



A GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING ANIMAL WELFARE, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS

Created for Global Research Education & Training LLC

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INTRODUCTION

Global Research Education & Training (GR8) recognizes the need for global standards in the care and use of laboratory animals, and promotes training as critical to ensuring animal welfare and quality science. To that end, a comprehensive assessment strategy can serve as a driver for enhancing existing internal training programs as well as harmonizing the approach to global audits of external CROs wherever animal research is conducted.

A team of highly experienced training professionals from the laboratory animal research community worked with GR8 to develop this strategy, which is designed to effect change in the way our global community implements training. Our goal is to expand the scope and dynamics of an institution's training program.

Our approach facilitates assessment of an institution's top-level commitment to sustaining a culture of care through training. The strategy provides a framework of targeted questions that enable an internal or external "auditor" to evaluate the breadth and depth of an institution's training program. This assessment framework is built on over-arching principles that support and promote the highest possible standards of animal welfare and science.

The use of animals in biomedical research is under constant scrutiny. The pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry is under continuous pressure to increase revenue streams, reduce costs and improve the time-to-market. The drive to capture emerging markets has led to a trend towards outsourcing work. We are also seeing a growing convergence and adoption of international regulatory standards; however, the public continues to harbor concerns over the relative quality of work and the standards of animal care. Recognizing the changing environment, GR8 was founded to promote a global standard of training and development to ensure animal welfare wherever biomedical research is conducted.

The ability to conduct a range of biomedical studies, deliver high quality data while continually refining the technical and animal welfare practices employed, is a fundamental expectation. Animal welfare is key to quality science and training is key to animal welfare.

A comprehensive training & compliance program promotes:

- A Culture of Care
- Quality Science and Technology
- High Regard for Animal Welfare
- Public Trust and Enhanced Reputation

- Professionalism
- Stakeholder Confidence
- Innovation & Quality

Growing a successful and diversified research organization depends upon a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable training, education and development program. This global strategy provides the framework for developing or evaluating an institution's commitment to training through a series of fundamental questions. These questions are based on the following over-arching principles:

- A culture of continuous learning improves animal welfare and promotes quality science
- Individuals learn from the behaviors of others and from every day experiences
- The attitude and receptiveness to learning affects training outcomes
- Quality of training is heavily influenced by the trainer and available resources
- Understanding of the how and why is fundamental to competency, proficiency and continuous improvement

Conclusion

A comprehensive training program is vital to animal welfare and quality science. Generally, the importance of training isn't recognized until it's too late. The cost of making a mistake in research may be catastrophic, so it's best to teach good habits from the start.

This tool was developed to assist organizations in assessing animal training programs. Organizations developing a training program, who want to get it right from the start, may also find this tool useful. It is designed to be flexible in order to meet the users' needs.

Copies of this global strategy can be found at www.GR8TT.com.

TRUST TRAINING

Sustainability

Is the scope and content of the training program clearly defined and approved by the Attending Veterinarian?

Are the component parts of the training program subject to formal review and routine update? Describe the review process including how personnel from across the animal care program are represented.

Does the program have the necessary scope and flexibility to develop the potential of all personnel?

Does the program allow time, materials and opportunities to develop competency and refine skills? Describe the process.

Does the accountability for the training program reside at a governing level within the institution? At what level, and with whom does it reside? Describe the training materials, equipment and facilities.

How does institutional investment in the training program impact the animal welfare as well as technical and scientific consistency?

Demonstrate that senior management recognize training as a priority activity throughout the organization.

Is there a framework for continuing professional development that includes all personnel within the animal care program?

What opportunities exist for personnel to remain current with evolving industry trends and standards?

How are all levels of staff provided with enough information to allow them to appreciate the cost to the animal vs. the scientific objectives?

Describe strategies for engaging all personnel, including those not directly involved in animal work, in promoting animal welfare.

Train the Trainers

What are your criteria for selecting individuals who perform formal training?

How does the program provide trainers with the opportunity to exchange ideas and develop their training skills in a collaborative and progressive manner?

How are trainers provided with the requisite skills to develop the potential of others, and how do they remain conversant with the latest training trends and techniques?

Explain the strategies used to ensure an effective balance between experiential and academic learning.

What opportunities exist for trainers to develop their communication and presentation skills?

How does the program evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the trainer and what strategies are used to remediate any shortfalls?

What opportunities do the trainers have to remain current within their field of expertise?

How does management ensure that trainers are provided with the necessary time and resources to prepare and deliver training?

Reduction, Replacement, Refinement (3 Rs) and Respect

Describe the training with regard to the 3Rs. How are these concepts applied across the institution?

Does the scope and content of the training program provide the trainee with the ability to:

- ✚ Recognize the humane, ethical and scientific importance of the 3Rs
- ✚ Recognize normal clinical condition and species-specific behaviors
- ✚ Identify signs or conditions that may be indicative of pain/distress or justification for premature euthanasia.
- ✚ Alleviate pain/distress
- ✚ Determine humane endpoints and euthanize animals in a competent and professional manner.
- ✚ Utilize literature searches and statistical analysis to reduce the number of animals used

How are personnel who work with animals trained to recognize behaviors, both normal and abnormal, and implement effective enrichment strategies?

How are personnel instructed to respond to or report inappropriate handling of an animal?

Initial Assessment & Reassessment of Competency

Is there a defined program in place, and does it encompass all personnel involved in the animal care program?

Does the assessment program evaluate both practical skills and theoretical knowledge (how, why and what are the potential adverse effects of safety risks)?

Does the scope of the assessment program encompass all in-life procedures from receipt through euthanasia?

How are assessors selected, approved and authorized to assess competency? What process is in place to verify the integrity of the competency sign-off?

Is the assessment frequency sufficient to promote a high regard for animal welfare as well as technical and scientific consistency?

Does the documentation of training and assessment provide traceability and promote accountability from the trainer and trainee.

Animal Facility

Describe your training program for monitoring, recording and remediating environmental problems in the animal facility.

How are personnel educated about the potential impact of variables to animal welfare and experimental results in an animal room?

Describe your training program for cage and room sanitation including the selection and use of cleaning chemicals.

How are employees trained to monitor; prevent and if necessary treat for vermin control?

Occupational Safety

Describe your employee health and safety training program. How do you assess the effectiveness of this training?

How are people informed of potential hazardous agents, chemicals, zoonotic risks or allergens in their work environment?

Do you incorporate safe work practices into your training program? Please describe your program /methods.

Handling, Restraint and Behavior

Describe how your training program ensures that handling, restraint and manipulation minimize distress.

Describe your training program pertaining to species-specific behavior and clinical conditions.

How do you evaluate proficiency in the handling of animals with various health or study conditions?

How are personnel trained in the appropriate selection and use of mechanical restraints?

Technical Procedures

Is the Attending Veterinarian accessible to research personnel and able to provide and present meaningful training material, guidance and information?

Does the training program place adequate emphasis on the importance of pre-procedural planning as well as error prevention and resolution?

How does your program ensure trainers provide consistent content and training quality for all trainees?

What guidance and information are trainees given to recognize and alleviate pain and distress?

Does the program provide trainees with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, assess and respond to adverse or emergency situations?

What is the process to support trainees while developing procedural skills with sentient beings?

How does the institution safeguard the welfare of the animals during and following training sessions?

Post-Approval Monitoring

Describe your post-approval monitoring program.

What are your criteria for selecting individuals who perform post-approval monitoring?

How are the individuals who perform post-approval monitoring trained?

Documentation

How do you ensure consistency in your training program?

Do you have standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place? Do all personnel know where and how to locate SOPs?

Describe your training materials. Do you have training documents for trainers to use when delivering training or assessing competency?

Describe your process for managing previous versions of SOPs and training materials.

Describe your process for recording education, training and competency. Who records the training? Where are these records maintained? Who has access to these records?

How do you document that all personnel are currently competent to perform the procedures associated with their role?

Career Progression

A progressive and well-defined career progression scheme promotes high quality work, employee retention and adds value to the business. How does your institution support this ideal, and how is this communicated to staff?

