

Guidance Notes to Assist You in Applying for Food Safety Manager with IFST

Before you start your application:

- Make sure you have set aside some quality time for this – it will take you around an hour.
- The online application must be submitted in one go, and cannot be saved as you type, so we would strongly recommend typing your answers into a word document before adding them into the online application to ensure no loss of content if your connection times out.
- The questions are available in Appendix 1 of this document to assist you with preparing your application.
- Make sure you have all the documents required before submitting your application (see paragraph 2 below). Sending incomplete documents will lead to delays in your application being assessed.
- If you are unsure of anything, please email IFST on JoinUs@ifst.org

1. What you are applying for: Registered Food Safety Manager (RFoodSM)

Typical roles for an RFoodSM include Technical Manager, HACCP Team Leader, Food Examiner, Head of a QA Department, Food Premises Inspector, 3rd party/external auditor, an EHO specialising in food enforcement, food safety consultant, or an academic with relevant practical experience.

Applicants at this level would be accountable for the implementation of policy and delivery of food safety performance for a given area of operation. A Level 3 HACCP is required for this registration.

Example pathways below provide guidance to qualifications and experience:

- 10 years' experience in a senior food safety related management position
- A BSc in science and technology (non-food) plus 7 years' experience in a senior food safety related management position
- A BSc in food science and technology and closely related subjects plus 6 years' experience in a senior food safety related management position
- An MSc in food science and technology or closely related subjects plus 4 years' experience in a senior food safety role of which 2 years should be in a senior food safety related management
- A PhD in food science and technology or closely related subjects plus 2 years' experience at a senior level involved in the practical application of food safety requirements pertinent to a food safety role at a senior position

Relevant work experience may include:

- ensuring the company/business unit operates in compliance with legal requirements and relevant industry COP
- implementation and operation of company policy, systems and guidance
- providing technical advice on adherence to company policy and industry standards
- providing advice and guidance on the development / improvement of existing systems & policy
- conducting 3rd party audits/inspections
- responsibility for making business critical decisions in the event of a food safety crisis, initiating the recall/withdrawal process and crisis management procedure.

Overseas Qualifications

Qualifications from non-UK/EU universities are welcome. However, to support your application we will need a statement of compatibility from UK ENIC. This can be obtained from:

<https://www.enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SoC/Default.aspx>

2. Application Process

- All applications are made online (see guidance box above). The application process consists of submitting a competency report in which you draw upon your career and experience in food safety, and your answers will be assessed against the competency framework in place for this tier of the register.
- Appendix 1 contains the questions that you will be asked to answer in your report and the full details of the standards.

To submit your application, the following is required:

- Completed Competency Report
- Copy of HACCP Level 3 certificate
- Up-to-date CV including details of roles and responsibilities held
- RFoodSM Registration Fee
- Details of 2 x referees to support your application. A suitable referee would be a senior professional in your field of work; someone who is able to base their view on direct knowledge of your work experience. They should also be able to confirm the validity of your stated achievements. **Your referees should not be related to you or subordinate to you.**
- Certificate of highest relevant qualification.

3. Ongoing registration

In order to maintain your RFoodSM status, you will need to pay a renewal fee, and are required to annually confirm that you remain professionally active, competent to perform your role, and have engaged in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Every three years you will be required to submit a summary report of your CPD activities during the previous year, and 35 hours of CPD are required each year. You will be given access an online tool where you can add your CPD activities. More information on the CPD standards is available here: <https://www.ifst.org/career-development/what-cpd/cpd-standards-and-learning-activities>

4. Code of Professional Conduct

All registrants, as IFST members, are bound by a Code of Professional Conduct. As food science and technology professionals, every member gives an undertaking to:

1. Uphold the integrity of the food science and technology profession, and refrain from conduct which detracts from its reputation
2. Comply with current regulatory and legal requirements with care, and follow best practice to ensure the safety of food
3. Develop and maintain my professional knowledge and skills, and work within the limits of my knowledge, competence and skill
4. Act in a fair, honest, trustworthy and diligent manner
5. Take reasonable steps to ensure my professional judgement is not compromised nor perceived as being compromised because of bias, conflict of interest, or the undue influence of others
6. Consider the risks and implications of my action (or inaction) and advice, and hold myself accountable for them and for the impact these may have
7. Treat information with appropriate confidentiality and sensitivity
8. Raise any concern I have about the conduct of an individual or organisation likely to put the safety or health of the public at risk

Any allegation of a breach of the Code will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a member.

The Disciplinary Procedure governs how the investigation and disciplinary hearing will be conducted and a range of possible outcomes, including expulsion from membership in the most serious cases.

Appendix 1: Completing the competency report

The competency report will ask you the following:

- Please provide a summary of your food safety related experience during the past 3 years. For each position, state the company name, start and finish dates, list of achievements, responsibilities, level of authority and autonomy (please limit this to 300 words).
- Please tell us how you think you meet the standards for RFoodSM, using examples drawn from your recent personal involvement in the management of food safety tasks and projects utilising existing and emerging science and technology. Please answer ALL questions.

Some tips on completing the report include:

- **We would strongly recommend typing your answers into a document before adding them into the online application to ensure no loss of content if your connection times out.** The questions are provided below for your information.
- When you are thinking about how to structure your answers, you will need to think of examples of your experiences in terms of what you did, how you went about it and why you did it. You may find the STAR method helpful for structuring your answers – this stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result.
- Provide clear examples of the role that you played or the contribution that you made to a particular task or activity, rather than that of the team as a whole.
- You should think about using examples that are fairly recent i.e. from the last three years, although you can also draw on relevant experience from further back in your career.
- You can use and refer to a particular example more than once, but do ensure you make it clear how and why it applies to a competence.
- You can use examples from broad professional experiences, but you must be able to show how you have applied the skills developed in your job role.
- As a guide, approximately 100-150 words are suggested per response.

The questions and competences in the report are provided here so that you can prepare your answers. This is just for your information, and the application form will need to be completed online. Q denotes a question, and K or P denote the competence it relates to:

| Section A: Application of knowledge and understanding | |
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| Question | Competence |
| Q1. Give an example of where you have used your knowledge of pathogens to identify potential risks to your company/client and thereby enable appropriate food safety monitoring or controls to be implemented. | K1 Knowledge of the ecology of microbiological pathogens in foods with specific reference to sources, growth and survival characteristics, with reference to product intrinsic (e.g. pH, aw) and extrinsic (e.g. temperature) factors, and cross-contamination potential for common food pathogens. |
| Q2. Give an example where you have used a food allergy and intolerance management system to prevent allergen cross contamination in a factory, storage facility or retail environment. Explain what you learned. | K2 Knowledge of food allergy and intolerance management, including labelling requirements and management systems for control of allergens in manufacturing. This will include knowledge of the important controls to prevent allergen cross contamination in the design and operation of a new factory, storage facility or retail environment. |
| Q3. Give an example of where you designed a sampling and testing schedule for a specific aspect of food safety management in relation to a product or process. Describe your approach and rationale. | K3 Knowledge of microbiological and chemical testing procedures relevant to food safety, including sampling and interpretation of results. Note: for Food Examiners , a detailed knowledge of testing within the given field of examination must be proven. If you are a Food Examiner this section should be used to demonstrate that you have carried out examination of food over a period or periods amounting in aggregate to a least 3 years in one or more of the laboratories listed in your response to this section. |

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| Q4. Give an example of your involvement in supply chain management to ensure food safety e.g. through drafting raw material specifications, supplier audits, traceability exercises, raw material testing programmes. | K4 & P2 Knowledge of supply chain management practices and systems to assure the safety, quality and legality (including fraud prevention) of all raw materials, ingredients, goods and services in the work setting, e.g. FSMS, specifications, traceability systems, recent developments and techniques to scientifically prove certain fraudulent customer allegations etc. |
| Q5. Give an example of where you have been involved in the areas detailed in K5 below, e.g. HACCP pre-requisite or CCP foreign body controls, or foreign body investigations. | K5 Knowledge of physical hazards and their control in foods, including practical use of monitoring and management systems. |
| Q6. Detail an example of an experience you have had in relation to understanding the safety characteristics of packaging systems with respect to control of food safety hazards. | K6 Knowledge and understanding of the safety characteristics of packaging systems with respect to control of food safety hazards, e.g. understanding of UHT/aseptic/canning/modified atmosphere systems (as appropriate to job role). |
| Q7. Describe how you keep yourself up to date with current developments and new knowledge in the field of food safety. Explain how this has benefited the quality of your practice and the users of your work. | K7 Detailed knowledge of factors governing food safety in all relevant food industry sectors as appropriate to job role. |
| Section B: Professional Practice | |
| Question | Competence |
| Q8. Explain a situation where you had to make a critical food safety decision with potentially significant impact on your Company's or Client's business. Describe how you approached & addressed the challenge & how you communicated this to senior management. | P1 Experience of food safety decision-making with respect to management of microbiological issues, e.g. CCP failure management, results of environmental listeria screening, pathogen detection in ingredients, recall decision-making, etc. |
| Q9. Give an example from your current or recent role, where you validated a food safety control measure. | P3 Experience of developing, implementing, validating, verifying and reviewing HACCP systems in practice. The ability to lead HACCP teams and formulate systems when there has been a change in processes and raw materials, or in the development of new products. |
| Q10. Give an example where you have been involved in an audit within your current or recent role. Explain the approach taken and the outcome of the audit. | P4 Experience of 3rd party auditing. |
| Q11. Explain how you manage staff and resources within your technical remit to ensure food safety can be managed effectively. How do you identify and agree collective goals? | P5 Experience of staff or resource management. |

| Section C: Commitment to Professional Standards | |
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| Question | Competence |
| Q12. Give an example where IFST's Code of Professional Conduct relates to the work you carry out and how this governs your professional practice. | E1 Demonstrate understanding and compliance with relevant codes of conduct. |
| In addition to the above technical competencies, all registrants are expected to demonstrate a high degree of personal responsibility in the workplace and the following interpersonal skills, and these attributes should be included in your answers to the above questions: | |
| Personal Responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and lead work teams, coordinating project activities. • Operate and act responsibly, taking account of statutory requirements, environmental and socio-economic factors. • Develop and promote the application of quality standards. |
| Interpersonal Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate effective and appropriate communications skills. • Create, maintain and enhance productive working relationships. • Gather and evaluate feedback, acting where appropriate. • Identify, agree and work towards collective goals, and be aware of the needs and concerns of others. |