



Name: Matthew
Job Title: University research facility manager
Organisation: Agenda Resource Management Ltd
Qualifications: GCSEs
National diploma, animal care
Salary: Over £35,000

About me and my job:

I manage a medical research facility, with responsibility for the animal facility as well as research laboratories. I work closely with two technicians to ensure the care and welfare of the rats and mice within the facility. I chose to become an animal technician as I always wanted to work with animals, and working within a research organisation enables me to make a difference to animals and people with the advancement of medical treatments that we are developing.

On a typical day, I start by working with the team to check all of the animals and environmental conditions. We then have a morning meeting with the animal facility team to talk through the day's work and any other issues that need to be discussed. I then meet with the research teams to discuss their ongoing projects and assist with their work. During the day I also assist as required within the animal facility, performing home office licensed procedures and husbandry procedures such as cage changing and cleaning. In the afternoon I perform health and safety audits of the laboratories, and carry out any facility inductions for new team members.

I also host unannounced inspections by the Home Office, who are responsible for inspections to ensure that the requirements of the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) are applied in all designated research facilities. I enjoy the daily challenges that my job offers and the sense of achievement in knowing that the work that I do could save the lives of millions of people. I like the fact that all of the animals in the facility where I work are well cared for and that their welfare is at the centre of our team's thinking. I recently became a named animal care and welfare officer which is recognised under the A(SP)A, and enjoy playing a full role in the ethical review processes – I understand and support the importance of the research being conducted, but my priority is always the welfare of the animals – this gives me great satisfaction.

I can't say that I actively dislike anything within my job, although when we get into the job we know we will have to work weekends and bank holidays, somebody will work Christmas Day and New Year's Day too.

Advice about the sector:

You need a keen interest in working with animals and a desire to want to make a difference. It is important to be flexible in your working hours, willing to help as necessary and have a good work ethic. Experience of working with or owning animals is useful but not essential because training will be provided. There are lots of opportunities and routes to progress within the Animal technology industry; from becoming a specialist in surgical techniques or becoming an animal facility director and publicising research data.