

Annex 6

The FELASA Accreditation Scheme

The original recommendations for education and training of persons working with experimental animals (Council of Europe, 1993) and the more detailed elaboration of these (FELASA 1995, FELASA 1999, FELASA 2000) addressed neither the depth of study nor the process and quality of training. Courses established by different training providers varied considerably in content, emphasis and length. To assure the quality of education and training FELASA, introduced an accreditation scheme in 2002 designed to promote responsible and high quality science, facilitate free movement of personnel between countries and to assist with further harmonisation (FELASA, 2002).

The accreditation scheme is operated by the FELASA Teaching and Training (T&T) Board, on behalf of the FELASA Board. Courses approved as meeting criteria laid down by FELASA for each of the categories A, B, C and D are described as offering "FELASA accredited training" for the duration of the validity of the approval; details can be listed on the FELASA website and elsewhere and Course Organisers are invited to periodic update sessions organised by the T&T Board. Programmes are recognised only if they lead to full development of competencies in the various categories. To promote global mutual recognition, accreditation may also be considered for educational programs accredited by well-established non-European bodies which the T&T Board considers lead to the development of compatible competencies.

Applicants for accreditation are required to submit to the Board the following information:

- Details of the curriculum including main topics and subheadings together with an account of the time allocated to each, detailing variations (where these exist) from the respective guidelines and explaining the rationale for these;
- A statement confirming compliance with national or international regulations and guidelines;
- An account of teaching methodologies and the way in which these deployed;
- Details of the teaching materials used including manuals or texts, audiovisual aids, computer software, handouts etc;
- The frequency with which the courses or programmes are offered and the anticipated number of students attending each;
- A statement confirming that the course has been run at least twice prior to the date of application; the Board reviews examination results and student evaluations;
- A description of the way in which practical competencies are developed and assessed, including arrangements for student supervision and safeguarding animal welfare;
- Examples of marked student assessments, records of examination results and criteria for assessing competence;
- A description of the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of course delivery, including examples of student evaluations;
- Evidence that opportunities for improving the learning environment are identified and introduced as appropriate;
- A brief statement identifying the principal teachers and why each has been selected to deliver the relevant topic.

This information is reviewed by the T&T Board which may seek supplementary information and clarification on particular topics. Accreditation is awarded either for a period of five years in the case of competence for persons either designing (C) or conducting (B) experimental procedures or for 10 years in the case of animal caretakers (A) and laboratory animal specialists (D).

Organisers of each accredited course are required to submit an annual report, in a prescribed format, confirming adherence to the conditions specified on the application, or identifying deviations from these and explaining why they were introduced. The Board expects courses to evolve and improve over time, and encourages course organisers to reflect on the effectiveness of course delivery. The T&T Board considers this annual report at its formal meetings, and may accept it, seek additional clarification, or in exceptional cases reject the report and terminate accreditation. Additionally, accredited courses are formally visited (generally at approximately the midpoint of the accreditation period) by two members of the T&T Board. The outcome of these audits is presented as a written report and discussed at a formal meeting of the Accreditation Board, which may accept continued accreditation, may require changes to be made and reported back to the Board, or may withdraw accreditation if major concerns are identified. A full copy of the report is sent to the Course Organiser together with an account of the Board's review.

Accreditation is available to applicants from all member states (Van der Valk, 2010). The Table below shows courses for FELASA Categories A to C that are currently accredited.

Current status of FELASA-accredited courses in Europe			
Country	Course Category		
	A	B	C
Belgium			1(a)
Denmark			2
Finland			2
France			2
Germany		2 + 1(a)	1
Hungary			1(a)
Italy	1(a)	1 + 1(a)	
Netherlands			1(a)
Portugal			1
Spain	1	3	2
Sweden			2
Switzerland		1 + 1(a)	
UK		1	

(a) Awaiting confirmation

References

Council of Europe (1993) Multilateral consultation of the parties to the council of Europe convention ETS no 123 on 3 December 1993.

FELASA (1995) FELASA recommendations on the education and training of persons working with laboratory animals: Categories A and C. Reports of the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations Working Group on Education accepted by the FELASA Board of Management. *Laboratory Animals* 29, 121±31 (also available at: <http://www.lal.org.uk>)

FELASA (1999) FELASA guidelines for education of specialists in laboratory animal science (Category D). Report of the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations Working Group on Education of Specialists (Category D) accepted by the FELASA Board of Management. *Laboratory Animals* 33, 1±15 (also available at: <http://www.lal.org.uk>)

FELASA (2000) FELASA recommendations for the education and training of persons carrying out animal experiments (Category B). Report of the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations Working Group on Education of Persons Carrying out Animal Experiments (Category B) accepted by the FELASA Board of Management. *Laboratory Animals* 34, 229±35 (also available at: <http://www.lal.org.uk>)

FELASA (2002) FELASA recommendations for the accreditation of laboratory animal science education and training. Report of the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Associations Working Group on Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Science Education and Training. *Laboratory Animals* (2002) 36, 373–377 (also available at: <http://www.lal.org.uk>)

FELASA (2010) FELASA recommendations for the education and training of laboratory animal technicians:
Category A. Laboratory Animals 44, 163-169

Van der Valk J et al (2010) Education and training in the 3Rs. ALTEX 27,169-175