



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## **FCCO Briefing Note 06/21**

# **Update on Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO) training**

**Date issued: 16 November 2021**

### **Purpose**

1. To provide an update on the Official Controls Qualification (Certifying Officer) - Food Competent Certifying Officer (OCQ(CO) - FCCO) training, which is being launched on 30 November 2021.

### **Background**

2. APHA and Defra have developed the OCQ(CO) - FCCO online training course to help FCCOs in their role of 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 Local Authority (LA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) officers to qualify as new FCCOs.

### **Information about the training**

4. From the 30 November 2021, FCCOs will be required to complete online training as part of the APHA's FCCO authorisation process. Current FCCOs can be assured that their existing APHA authorisation will continue to remain in place, provided that they successfully complete the revalidation course by the deadline of 31 May 2022. Funding is only guaranteed for those who enrol by 31 March 2022, after that there may be a charge for registering and enrolling on the course.
5. The training covers the principles of certification, Export Health Certificates (EHCs) conflict of interest, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), risk-based

certification, and groupage. It will be delivered by Improve International, who also provide Official Veterinarian (OV) training.

6. Existing FCCOs will have until 31 May 2022 to successfully complete the training and invigilated online examination in order to retain their authorisation.
7. Revalidation of the FCCO training will be required every four years. This is the same revalidation interval that is required by OVs carrying out export certification work.
8. All new FCCO applicants will need to successfully complete the training course and invigilated online examination before they can be authorised as an FCCO. There will be no time limit for new candidates completing the course.
9. There will be no cost to current FCCOs (or to the LAs they are working for) for the initial revalidation training, providing they enrol by the deadline of 31 March 2022. Funding will also be available for the cost of the training course for new FCCOs. However ongoing funding availability will be kept under review.

## How to sign up for the training

### For existing FCCOs

10. Register on the Improve Animal Health Paraprofessional website at: <https://www.improve-ahp.com/registration/> by using the code **21-FCCO-Reg-AP**. This code must be entered as an invoice code for payment. FCCOs or their employers are not required to pay for the training themselves. As part of registration, the FCCO will be required to nominate their manager, who will confirm their right to work and eligibility for the qualification.
11. Once registered, the FCCO or their employer needs to email the APHA OV team at [CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk) to let them know that they have registered and require access to the FCCO revalidation course.
12. The APHA OV team will grant the FCCO access to course enrolment and send an email confirming this to either the FCCO or their employer. The confirmation email should be received within 5 working days and will include an invoice code for enrolment onto the OCQ(CO) - FCCO revalidation course. This code must be entered as an invoice code for payment for enrolment onto the course and must not be shared with anyone other than the FCCO's employer.
13. Any existing FCCO (those authorised before 30 November 2021) should ensure that they enrol on the revalidation course and not the main FCCO course.

14. Once enrolled, the course will appear on the FCCO's personal training dashboard. The FCCO can access the course in their own time and complete it at their own pace. Parts of the course can be completed and then returned to later. Progress on the course will be saved so that any parts that have been completed will not need to be repeated.
15. FCCOs are encouraged to register and enrol on the training as soon as possible after it has been launched on 30 November 2021. They must enrol by 31 March 2022 and complete the training and pass the invigilated online examination by 31 May 2022 in order to continue to be authorised as an FCCO.
16. In exceptional circumstances, an extension to the deadline may be granted by APHA, for example if the FCCO is on parental leave throughout the revalidation period. Applications for an extension must be received before the deadline date of 31 May 2022. The completed application form (which will be available on [vet gateway](#)) needs to be sent to the APHA OV team.

## For new FCCOs

17. In order to become an FCCO, LA and FSS employees must register on the Improve Animal Health Paraprofessional website at: <https://www.improve-ahp.com/registration/> using the code **21-FCCO-Reg-AP**, which needs to be entered as an invoice code for payment. As part of registration, the applicant will be required to nominate their manager, who will confirm their right to work and eligibility for the qualification.
18. Once registered, the applicant or their employer needs to email the APHA OV team at [CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk) to let them know that they have registered and require access to the FCCO course. They will then be sent a code to enrol on the OCQ(CO) - FCCO main course. This code must be entered as an invoice code for payment for enrolment.
19. Once enrolled, the course will appear on the applicant's personal training dashboard. They can access the course in their own time and complete it at their own pace. Parts of the course can be completed and then returned to later. Progress on the course will be saved so that any parts that have been completed will not need to be repeated.
20. After successful completion of the online course, there will be an invigilated online examination. A Certificate of Competence will be issued by Improve International once this has been passed. Please note that this not FCCO authorisation.
21. The APHA OV team will grant FCCO authorisation within 10 working days of the applicant passing the online examination. An official stamp and the stamp terms and conditions will be sent to the applicant's employer.

22. The applicant must not carry out any FCCO duties until they have been authorised by APHA and received their stamp.

## Timing

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

## Further information

23. Improve International: <https://www.improve-ahp.com/qualifications/fcco.php>

24. If you have any questions about the FCCO training, please contact:  
[CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why is APHA asking FCCOs to do this training?

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. This ensures that FCCOs have access to training they need, like OVs who also must 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?

We would encourage existing FCCOs to enrol as soon they can after the training is launched on 30 November 2021 and by 31 March 2022 at the latest. Once enrolled, existing FCCOs will have until 31 May 2022 to complete the training.

New candidates will be able to start the training at any time after it is launched.

### How do I sign up for the training if I am an existing FCCO?

Existing FCCOs can register on the [Improve Animal Health Paraprofessional website](#) by using the code **21-FCCO-Reg-AP**, which must be entered as an invoice code for payment. Once registered, the FCCO or their employer needs to email the APHA OV team at

[CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk) to let them know that they have registered and require access to the FCCO revalidation course. The APHA OV team will grant the FCCO access to course enrolment and send an email confirming this to either the FCCO or their employer. The confirmation email should be received within 5 working days and will include an invoice code for enrolment onto the OCQ(CO) - FCCO revalidation course.

## **What is involved in the training?**

The training is an online course consisting of a series of modules with a single multiple-choice online examination at the end. The modules will cover all aspects of the certification process (for example, EHCs, risk-based certification and groupage).

## **How long will it take to do?**

The course will take around 6 hours to complete. Once enrolled on a course, candidates can access the course in their own time and complete it at their own pace. Parts of the course can be completed and then returned to later. Progress on the course will be saved so that any parts that have been completed will not need to be repeated.

## **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 is no time limit for completing 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. For now, there will be no cost for training new FCCOs. APHA will provide updates on funding for future training for new candidates if this should change.

## **Who will invigilate my online examination?**

Candidates may nominate an FCCO, a vet, a doctor or a lawyer to invigilate their online examination. Alternatively, there is an option for remote invigilation which is detailed on the Improve website, but this would incur a cost. The online examination will only become available once the candidate has completed the training and the invigilator has confirmed that they are happy to accept the role.