Intended to minimise time and resource taken to review

Initial review of project to determine if there are ethical/animal welfare issues to be considered by ARG

Blanket approval of procedures/protocols – e.g sampling, observation, pitfall traps

Approval granted – AWERB made aware at quarterly meetings

Approval required by ARG full application to be submitted for ARG review

Process Pre Application

- Title of Research Project: “Nature cameras and garden birds their efficacy for viable census data and increasing connection to nature”
- Proposed start date and duration
- Brief summary
- General Information
 - Teaching or research
 - Lab or field based or both
 - UK or overseas
 - Species involved
 - Licences or permissions
 - Activities e.g observation, trapping,

Process

Full application for approval

Full application to be considered by ARG

More “formal” application focusing on harm benefit analysis, animal welfare, funding,

Process Full Application

- Title of Research Project: “Ongoing ecological fieldwork”
- Proposed start date and duration
- Grant awarding body/status
- Relevant guidelines
- Current knowledge which project intends to build
- Harm benefit analysis
- Species and number of animals
- Consideration of 3 R's
- Location of research
- If project is in the wild impact on social group/other species

Process Full Application

- If animal are to be removed from the wild describe housing and care
- What kind of procedures
- What physiological and behavioural effects
- How will animal welfare be assessed
- Supervisor statement of support

Examples

“Examining bird colour vision throughout colour space (behavioural study)”

“Integrating anthropological methods and innovative research tools for community-based coral reef and fisheries conservation in Indonesia”

“Nature cameras and garden birds, their efficacy for viable census data and increasing connection to nature”

“Empathy and connectedness between domestic animals and humans”

“Ongoing ecological fieldwork” example of several protocols being approved

“Assessing the species pool of ground beetles on and around campus”

“Herring Gull behaviour patterns in response to humans”

“The social communicative behaviours of domestic cats when faced with unsolvable tasks”

Successes

Chick/Finch study in Australia

Title: Examining bird colour vision throughout colour space (behavioural study)

Species – Chickens, Finches and Budgerigars

After UoS review request made to institution to increase size of enclosures to comply with UK Home Office Code of Practice – request agreed and amended submission reviewed by Institutions ethics committee and change approved.

Animal Derived Products

- List collated of animal derived products from Life Sciences, Psychology and Brighton and Sussex Medical School
- Anatomy – predominantly hearts, heads, brains, intestinal tracts obtained from abattoirs
- Animal tissues slides – education supplier
- Defibrinated horse blood – TCS
- Lamprey/dog fish – bait suppliers
- Insect specimens - Metabugs

Animal Derived Products

Supplier statement: “Most of the specimens offered for dissection are products of the food industry. For example, fetal pigs, organs of sheep, cow and pigs, fish, crayfish, and frogs are all products of the food industry.

Most of the fetal pigs we preserve are stillborn. They would normally be a waste by-product, but we preserve them for educational purposes. Sheep, cow, and pig organs come from animals slaughtered for meat. Fish, including dogfish sharks, come from commercial fishing interests and would normally have been used for human consumption. The bullfrogs and grass frogs we preserve come from agricultural sources and would have been sold for frog legs.

The cats and dogs we preserve for dissection come from governmentally operated or regulated humane shelters. They are dead when we receive them, having been euthanized at the shelters under their policies and on their schedules. They would have been euthanized regardless of whether we were involved. We repurpose them for educational use rather than having them go to waste.

The humane treatment of animals, and the sustainability of animal populations, are very important”

Animal Derived Products

Supplier statement:

“All of our samples are a by-product of the food industry and no animals have been specifically slaughtered for these samples. As such all animals have been slaughtered in a humane and legal way under the direction of the food standards agency. We feel using by-products is a sound ethical way to provide high quality dissection specimens for the classroom”

Future refinements/plans

- How to ensure all activities are captured and ethically reviewed
- Link to grant funding process?
- Procurement links – mainly to assist with animal derived products
- Reviews of Non ASPA projects by ARG (AWERB) – number of projects, outputs, refinements