

LASA POSITION PAPER

Education and Training

Background

Under the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), there are formal training requirements for those wishing to carry out scientific procedures on live animals or who will be responsible for such projects. To meet these needs, a number of commercial and non-commercial courses have been established, accredited by either the Institute of Biology or the Universities Accreditation Group. In addition, however, education and training of those involved in the care or use of laboratory animals is dependent on the availability of current information, both by means of publications and meetings and the provision of continuing education programmes.

LASA Position

LASA believes that education and training is a prerequisite for, and is pivotal to, the understanding and practice of the science and welfare of laboratory animals. A primary object of the Association, as stated in the Bylaws, is therefore to encourage education and training in laboratory animal science. Education and training should be regarded as a continuing process. In addition to the need to maintain knowledge and skills, it is essential also to maintain a process of continuing professional development (CPD) in order to ensure such knowledge is regularly updated to take account of new developments and emerging technologies. LASA facilitates this process by the following: -

LASA organises an annual meeting in order to present current information on an aspect or aspects of laboratory animal science and welfare. In addition, LASA makes a major contribution to educating and training its own members and those of the general scientific community through its five Scientific Sections. These individual Sections cover Alternatives, Animal Health and Nutrition, Management, Toxicology and Pathology, and Transgenic Animals. Each Section normally holds two meetings annually and reports are published either in the LASA Newsletter or in *Laboratory Animals*, which is LASA's official journal.

Formal interactions are maintained with other organisations with common interests, such as the Institute of Animal Technology (IAT), the British Laboratory Animal Veterinary Association (BLAVA), the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations (FELASA) and the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS), and with the Home Office. Through these interactions, LASA is able to input to recommendations such as those of FELASA relating to the education and training of persons involved within the care and use of laboratory animals, and to monitor the impact of scientific advances and emerging technologies on the supply, use and welfare of laboratory animals and be in a position to provide guidance on current best practice.

LASA is compiling a series of Guidelines on Good Practice in various areas of laboratory animal science. These Guidelines are being published and made available to all licensees in the UK in order to be a reference on the current state of knowledge in individual areas, such as anaesthesia and analgesia. They will be updated as necessary.

LASA has identified and further acted upon the need to provide continuing education and training by the formation of an Ethics and Training Working Group, which reports directly to LASA Council. A key initiative of this group has been to organise, in collaboration with the Home Office, a series of workshops for holders of Project Licences under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, in order to provide a forum for discussion and continuing education on topics for those persons directly responsible for the management of projects. LASA believes a similar forum should be provided for Certificate Holders under ASPA.

Education and training on an ongoing basis is essential for all involved in the care and use of laboratory animals. LASA is a key organisation in providing the resources to enable this and is positioned to develop these resources further, in discussion with other organisations and the relevant authorities.

