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## **Position Paper: Education and Training**

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### **Issue Background**

1. Research in life sciences, as well as safety testing of products still involve the use of live animals. State of the art science and the welfare of the animals used for these purposes depend on the professional competence of all personnel involved.
2. Training people in the humane care and use of animals ensures that Russell and Burchs' principles of the 3Rs (refinement -- reduction – replacement) are act upon. Education and training do not only contribute to ensuring the application of the 3Rs in all aspects of laboratory animal science, but are part of the 3Rs themselves. In this context, training people in the proper handling of animals, in up-to-date and appropriate techniques, as well as in the biology of the animals involved, guarantees that pain and distress are minimized (i.e. Refinement is done). Educating people in topics such as ethics, experimental design and related database and literature searches assures that there is no alternative to the animal experiment and only the least necessary number of animals will be used to achieve scientific validity.
3. Refinement in itself may not directly reduce the number of animals used for teaching and testing, but will improve the wellbeing of animals used for research purposes.
4. Already, the legislative framework of most European countries requires the education and training of personnel who are involved in working with laboratory animals but not every institution has the necessary resources to provide for such competency. Major differences exist in the specific requirements or the educational background of people conducting animal experiments across countries and even within countries. The national legislations should promote harmonization.
5. A harmonized curriculum could help to contribute to the welfare of animals. A framework of LAS education that provides basic knowledge together with specialized teaching content can ensure high standards in animal experimentation.

## Key position statement

1. Establishing a harmonized Education curriculum including new and up to date technologies (Annex V gives already some guidelines) would allow to set up high quality standards and a valid accreditation scheme; courses could then be accredited by competent bodies (for instance regional, national, international bodies) throughout Europe.
  - Equal importance should be given to theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
  - For reaching the competence of “designing procedures and projects”, the person needs to attain the necessary competence of “carrying out procedures” as well as of properly “euthanizing animals”.
2. Establishing a framework of continuing education in LAS (3Rs, species specific training modules, accreditation policy).
  - Content of continuing education includes scientific conferences, specific topics in LAS, e-learning and hands-on workshops.
  - Continuing education content should be appointed to certification by a competent body.
  - Assignment of continuing education credit should be simple.
  - The continuing education system of Switzerland could be used as an example.
  - Networking between institutions should be encouraged in resources and information sharing.