IACUC TRAINING AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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PURPOSE:

Federal Regulations (USDA AWA/R: § 2143, § 2.31, § 2.32 & PHS Policy: IV.A.1.g, IV.C.1.f) require training and continuing education in the humane practice of animal care and use for scientists, research technicians, animal care technicians, and all other investigators working with animals. The Harvard Medical Area (HMA) IACUC must ensure that personnel are appropriately qualified and trained to conduct procedures on a given species, and maintain documentation of this training. Therefore, all personnel listed on an animal protocol must complete the required training.

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AALAS LEARNING LIBRARY TRAINING

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE AALAS LEARNING LIBRARY (if you do not previously have an AALAS account with us):

1. Go to https://www.aalaslearninglibrary.org/
2. Click on the “Subscribe” link.
3. Select “Yes” when asked whether you have an Access Code. Enter the code (the HMA Access Code is: 45200HMAIACUC) and click on the “Submit” button.
4. Enter your personal details. Please format your username as “HMS + HUID#”. For example: HMS12345678. Additionally, please register with an institutional email address if possible.

HOW TO RECOVER AN AALAS ACCOUNT (if you do not remember your username and/or password):

1. Go to https://aalaslearninglibrary.org/index.html#/login/forgot

REQUIRED AALAS COURSES (for investigators working with animals):

Required for all personnel:
- Working with the IACUC

Required for personnel on protocols involving mammals or birds:
- Working with BL2-N Infectious Agents in Animals*
- Safe Use of Toxic and Hazardous Materials in Animals*

Required for personnel on protocols involving rodents:
- HCCM Cage Based Rodent Records and Necessary Forms (Required for HCCM facility access)

Required for personnel performing survival surgery on rodents:
- Survival Rodent Surgery* (Initial in-person training with HCCM; web course is used as the triennial refresher)

Required for personnel on protocols involving USDA-covered species:
- USDA Medical Records* (Initial in-person training with HCCM; web course is used as the triennial refresher)

Required for personnel on protocols involving non-human primates:
- Video: Working Safely with Non-human Primates*

Required for personnel on protocols involving aquatics:
- Working with Laboratory Zebrafish (Required only for zebrafish users)
- Working with Laboratory Xenopus (Required only for xenopus users)
- Introduction to Amphibians (Required only for amphibian users other than xenopus)
- Aquatic Animal Husbandry and Management (Optional/Recommended)
- Additional training for other aquatic species may be required on a case-by-case basis; please contact the Office of the IACUC (iacuc@hms.harvard.edu) for more information

*NOTE: Those requesting to perform survival surgery, work with USDA-covered species (including NHPs), and/or work with toxic or infectious materials must receive additional training and/or supervision before working with animals. Please contact HCCM (hccmtraining@hms.harvard.edu) for more training information. Triennial refresher training for Survival Rodent Surgery and/or USDA Medical Records can be completed in AALAS. If you work in a Satellite Facility where BL2 or toxic agents are used, then please contact HCCM so they are aware.
HOW TO FIND WEB COURSES ON THE AALAS WEBSITE:

- Go to https://www.aalaslearninglibrary.org/, login, and then navigate using the sidebar.
- Essentials for IACUC Members
  - Working with the IACUC
    - Libraries > Animal Care and Use Courses > Compliance and IACUC Training
- HCCM Cage Based Rodent Records and Necessary Forms
- Safe Use of Toxic and Hazardous Materials in Animals
- Survival Rodent Surgery
- USDA Medical Records
  - Working with BL2-N Infectious Agents in Animals
    - Tracks > HMA IACUC Courses
- Video: Working Safely with Non-human Primates
  - Libraries > Animal Care and Use Courses > Occupational Health and Safety
- Introduction to Amphibians
  - Working with Laboratory Xenopus
  - Working with Laboratory Zebrafish
    - Libraries > Animal Care and Use Courses > Species-Specific
- Aquatic Animal Husbandry and Management
  - Libraries > Animal Care and Use Courses > Facilities, Supplies, and Materials

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU CANNOT ACCESS THE WEB COURSES:

If you are able to log-in to your AALAS account, but cannot access the required web courses, then please contact the Office of the IACUC (iacuc@hms.harvard.edu) to get your account re-assigned. All usernames are released from HMA’s account each year.

DO PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS (PIs) NEED TO TAKE THESE AALAS COURSES?

The IACUC requires these courses be taken by all PIs even if they are not working with the animals. This is because the material covers animal care and use policies; personnel and animal care staff safety; and other procedures, which PIs are expected to oversee and implement among their lab personnel. Our regulatory agencies are increasingly scrutinizing our training program for research personnel. The IACUC looks at the PI role as the one who will be writing protocols and signing off as having the ultimate responsibility for all work performed on animals and also as the person leading their labs in learning the rules and expectations in order to be able to supervise and enforce compliance.

A new protocol or three-year renewal will not be approved/renewed unless the PI meets the AALAS requirements described in this document or unless the protocol is transferred to another PI who is in good standing. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in protocol expiration, suspension of animal work, transfer of animals to a holding protocol, and notification to federal funding agencies.

HOW LONG DOES THE TRAINING TAKE?

Each course takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. You may take them all at once or individually over the course of several days, but please be sure to use the same account to complete all trainings.

HOW OFTEN DO INVESTIGATORS NEED TO TAKE THESE AALAS COURSES?

All required AALAS Learning Library courses must be retaken once every three years.

HOW DO YOU COMBINE RECORDS IF YOU HAVE MULTIPLE AALAS ACCOUNTS WITH HMA?

To merge your AALAS Learning Library accounts, please contact the Office of the IACUC (iacuc@hms.harvard.edu) with the username of the account you would like to keep/use. After the merger, all of your transcripts will be available for viewing under one account.
WHAT IS THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM?

The Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP) for Personnel with Animal Contact is a part of the HMA IACUC overall program of animal care and focuses on maintaining a safe and healthy environment for individuals with exposure to animals. Participation in the OHSP is required for all personnel who have contact with animals.

WHY IS PARTICIPATION REQUIRED?

Participation in the OHSP is required per federal regulations. The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide) states that:

- “Each institution must establish and maintain an occupational health and safety program as an essential part of the overall Program of animal care and use... The nature of the OHSP will depend on the facility, research activities, hazards, and animal species involved.” (page 17)
- “A comprehensive OHSP should include a hierarchy of control and prevention strategies that begins with the identification of hazards and the assessment of risk associated with those hazards. An effective occupational health and safety program must encompass all personnel that have contact with animals.” (page 18)

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

Upon enrolling in the OHSP, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire with questions about your health history, and the animals and potentially hazardous substances you will be handling. The questionnaire will be reviewed by a nurse specializing in occupational health. The nurse will follow up with you if any further action is required. Once you have completed this process, you will receive OHSP clearance.

HOW OFTEN DO INVESTIGATORS NEED TO UPDATE THEIR ENROLLMENT?

In accordance with federal requirements for periodic updates to ensure the OHSP captures changes to your health status and job description, you must receive a new clearance from the occupational health nurse once every three years.

WHO SHOULD INVESTIGATORS CONTACT FOR OHSP CLEARANCE?

- Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and Harvard School of Public Health
  Deborah Beckett (deborah_beckett@hms.harvard.edu | 617-432-4658)
- Brigham & Women’s Hospital
  Riolla Riobe (rriobe@partners.org | 617-732-8502)

If you have any questions, then please contact the Office of the IACUC (iacuc@hms.harvard.edu).