

## On-line training for initial and continuing education

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Innovative ways of delivering veterinary education are being developed to accommodate the busy schedules of veterinarians and paraprofessionals where face-to-face educational experiences are not as convenient. Online learning enables veterinarians, educators and students to access expertise that might otherwise not be readily accessible.

Quality educational resources support Veterinary Services and a strong professional veterinary service in each country. The rapid growth of online educational resources and the adoption of those resources by learners demonstrates its usefulness. Online veterinary educational materials are used in a number of ways.

In the U.S., accredited veterinarians (60,000+) must complete continuing education requirements to maintain their accreditation status. Most veterinarians use free online courses (25 current courses) to complete this training; 100,000 courses were taken in 2015. Veterinary students who want to become “accredited veterinarians” use an online course entitled *Emerging and Exotic Diseases of Animals (EEDA)* to learn about transboundary animal diseases, health certificates and other responsibilities. This course ensures a standardized level of education nation-wide and has been translated into Spanish (*Enfermedades Transfronterizas de los Animales*) with USDA support and used by over 5000 individuals. The Center for Food Security and Public Health (CFSPH) developed the accreditation and EEDA materials and manages the online learning platforms for the USDA.

The World Veterinary Association (WVA) has an online Education Portal. The portal has over 900 courses on a variety of topics. The portal is free to join and will accept content from a variety of providers. Much of the content has been certified by various accrediting entities. Some content is free and some content requires a user fee.

The CFPSH and WVA believe that online learning approaches can be used to address World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) training needs. The CFPSH is currently working with OIE to develop online training for OIE Focal Points who submit reports through the World Animal Health Information Service. Online learning could also be used to support competencies of graduating veterinarians and to enhance the Core Curriculum in some educational institutions. In conclusion, online learning is a powerful tool to improve veterinary capacity around the world.

**Keywords:** online learning – USDA accreditation – transboundary diseases – WVA Online Education Portal.