



Minutes of the Board meeting

1 October 2020

Present:

Professor Kevin Shakesheff (KS) *Chair*

Professor Chris Denning (CD)

Mr Paul Brooker (PB)

Professor Paul Evans (PE)

Mr Paul Finnemore (PF)

Professor Paul Garside (PG)

Professor Christopher George (CG)

Dr Frances Rawle (FR)

Ms Linda Horan (LH)

Dr David Lovell (DL)

Dr Vicky Robinson (VR)

Professor Blanca Rodriguez (BR)

Dr Sadhana Sharma (SS)

Professor Jon Timmis (JT)

Professor Lucy Walker (LW)

Office:

Dr Suzanne McArdle (SM) *item 4*

Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*

Emma Stokes (ES) *item 5*

Apologies:

Dr Sally Robinson (SR)

1. Welcome

1.1. KS welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2. KS and VR thanked outgoing members, PB, CD, PF, BR and LW for their contributions and wise counsel over the years, which has been invaluable in the growth of the NC3Rs.

2. QQR update

2.1. On 22 September, KS, VR and SM attended the preliminary meeting of the NC3Rs quinquennial review (QQR). A closed session was held to update the Board and provide members with a summary of the external reviews and commentary received.

2.2. The QQR committee will reconvene for the main meetings on 5 and 6 November. KS, VR, SM and Programme leads will be attending along with the NC3Rs previous Board Chair, Professor Sir Stephen Holgate.

3. Update on NC3Rs activities

3.1. VR updated the Board on core business activities. This included:

NC3Rs Mission

VR presented an updated mission statement to the Board for discussion. Members agreed that this was an opportune time for the NC3Rs to review its mission following the submission of the QQR and provided comments for consideration.

It was agreed that the revision of the mission statement would be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

Research funding and early career awards

- A total of seven awards were made under the 2020 call for Project grants.
- The eligibility criteria for the Skills and Knowledge Transfer scheme have been updated to allow applications to be submitted from small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- 39 applications have been received for the 2020 Training Fellowship call. The Training Fellowship Assessment Panel will meet in November.
- 77 applications were received for the 2020 PhD Studentships call, of which 38 were shortlisted during the triage stage.
- Due to ongoing disruption caused by COVID-19, the annual NC3Rs Summer School was held virtually over four days in July. The programme included an interactive session offering tips for communicating 3Rs impacts. Students were also able to benefit from one-to-one experimental design sessions. Despite the revised format the event was a success with the team receiving positive feedback from the students.
- A total of 11 articles have been published on the NC3Rs gateway. Since its launch, the articles have had 15,721 views, 2,580 downloads and been cited 39 times with 11 citations referring to using the methods described. There are two additional method papers awaiting publication following the completion of pre-publication checks by F1000. The Board will be updated after the gateway advisory board meeting in February.

CRACK IT

- Three Two Phase and two Single Phase Challenges have been launched for the 2020 competition with co-funding secured from Unilever, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). The deadline for applications is 5 and 12 November.

Office-led programmes

- ARRIVE 2.0 has been published and a new dedicated website has been launched to promote the revised guidelines.
- 27 research proposals were reviewed through the Peer Review Service between July and September.
- There has been a soft launch of the 3Rs self-assessment tool (SAT) ahead of wider promotion in 2021.
- The possibility of awarding Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in recognition of stakeholders' active engagement with the 3Rs is being explored.
- A new resource hub on breeding and colony management has been established for researchers and technicians returning to laboratories after lockdown.

4. Finance update

- 4.1. SM provided the Board with an update on the outlook for the NC3Rs short-term finances and discussed the management of accounts for financial year (FY) 2020/21. A number of challenges were highlighted including the uncertainty of future financial budgets due to the outstanding QQR and the continued impact of COVID-19 on both the NC3Rs activities and those of its stakeholders.

5. Communications update

- 5.1. ES presented the NC3Rs Communication and Engagement Strategy to the Board, highlighting objectives for the next five years, plans for delivery and the metrics that will be used to assess progress.
- 5.2. ES also highlighted the success of the NC3Rs collaboration with five European 3Rs centres, Charité 3R, The Danish 3R-Center, The Swedish 3Rs Center, The Swiss 3R Competence Centre and 3Rs-Centre Utrecht Life Sciences, in hosting a series of webinars showcasing the latest 3Rs opportunities. Feedback from all parties has been very positive and has led to plans for continued collaboration.

6. AOB

- 6.1 There were no AOB items.