

Future of food control qualification **FAQs**

Chartered Institute of
Environmental Health



Background

The UK has some of the safest food in the world due to the expertise and efforts of food control professionals working in the public, private and third sectors. These professionals develop policies and provide assurance, undertaking checks from farm to fork, to ensure consumers can trust that the food they buy and eat is safe and what it says it is.

CIEH is the UK's leading awarding body for food control officer qualifications which are officially recognised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in its statutory Food Law Code of Practice.

Historically we have facilitated three routes to qualification for food authorised officers:

1. The Higher Certificate in Food Control (HCFC)
2. The Environmental Health Registration Board's (EHRB) Certificate of Registration (this route is scheduled to close in 2020)
3. The Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection (which allows the holder to deliver food hygiene official controls but not to inspect, detain or seize food or deliver food standards official controls.)

(These qualifications will continue to be recognised. There is no requirement for people who hold these qualifications to take the new ones we are launching).

There is currently a shortage of qualified food enforcement officers.

Both the Food Standards Agency and CIEH wish to move to a more holistic approach to food law intervention to help make effective use of resources and target high risk and non-compliant businesses.

Our new qualification pathways will contribute to ensuring a sustainable, first class workforce of professionals with the required knowledge, experience and skills to effectively fulfill their role as competent food officers.

The Competency Development Portfolio (CDP)

This Portfolio is available now. It can be completed by people who hold a CIEH accredited degree (curriculum 2010 onwards) or those who have completed the taught element of the Higher Certificate in Food Control.

It will take six months to undertake the CDP. During this period candidates are required to complete:

- three detailed case studies
- two investigation reports
- two narratives based on legal notices

The Portfolio will be submitted to CIEH and used as the basis for the final assessment - the Professional Discussion.

The Advanced Professional Certificate in Food Hygiene and Standards Control (APC-Food)

Covering food safety and hygiene, labelling and compositional standards, the APC-Food qualification equips candidates to adopt a holistic approach to ensuring food business operators achieve the required standards. The syllabus reflects changes to the food regulation landscape which will continue as the UK exits the European Union, including latest technological developments, modernisation of regulation and use of surveillance and data to inform official controls.

The qualification is suitable for those who wish to undertake food official controls and other assurance activities.

It:

- is designed to be a baseline-equivalent qualification (food hygiene and food standards) for those wishing to become authorised food officers
- builds on the existing HCFC syllabus
- introduces updated material on food standards to address the need for a holistic approach to food law enforcement and assurance
- meets the requirements of (EC) No 2017/625 (Official Controls Regulation) and articulates to the FSA’s functional competencies

The knowledge element of the APC-Food can be delivered by learning providers as part of a CIEH accredited environmental health degree or as a standalone qualification.

The practical element for APC-Food is the **Competency Development Portfolio (CDP)** and Professional Discussion.

Routes

| Award | Knowledge | Additional Knowledge | Practical Assessment | Practical Assessment |
|---|--|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Higher Certificate in Food Control (HCFC) | Standalone HCFC academic course (includes Food Practical Exam) | None | Competency Development Portfolio | Professional Discussion |
| CIEH Accredited Degree Route to HCFC/ APC-Food | CIEH accredited degree (existing degrees will be HCFC, future accreditations will be APC-Food) | Food Practical Exam | Competency Development Portfolio | Professional Discussion |
| Advanced Professional Certificate in Food (APC-Food) | Academic course (APC-Food syllabus from accredited CIEH partner) | Food Practical Exam | Competency Development Portfolio | Professional Discussion |

Frequently asked questions

1. Candidates

When can I do these new qualifications?

The Competency Development Portfolio is available now. You can enrol for your Portfolio [here](#).

The new APC-Food qualification has now launched and is open for applications.

When can I enrol for my CDP?

You can enrol at any time, there are no fixed intakes.

How much will it cost?

In 2021, the registration fee for the Competency Development Portfolio is £655, this also includes the cost of the Professional Discussion and certification.

How long will it take to complete the Competency Development Portfolio?

Six months after enrolment. This is a fixed term and there will be no reductions. Candidates are required to demonstrate their competence through new work undertaken during the six months.

What do the case studies in the Competency Development Portfolio consist of?

You will be provided with a CDP template setting out the competencies you will need to demonstrate in the case studies. You and your employer will be provided with guidance to help complete the activities.

You are required to evidence that you meet the

competencies set out in the CDP template using 'in-practice' experience of delivering food hygiene and food standards official controls in a range of food establishments. You will also need to reflect on the experience of applying your knowledge in a workplace setting.

What can you tell me about the assessments?

Assessment of knowledge will be undertaken by the University or similar Higher Education Institution as part of the course.

The Competency Development Portfolio will be signed off by your manager, workplace supervisor or Lead Officer.

The end point assessment will be CIEH's Professional Discussion. This will be a face to face (including video conference) conversation about your CDP case studies, Investigations and related issues.

What happens if I pass?

Successful candidates will be awarded the Advanced Professional Certificate in Food Hygiene and Standards Control (APC-Food) or Higher Certificate in Food Control as appropriate.

We will maintain Registers of practitioners who complete these qualifications.

Holders of these qualifications may be authorised to deliver official controls.

How am I required to maintain my competence?

The Food Law Code of Practice requires authorised officers to obtain a minimum of 20 hours Continuing

Professional Development (CPD) per year, split into:

- A minimum of 10 CPD hours on relevant core food matters directly related to the delivery of official controls;
- 10 hours on other professional matters

2. Employers

I have a shortage of food enforcement officers, what can I do?

Your options are to:

- recruit staff who are already qualified (i.e. with the EHRB Certificate of Registration or Higher Certificate of Food Control – or equivalent from Scotland)
- support one of your existing employees with an accredited degree (curriculum 2010 onwards) through the Competency Development Portfolio and Professional Discussion
- recruit a new member of staff with an accredited degree and support them through the Competency Development Portfolio and Professional Discussion

3. People with (or working on) existing qualifications

I am currently working on the Higher Certificate in Food Control – what should I do?

If you have already commenced the HCFC logbook then you are welcome to continue with that – it will be assessed as usual. Alternatively, you can switch to the new Competency Development Portfolio if you prefer.

If you have not yet commenced the logbook, we would strongly recommend that you enrol to complete the CDP instead.

I hold (or am enrolled on) the Higher Certificate of Food Premises Inspection

The existing arrangement for a top up to the Higher Certificate in Food Control will continue. This is completion of the required taught top up modules from one of our accredited partners, followed by either the existing logbook + interview – or completion of the CDP and Professional Discussion.

I have a CIEH accredited degree (2010 or 2011 curriculum)

You can register for the CDP. Once you have completed your portfolio and passed your Professional Discussion you will be awarded the Higher Certificate in Food Control.

I am enrolled on (or considering) the Chartered Practitioner Programme

If you are registered on the Chartered Practitioner Programme and wish to work in food enforcement, you will also need to gain a qualification such as the HCFC or APC-Food. The knowledge element of these qualifications is covered by your CIEH accredited degree. You can therefore enrol for the Competency Development Portfolio and commence the practical element.

You may work on the Chartered Programme and the Competency Development Portfolio concurrently.

I hold the EHRB Certificate of Registration or Higher Certificate in Food Control

Your qualification will remain valid. Your employer can authorise you subject to them being satisfied you are competent and you have the required CPD. There is no requirement for you to qualify again.

I would like to undertake the Competency Development Portfolio but I have an accredited degree prior to curriculum 2010

Please contact us. We will evaluate your degree against the current requirements and discuss the best way forward.

I qualified overseas

CIEH will continue to have the authority to offer an equivalency assessment to determine whether qualifications are equivalent to the baseline qualification in the Food Law Code of Practice.

Successful candidates will receive a Certificate of Equivalence to the baseline qualification. We will maintain a Register of practitioners who are issued with these certificates.