TRAINING OF PERSONNEL WORKING WITH ANIMALS IN SCIENCE

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The following is a selection of frequently asked questions (and their respective answers) concerning the *CCAC guidelines on: training of personnel working with animals in science* (2015).

1. WHY DID THE *CCAC GUIDELINES ON: INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL USER TRAINING* (1999) NEED REVISION?

The training guidelines were published over 15 years ago and were in need of extensive revision to reflect changes in the manner in which training is being delivered by institutions and to address issues that had arisen during the implementation of the 1999 guidelines.

2. WHAT ARE THE KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 1999 GUIDELINES AND THE NEW *CCAC GUIDELINES ON: TRAINING OF PERSONNEL WORKING WITH ANIMALS IN SCIENCE* (2015)?

The basis of the revision of the 1999 training guidelines was to:

- shift from a focus on mandatory training to mandatory knowledge, skills, and competency;
- clarify who should receive training;
- remove the requirement for a five-year refresher course;
- add reference to the CCAC training modules; and
- make clarifications to the CCAC *Recommended Syllabus for an Institutional Animal User Training Program*.

3. WHY DO THE GUIDELINES FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND COMPETENCY, RATHER THAN ON MANDATORY TRAINING?

Competency refers to the ability to effectively perform a particular task in relation to the care and maintenance of animals or the conduct of animal-based procedures, while ensuring that the welfare of the animals is protected to the greatest extent possible. Focusing on competency rather than training acknowledges that there may be a variety of ways of acquiring the knowledge and skills, and that different individuals learn at different speeds and in different ways.

4. HOW SHOULD COMPETENCY BE EVALUATED?

It is the responsibility of institutions to determine how best to evaluate the competency of their personnel. This should include establishing a priori benchmarks for competency in a particular task. In addition, post-approval monitoring provides the opportunity for institutions to be assured that the procedures are being performed competently and to implement additional training where necessary.

5. WHO SHOULD RECEIVE TRAINING?

Section 5 of the *CCAC guidelines on: training of personnel working with animals in science* (2015) details the CCAC's expectations for the following groups of people involved in animal-based science: investigators, post-doctoral fellows, research staff, graduate students, teachers and study directors, as well as undergraduate students, veterinarians and animal care technicians. The training requirements for each of these groups can be quite different as it should be targeted towards achieving competency in tasks relevant to the particular procedures, animals, and equipment that they will be working with.

6. SHOULD UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE SAME TRAINING AS INVESTIGATORS?

If undergraduate students are to be involved in carrying out animal-based procedures, for example during their honours project, then they should receive theoretical training and hands-on training to ensure that they are competent to carry out the procedures. For those students who are not directly involved with animals, the CCAC expects any animal-related activities to be carried out under close supervision.

7. WHAT ABOUT INVESTIGATORS AND OTHERS WHO ARE VISITING AN INSTITUTION?

Where visiting investigators lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and competency to carry out animal-based procedures as described on the animal-based protocols, there must be close supervision until appropriate levels of competency are demonstrated.

8. HOW FREQUENTLY SHOULD TRAINING BE OFFERED?

The shift to a competency-based approach means that training can be tailored to an individual's needs, rather than being delivered to a pre-determined schedule. Those involved in animal-based studies should receive training in a timely fashion that permits them to be able to carry out procedures competently.

9. WHAT MATERIALS DOES THE CCAC PROVIDE TO ASSIST INSTITUTIONS WITH TRAINING?

The CCAC *Recommended Syllabus for an Institutional Animal User Training Program*, Appendix 1 to the *CCAC guidelines on: training of personnel working with animals in science* (2015), lists elements that should be incorporated into the theoretical component of an institution's training program as a basis for investigators, post-doctoral fellows, research staff, graduate students, teachers and study directors to

achieve competence in the procedures that they need to perform. The CCAC also provides training modules to support the implementation of the Recommended Syllabus by institutions, and quizzes which can be used by institutions to evaluate understanding of the course material.

10. DO INSTITUTIONS HAVE TO USE THE CCAC RECOMMENDED SYLLABUS AND TRAINING MODULES?

No, institutions are not required to use either the CCAC Recommended Syllabus or the CCAC training modules. These are provided as resources for institutions. However, the Recommended Syllabus does list the topics which the CCAC expects institutions to cover in their training programs for those working with animals, and these topics should be covered by whatever method the institution chooses.