

Ten top tips for a successful AWERB

Every AWERB brings its own local standards, expertise and perspectives to bear when implementing its tasks, and should be tailored to address local requirements, practices and resources. It is an establishment's responsibility to decide how the AWERB should be organised and managed, as long as it meets the basic requirements set out in section 10 of the [Guidance to the Animals \(Scientific Procedures\) Act 1986](#).



However, some principles apply to all AWERBs, and these ten top tips will help you reflect on whether yours is operating optimally. You may like to suggest focusing on these one at a time, for example by including each as an agenda item. They are based on section 2 of the [RSPCA/LASA Guiding Principles on Good Practice Guidelines for AWERBs](#), which goes into more detail for each of these points.

1. Ensure that senior management understands and is demonstrably committed to the AWERB. This includes providing adequate leadership and support, including an appropriate budget
2. Ensure that the aims and expected outcomes of the AWERB are well thought through and clear, avoiding unnecessary duplication
3. Make sure that in discharging its functions the AWERB 'adds value' over and above the work of other external or internal bodies, such as the Animals in Science Regulation Unit or internal 3Rs committees
4. Make sure all the AWERB functions are addressed in some way - does time spent on project review detract from other important functions?
5. Think carefully about the selection of participants, including people with different skills, perspectives and seniority. An effective Chair is especially important
6. Make sure the process is organised efficiently, e.g., could the AWERB receive reports from individuals or groups already fulfilling some of the tasks, freeing up time? Could short video meetings supplement the main meetings? Is there enough administrative support?
7. Ensure that there is effective communication between all parts of the AWERB and any other bodies that affect its work: ensure that all staff know what the AWERB is for, why it is important, who is involved and how it affects them
8. Be reactive and responsive to the needs of AWERB 'users', including all licence holders and animal unit staff. Is there effective, two-way communication?
9. At intervals, re-evaluate the AWERB's aims and outcomes and see whether its operation is efficient and appropriate
10. Try to interact with and share ideas for good practice with participants in other AWERBs and the Animals in Science Committee, for example via the regional AWERB Hub network and meetings held by bodies such as the RSPCA and LASA

For more resources like this, see the [AWERB Directory](#) from the RSPCA [Animals in Science Department](#)

