



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 04/21

Update on FCCO training

Date issued: 28 September 2021

Purpose

1. To provide an update to Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) on the introduction of new training for FCCOs.

Background

2. APHA and Defra are developing FCCO training to help FCCOs in their role in certifying Products of Animal Origin (POAO) to the EU and the rest of the world.
3. The training will enable current FCCOs to revalidate their existing authorisation and enable new Local Authority (LA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) officers to qualify as FCCOs.

Information about the training

4. From the end of November FCCOs will be required to complete online training as part of the APHA's FCCO authorisation process. Existing FCCOs can be assured that their existing APHA authorisation currently remains in place.
5. The training will cover certification, Export Health Certificates (EHCs) conflict of interest, HACCP, risk-based certification and groupage. It will be delivered by Improve International who also provide Official Veterinarian (OV) training.
6. The intention is for the training to be live at the end of November. Existing FCCOs will have six months from the date that the training becomes available to complete it. This will revalidate the authorisation

7. Revalidation of the FCCO training will then be required every four years. This is the same revalidation interval that is required by OV's carrying out export certification work.
8. There will be no cost to current FCCOs (or to the LAs they are working for) for the initial revalidation training. Some funding will also be available for the cost of training new FCCOs although the details of this are still being finalised.
9. The current process of authorisation for new FCCOs will remain in place until the training is available.
10. Once the training is available, all new candidates will need to successfully complete the training course before they can be authorised as an FCCO. There won't be a time limit for when new candidates will have to complete the course.
11. All existing FCCOs are encouraged to register and enrol for the training as soon as it goes live. You will need to enrol by 31 March 2022 and to complete the training by 31 May 2022 in order to continue to be authorised as an FCCO.
12. We will provide more detail about the training at the end of November when the training is launched

Timing

Date	Requirements
November 2021	FCCO training launches – register and enrol
31 March 2022	FCCOs will need to enrol by this date
31 May 2022	Existing FCCOs must complete the training by this date

Further information

13. There is a [training section](#) on the FCCO section on vet gateway that will be updated with information about the training.
14. If you have any questions about the FCCO training, please contact: csconehealthovteam@apha.gov.uk

Frequently asked Questions

Why is APHA asking FCCOs to do this training?

FCCOs are required to complete the training as part of the APHA's FCCO authorisation process. [The Policy for Authorisation](#) of FCCO by APHA sets out the relationship between FCCOs and APHA as the competent authority responsible for their authorisation. The training has been devised to ensure that FCCOs have the information and support to help them in their certification role as part of the authorisation process. OVs also have to undergo similar training as part of their authorisation to certify goods to the EU and the rest of the world.

When should I start the training?

It is our intention that the training will go live at the end of November 2021. We would encourage existing FCCOs to enrol as soon as it goes live and by 31 March 2022 at the latest. Once enrolled, you don't have to complete the training straight away you will have until 31 May 2022 to complete it.

New candidates will be able to start the training at any time once it is available.

What is involved in the training?

The training will be online and is a series of modules with a single multiple-choice examination at the end. The modules will cover all aspects of the certification process so for example EHCs, risk-based certification and groupage. It is delivered by Improve International who also deliver the training for OVs.

How long will it take to do?

Once the course is fully set up, we will confirm the time it will take to complete it. Based on the OV courses, this is likely to be somewhere between 8 and 12 hours. We will provide more information on this when the course is launched.

Once enrolled on a course, it will be accessible at all times and can be completed in small sections at the individual's own pace and convenience.

How long do I have to complete it?

If you are an existing FCCO you will have until 31 May 2022 to complete the training. If you are a new FCCO there isn't a time limit when you have to complete the training, but you cannot be authorised until it is successfully completed.

Will I or my Local Authority have to pay for it?

There will be no cost to current FCCOs (or to the LAs they are working for) for the initial revalidation training. Some funding will also be available for the cost of training new personnel to become FCCOs although the details of this are still being finalised.