

Processes for ensuring training and competency for those working with protected animals

Swansea University, in line with legal, scientific, and ethical requirements, is committed to ensuring that all students and staff dealing with protected animals (as according to ASPA) are appropriately trained and continue to be assessed for ongoing competency throughout their research careers.

The responsibility for ensuring all those that are dealing with protected animals are adequately educated, trained, and supervised until they are competent lies with the Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO).

This document describes the detailed processes involved in training and assessment for regulated procedures.

The table below summarises the training requirements for all those working with protected animals, including non-regulated work:

Swansea University training programme for work involving live animals				
Training function (Reassessment frequency)	Animal care staff	Non-regulated work	Regulated work under ASPA	Regulated work under ASPA – in Place other than Licenced Establishment (POLE)
Facility induction (As required)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	NA
Husbandry techniques (3 years)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	NA
Handling & restraint (3 years)	Mandatory	Mandatory *	Mandatory	Mandatory
Schedule 1 (3 years)	Mandatory	Mandatory *	Mandatory	Mandatory
ASPA accredited training (As required)	Recommended	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
Procedure training (1 - 3 years**)	NA	NA	Mandatory	Mandatory

* Some exemptions apply for student work where husbandry and welfare of animals is being supervised by competent animal care staff

** Dependent on complexity of procedure, individual's experience & frequency of procedures

Animal Care staff

All animal care staff are trained to a high level, and relevant to the species they are working with. Where required or for continued professional development opportunities animal care staff may undertake accredited Home Office Licensee training or other forms of external training for the relevant species, to ensure that employees working with animals have the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their job roles effectively.

Non-regulated work

All new students and staff wishing to work with live animals on campus should attend a facility induction and receive relevant husbandry, handling & restraint and Schedule 1 training.

All handling and schedule 1 training is conducted by facility staff.

Regulated work under ASPA

All new PIL holders should attend a facility induction. It is expected that anyone undertaking a regulated procedure is signed off for a relevant schedule 1 method prior to undertaking any procedural skills. Where this is not possible, the individual must arrange for someone with schedule 1 competency to be available (out-of-hours work needs to be carefully considered in this situation).

All handling and schedule 1 training is conducted by facility staff.

In line with Home Office Guidance, training and competency in regulated procedures is a two-step process. To be signed off as competent for a regulated procedure, all individuals require training (by a designated trainer) and assessment (by designated assessors including NACWO, NTCO, facility staff, PPL holder or NVS). Depending on an individual's experience & the complexity of the procedure, this process can take a variable amount of time.

Training in a regulated procedure requires a PIL. Individuals should ensure they hold the correct category of licence to undertake the procedures (i.e. PILAB or PILABC) and the licence covers the species involved.

An individual remains under training until both the trainer and trainee are satisfied that the trainee is competent to conduct the procedure unsupervised. At this time, the trainer/trainee should notify the NTCO that the trainee is ready for assessment of skills.

It is recommended that individuals undertake cadaver training (where appropriate), prior to undertaking any procedures on live animals. An NVS can request to observe cadaver training of surgical procedures prior to live experiments being conducted where an individual is new to surgical procedures or the Establishment.

Individuals can request refresher training for any procedures prior to reassessment of skills as required.

Unless an earlier reassessment is requested by the assessor at the time of feedback, all procedures require reassessment every 1 – 3 years. All competencies are recorded in electronic form by the NTCO upon receipt of the assessment sheet and/or any correspondence from the assessor.

All PIL holders are responsible for ensuring their training record is up-to-date and request any reassessment of skills required.

On occasion, competencies may need to be reviewed prior to the reassessment date if concerns are reported with animal welfare which can be improved with additional training in practical skills.

- New staff with previous experience

Researchers joining the Establishment with significant animal or procedural experience may not be required to undergo training in their areas of experience but will be assessed prior to being allowed to work independently. This ensures that all staff are working to the same standards and SOPs. All staff will be assessed for handling and schedule 1 as part of PIL training whether experienced or not.