

Guidance Notes to Assist You in Applying for Food Safety Principal 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 Principal (RFoodSP)

Typical roles for an RFoodSP include Senior Food Safety roles such as Technical Manager / Director in a larger company, including senior consultants on long term or high-level strategic contracts, scientific advisor to government, Chief Environmental Health Officer or a senior academic with relevant practical experience. The applicant would be accountable for policy, strategy, systems, education and management and direction of food safety performance, typically reporting directly to the Board. A Level 4 (Advanced) HACCP is required for this registration.

Example pathways below provide guidance to qualifications and experience:

- 16 years' experience working in food safety of which 2 years' experience should be working in food safety at a management level
- A degree in Science and technology (non-food) plus 13 years' experience working in food safety of which 2 years' experience should be post-qualification and at management level
- A BSc in food science and technology or closely related subjects plus 12 years' experience working in food safety of which 1 years' experience should be post-qualification and at management level
- An MSc in food science and technology or closely related subjects plus 10 years' experience working in food safety of which 1 years' experience should be post-qualification and at management level
- A PhD in food science and technology or closely related subjects plus 8 years' experience working in food safety of which 1 years' experience should be post-qualification and at management level.

Relevant work experience may include:

- overseeing and advising on company compliance with legal requirements and relevant industry COP
- defining company structure and resource requirements for effective food safety management
- collating all relevant technical data to develop company policy and standards relevant to food safety
- being responsible for making business critical decisions in the event of a food safety crisis, initiating the recall/withdrawal process and crisis management procedure.
- contributing to appropriate industry/ stakeholder groups relevant to food safety performance

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 4 certificate
- Up-to-date CV including details of roles and responsibilities held
- RFoodSP 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 RFoodSP 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 RFoodSP, 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	
Question	Competence
Q1. Give an example of where you have used your knowledge of pathogens, chemical & physical hazards to identify potential risks to your company/client and thereby enable appropriate food safety monitoring or controls to be implemented.	K1 The knowledge of new and emerging food safety hazards with reference to commercial processes and products. The prediction and elimination of likely problems arising when implementing a new process / product development.
Q2. Describe how you design and manage allergen management systems. How would you determine the measures necessary to ensure consumer protection?	K2 Knowledge of planning and design principles with respect to allergic consumer protection, including leadership of systems to prevent allergen cross contamination through the design and operation of factories, storage facilities and/or retail environments. This will include decision-making about where specific allergen containing products should be made and how other sensitive products will be protected, e.g. consideration of the need for specific allergen free sites, etc.
Q3. Give an example of when you had to explain a potential food safety risk to non-technical members of a Company's Leadership or Senior Management Team or in a court case, as prosecuting officer or expert witness. How did you evaluate your success?	K3 Knowledge that would allow you to act as an expert witness or prosecuting officer as required.

Question	Competence
Q4. Explain how you would assess a supplier's food safety management systems and quality to ensure supply chain integrity. Give an example of where you suspected a supplier of fraudulent activity. Describe the steps and actions you took to address this concern.	K4, P2 Knowledge of the way others manage their quality and safety systems; use methods to minimise fraud; to maintain traceability especially during splitting of raw materials into smaller portions.
Q5. Give an example of where you have been involved with food packaging in relation to food safety.	K5 Knowledge of the applications of research relating to novel food, packaging and design.
Q6. Explain how you assess, support, encourage and develop staff within your technical remit to ensure they are able to work effectively in a food safety role. How do you identify and agree collective goals? Explain your answer in the context of CPD.	K6, P5, P6, P7 Knowledge of assessment and training methods in order to ensure that all staff are trained fully and appropriately.
Section B: Professional practice	
Q7. Demonstrate using at least one example your ability to make decisions and construct and communicate company policies related to food safety, non-conformances discovered and reported in technical operations.	P1 The ability to make decisions and construct and communicate company policies related to food safety, non-conformances discovered and reported in technical and processing operations.
Q8. Give one example of where you have used your food safety knowledge and experience to direct the design, development and implementation of a new food safety management system or process. Explain how you designed the project and ensured necessary resources were in place. Describe how the work benefited the Company (or Client).	P3 Experience of leading company HACCP strategy with respect to system structure decisions, for example, food safety management system certification (BRC, GFSI, ISO etc.), use of prerequisite programmes, operational prerequisite programmes, etc.
Q9. Give an example of where you have been involved with third party auditing and where you have used the 3rd party auditing resource or its results to improve food safety in your organisation OR give an example from your current or recent role, where you set up a verification and validation programme for a HACCP plan.	P4 The ability to lead a team or a response to a team, of 2 nd or 3 rd party auditors (i.e. Lead Auditor status) and/or to instruct and guide Tier 3 staff into verification and validation of HACCP plans
Section C: Commitment to Professional Standards	
Question	Competence
Q10. 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.
Q11. 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.	E2 Demonstrate a commitment to professional development through continuing advancement of own knowledge, understanding and competence.

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.