



University of Cambridge

UBS Training and Competency Assessment Framework for Animal Care Staff:

Using Direct Observation of Practical (or Procedural) Skills (DOPS) Assessments

Context

University Biomedical Services (UBS) requires high standards of animal welfare and competency from all UBS animal care staff at all times, throughout the Establishment. In order to achieve this, quality training and assessment is provided for all members of staff.

This document provides details on the use of Direct Observation of Practical (or Procedural) Skills (DOPS) assessments across UBS.

DOPS

DOPS assessment is a tool used for assessing competency of staff members on a variety of different tasks and procedures. DOPS forms have been introduced to provide a structured, harmonised and objective method for assessing competency. An example of a UBS DOPS Assessment Form is appended to this document. All staff are to be assessed using the DOPS approach.

DOPS Assessment

Upon starting in post new UBS Trainee Animal Technicians undergo an entry level training programme. This training is usually provided as part of the probation period. It consists of practical on the job training sessions with an experienced member of staff. This stage is designed to reach the expected standards of competency in a variety of basic tasks and procedures. Once both the trainer and trainee agree sufficient training has been given and competence achieved in a task/s or procedure/s, an assessment/s will be scheduled with an accredited or nominated assessor.

Competence is not a steady state: it can change, therefore requires re-assessment at appropriate intervals.

For existing staff or staff who already have some experience (such as those moving between UBS facilities) a DOPS assessment will be undertaken by an assessor following any appropriate additional training when required. Training and assessment is tailored to each staff member's needs.

Once an assessment is scheduled the assessor will explain the process with the staff member and will provide them a copy of the DOPS form against which they will be assessed. Understanding of the assessment is confirmed again before the assessment is undertaken. A DOPS assessment is undertaken by an assessor observing the staff member carrying out a task or procedure and then the relevant DOPS form completed. Following the assessment the assessor will provide feedback to the staff member and will confirm the competency level that has been achieved.

Expectations

A staff member unable to achieve competency within a suitably agreed time frame or unable to consistently maintain the expected standards of competency, with any appropriate support identified, may be managed under an appropriate University policy.

In the majority of cases this will begin with an informal discussion between the staff member and the line manager to highlight the concerns, establish any likely causes of underperformance and to set out the expected improvements, with any appropriate support (such as retraining) being identified. If improvement is not achieved or sustained the case may be managed formally under a University policy.

The staff member's line manager will, in consultation with Human Resources, determine the relevant policy to refer to using the following guidance:

- A deliberate failure on the part of the staff member to perform to the standards of which they are capable (e.g. carelessness, negligence or lack of effort which is under the employee's control) in which case the relevant Disciplinary procedure will be appropriate. <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/hr-staff/information-staff/assistant-staff-handbook/disciplinary-procedures>
- A case of incapability, where the staff member is lacking in knowledge, skill or ability, which is outside of the staff member's direct control, and so is unable to carry out their duties to the standard required, in which case the Capability Policy will apply to support and improve performance. <https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/capability-policy>

In addition if the welfare of any animal/s is/are put at risk or negatively impacted due to the actions of an individual, and whether or not non-compliance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 is suspected, the Establishment License holder may request a Compliance Assurance Meeting (CAM) be held.

Declaration

I have read and understood the UBS Training and Competency Assessment Framework for Animal Care Staff: Using Direct Observation of Practical (or Procedural) Skills (DOPS) Assessments document.

Print name:

Signed:

Date: