Minutes

Date Friday, 09/03/2018
Time 10:00 AM
To Standing Committee
At
Subject AWERB Sub-Standing Committee
Our Ref

In attendance:

Apologies:

Review meeting to discuss the changes introduced to the University AWERB governance and processes introduced since the end of 2015.

The committee discussed the following:

- The current committee structure including tasks covered by the AWERB Standing Committees, 3Rs Committee and Named Persons Committee.
- The UBS Operational Committees, who these are attended by and how they fit into the overarching structure.
- Communication between all the committees and how information is disseminated to the various members.
- The difficulties around the virtual amendment committees in regards to the time it takes to receive responses from those selected, getting researchers to join the pool of scientists available and the impact this has on delays.

The committee agreed the following recommendations:

- To have the AWERB Secretariats provide verbal updates of relevant activities from the AWERB committee they serve to other AWERB committees.
- The UBSGS and FOMS minutes to become agenda items at the AWERB Standing, AWERB 3Rs and AWERB NPC meetings.
- All minutes from the AWERB meetings to be circulated to all committees members.
- The AWERB Sub and Standing Committees should become known as the AWERB Standing Committee only as the agendas are now the same. The committee will meet on average twice a month.
- The chairs of the User Group meetings and their deputies should encourage all research groups to send at least one representative from their group to attend these meetings.

The committee discussed the following:

- Concern raised by individuals who are not AWERB committee members around the complexity of the University AWERB structure.
- Various other AWERB structures, how these would work and concerns that if these were implemented, they would cause duplication of work and variable standards being applied.
• The introduction of an AWERB bookings spreadsheet to give transparency to those that book in applications and administer the AWERB process.
• Examples of when extra AWERB Standing committee meetings have been organised to ensure delays are minimised.
• The lack of control the committee has over when the applicant begins writing their new application or amendment in regards to delays.

The committee agreed the following recommendations:
• The current structure stays in place for the foreseeable future now it is in place and working well.

The committee discussed the following:
• The impact of AWERB on the researchers and the various ways the committee and the AWERB process is interpreted by the applicant.
• The need for the committee to sufficiently understand the science in order to consider its potential ethical and welfare impact and therefore the need for researchers to justify and explain their science during the meeting.
• The inclusion of a scientist into the AWERB committee in the form of a small team of ‘core scientists’ who attend the meetings. At the beginning of 2018 a rota for this was introduced reducing the number of meetings they need to attend.
• The role of ‘specialist scientist’ to provide additional scientific expertise.
• The opportunity given to applicants during the process of drafting or about to draft their new project applications to attend AWERB either as a specialist scientist or an observer, giving the applicant another perspective.
• The perception of AWERB in regards to the applicant and their research.
• The committee’s responsibility for the welfare of animals in research and the level of seriousness at which this is taken. It was agreed the researchers similarly respected the welfare of the animals they use.
• The continuation of a collaborative approach (in regards to the AWERB process) to ensure relationships with researchers are always improving. It was noted by the committee that this needed to be a two way process and they relied on the researchers having a positive attitude towards the process.
• It was noted by the committee that they would like to encourage the output of constructive ideas and suggestions as to how the AWERB experience can be improved for researches.
• The committee reviewed the two AWERB Annual Reports (2015/16) & (2016/18) and the UBS committee structure.
• Minor changes to the AWERB Handbook that need to be made before it is circulated.
• Minor amendments’ in sections 3 and 4 and consideration given to rewording questions 4.1 and 4.2 in the Retrospective Review and Retrospective Assessment forms.
• The new AWERB slide templates that after minor changes are working well.

The committee agreed the following recommendations:
• The guidance on how to use the Power Point template should be included as Notes Pages in the Power Point.
• The order of the 3Rs section of the Power Point is amended.
• The possibility of eliciting researcher feedback after each AWERB meeting. Careful consideration would need to be given before implementation.
Date of next meeting: AWERB Standing Committee Meeting: 28/03/2018 & 06/04/2018