

# WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management

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**Vision:** Veterinary professionals (i.e., veterinarians and nurses/veterinary technicians) across the globe understand the importance of adequate pain management for small animal health and welfare, and are empowered to:

- Frequently assess pain in small animals with knowledge of pain-related behaviors and validated pain scales
- Prevent pain and other negative emotions such as fear, discomfort, nausea and anxiety
- Treat pain using drug and non-drug therapies in which the analgesic plan is developed on a case-by-case basis and adapted to their own reality

## Goals

- Promote pain management as a discipline globally so that pain in small animals is more frequently prevented, recognized, assessed and treated
- Present the concepts, principles and foundations of pain management to a large international audience
- Provide veterinarians and technicians/nurses with an international certification on small animal pain management recognized by WSAVA and accredited by international bodies

## Overview of educational program

The WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management includes pre-recorded lectures in addition to mandatory and suggested reading materials, and quizzes at the end of each lecture. The educational content is primarily based on the recently published '[2022 WSAVA guidelines for the recognition, assessment and treatment of pain](#)', and on additional topics not covered by that document, but considered to be important and relevant for professionals working with companion animal health and welfare globally. Lectures will be given by the authors of the Guidelines and other invited experts in the field.

The entire educational content is available at no cost following registration to any veterinarian or nurse/veterinary technician. A fee will be charged to those who would like to receive the actual Certificate and recognition of continuing education credits. In that case, a veterinarian or nurse/veterinary technician completing all mandatory activities (see below) and achieving a passing rate of the quizzes will be entitled to receive a digital version of the **WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management - Veterinarians** or **WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management - Veterinary Technicians/Nurses** and associated continuing education credits. Students of veterinary medicine or veterinary nurse/technician are welcome to register and access the course content but are not eligible for the Certificate.

The WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management has been submitted (but not yet approved) for 33 hours of continuing education credit in jurisdictions which recognize RACE.

The WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management is divided into three Modules available to anyone registering to the course. However, to be eligible for their respective Certificates:

- Veterinarians are required to complete and pass Modules I, II and III
- Veterinary technicians/nurses are required to complete and pass Modules I and II

## **Module I - Understanding and assessing pain**

Total of 7.5h (6h divided in 12 lectures + 1.5h of mandatory reading)

Animal welfare and ethics in pain management. Pain pathophysiology and the role of emotions on pain perception. Clinical assessment of pain in dogs and cats. Lectures on trending topics and how they relate to pain management including: Human-Animal Bond; Client Communication; Stakeholders and the importance of Nurses/Technicians; and Sustainability.

## **Module II – Preventing and treating pain**

Total of 14.5h (11h divided in 22 lectures + 3.5h of mandatory reading)

Principles of pain management. General approach to the treatment of pain. Specific lectures about pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies (e.g., opioids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, alpha-2 adrenoceptor agonists, local anesthetics, adjuvant analgesics, monoclonal antibodies, acupuncture, cold therapy, physical therapies, nursing and supportive treatments, nutrition, etc.). Lectures focused on the behavioral and environmental needs of cats and dogs in pain are also included.

## **Module III – Pain management in practice**

Total of 15h (13h divided in 32 lectures + 2h of mandatory reading)

This module will combine all information from Modules I and II to guide veterinarians to put the knowledge into practice based on each veterinarian's reality while considering the challenges they might face such as limited access to analgesic drugs. For example, tiered analgesic protocols will be presented for the management of numerous painful conditions including from state-of-the-art protocols to those cases where limited access to controlled substances or to any medications in general occur. Module III will be divided in two parts:

### ***Part A – Patients and Diseases***

Total of 7h (6h divided in 12 lectures + 1h of mandatory reading)

Specific painful conditions or groups of patients will be addressed (e.g. musculoskeletal pain, neuropathic pain, geriatric patients, pediatric patients)

### ***Part B – Clinical Cases***

Total of 8h (7h divided in 20 lectures + 1h of mandatory reading)

Clinical management of some of the most common painful conditions in dogs and cats, as well as some exotic animals (acute and chronic pain cases)

## Detailed program description

### Lecture format:

- **Mandatory reading:** Available as links to open-access documents available in multiple languages. Students need to confirm that each material has been read before watching the lecture.
- **Recorded lecture:** Available in multiple languages (30-min or 20-min of duration).
- **Quiz questions:** Available after each mandatory reading and lecture. Each quiz includes 4 multiple-choice questions. Students need a minimum score of 3/4 to move to the following lecture. After three unsuccessful attempts at the quiz, the student will need to re-watch the lecture.
- **Suggested reading and additional resources:** Includes review articles, guidelines, web addresses, or any other relevant material. Available in English language and open-access.

**Duration of program:** Each Module should be completed within 6 months. If the student does not complete a Module within this allocated period, that Module will need to be restarted from its first lecture. The interval between each Module should be no longer than 6 months (from the date of completion of a Module to the start of the next one). Therefore, a student using the maximum allocated time for and between each Module could take as much as 2.5 years to complete the Certificate. There is no minimum amount of time to complete each Module or between them.

**Eligibility:** Any veterinarian or nurse/veterinary technician, and any student of veterinary medicine or veterinary nurse/technician is eligible to register for open-access to the entire educational content. However, only veterinarians and nurses/veterinary technicians are eligible to receive the Certificate pending payment of the fees and achieving a passing rate for each Module.

**Language:** The entire education content, with exception of 'Suggested reading and additional resources' will be available in multiple languages.

**Accreditation:** The WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management has been submitted (but not yet approved) to accreditation by RACE.

**Certificates and proof of CE credits (digital formats):** For veterinarians or nurses/veterinary technicians who would like recognition of their efforts, a tiered fee is available. Once payment is complete, and if the veterinarian or nurse/veterinary technician has completed all mandatory lecture and reading material, and has passed all quizzes for a Module, a certificate of CE credits will be provided. The actual WSAVA Certificate in Pain Management will only be provided at completion of all mandatory Modules (Modules I to III for veterinarians; Modules I and II for veterinary technicians/nurses).

### Organizing committee:

Scientific committee: Beatriz Monteiro, Tammy Grubb, Conny Mosley, Jo Murrell, Paulo Steagall

Program director: Beatriz Monteiro