

# Criteria for SQF Fundamentals Auditor

Competency and Registration

**Edition 1.1**

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SQF Institute is a division of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The SQF Fundamentals Code was first released in June 2018 and is based off the SQF Food Safety Code, level 1 program and the GFSI Global Markets toolkit. The SQF Fundamentals Program provides the essential requirements for building a robust food safety management system and assists sites as they create a culture of food safety including the implementation of a written food safety plan and good industry practices.

The Fundamentals Program covers both primary and manufacturing scopes and consists of two separate codes: Basic and Intermediate. Both programs include essential food safety requirements however, Basic SQF Fundamentals focuses on developing good implementation tools for food safety, and Intermediate SQF Fundamentals builds on the Basic Code, and includes implementation tools and additional requirements regarding documentation.

The Criteria for SQF Fundamental Auditors, edition 1.1 was released in conjunction with edition 1.1 of the SQF Fundamentals Code and describes the qualifications, registration and reregistration requirements for auditors auditing the SQF Fundamental Codes, edition 1.1, or subsequent versions. The criteria contained in this document is applicable for all SQF Fundamental auditors applying for registration and reregistration beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. SQF Fundamental auditor registration is conducted by the certification body and is subject to review by SQFI or the site seeking certification.

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**Disclaimer**

While every effort is made to ensure that the process for evaluating applicants for registration is effective, FMI does not accept liability for services provided by registered SQF Auditors that fail to meet the requirements of all clients of the services.

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## 1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 1.1 Registration Category

The criteria described in this document are for the purpose of SQF classification and registration as an SQF Fundamentals auditor.

### 1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the relevant definitions given in Appendix 2: Glossary in the SQF Fundamentals Codes with the following definitions apply:

<b>Applicant</b>	An individual applying to become an SQF Fundamentals auditor.
<b>Fundamentals Auditor</b>	An individual who is registered by an SQFI licensed certification body as an SQF Fundamentals auditor according to the requirements contained in these criteria for SQF Fundamentals auditors
<b>HACCP Training</b>	Training that meets the guidelines outlined in the Food and Agriculture Organization’s CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application – Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 4-2003), – “A system, which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety.” This training shall: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Recognize a HACCP training course used extensively in a country.</li><li>2. Be administered and delivered by an institution recognized as a food safety training center of excellence.</li><li>3. Extend a minimum of two days (16 hours) in duration, or equivalent.</li><li>4. Assess the acquired knowledge of the candidate as part of the training program.</li></ol>

### 1.3 Sponsors

Each applicant for initial registration as an SQF Fundamentals auditor shall be sponsored by a certification body and one other person in the food industry with whom they have a business relationship. Sponsors must have evidence and / or personal knowledge of the relevant information contained within the application that they have verified (see attachment 3).

### 1.4 Personal Declaration

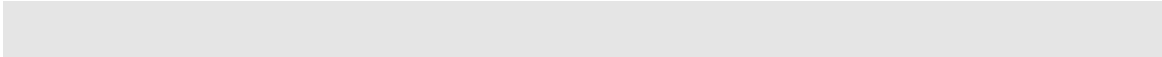
Each applicant for registration is required to attest they will comply with the SQFI Professional Code of Conduct (refer attachment 2) and that any complaints regarding their performance will be dealt with in a manner to prevent recurrence.

### **1.5 Appeals**

Written appeals against the outcome of an application for registration or re-registration will be referred to the SQFI Compliance Manager or designee. Decisions made by SQFI relating to any appeal are final.

### **1.6 Complaints Against Registered SQF Fundamentals auditors**

Complaints regarding the conduct of a currently registered SQF Fundamentals auditor will be acknowledged and investigated by SQFI. Substantiated evidence of misconduct may result in withdrawal of registration.



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## 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR SQF FUNDAMENTALS AUDITOR REGISTRATION

### 2.1 Overview

All applicants:

- Applicants shall successfully complete the online course, "Implementing the SQF Fundamentals Code for Manufacturing." As an alternative, the applicant may attend the "Auditing SQF Systems Training" course.
- Shall attend a HACCP training course that meets the definition described above (refer 1.2).
- Shall have successfully completed the SQF Fundamentals online examination.
- Shall have attained a university degree in a discipline related to the food industry (e.g. agriculture, food science, food technology, dairy technology) or 10 years work experience in a supervisory or technical role in food safety in primary production or food manufacturing, as applicable.
- Shall have attended a management systems lead auditor course or have successfully completed the GFSI Knowledge Exam.
- Applicants with a relevant university degree shall demonstrate a minimum of two (2) years work experience in food safety in primary production or food manufacturing as applicable or equivalent as outlined in 2.2.1.1 below.
- Auditors auditing in FSC 15, canning, are required to attend an approved scheduled processing course.
- Shall be employed by one designated SQF licensed Certification Body (if contracted, then the applicant must be sponsored by at least one SQF licensed certification body).
- Shall attest to the SQFI Professional Code of Conduct (refer attachment 2).

### 2.2 Requirements for Registration as SQF Fundamentals Auditors

The following educational, training, food industry work and food safety auditing experience requirements apply to all applicants unless otherwise specified.

#### 2.2.1 Education

2.2.1.1 The applicant shall have attained a university degree in a discipline related to the food industry (e.g. agriculture, food science, food technology, dairy technology). As an equivalent, the applicant may demonstrate 10 years industry experience in a supervisory or technical role in food safety in primary production or food manufacturing, as applicable.

2.2.1.2 Appropriate qualification is required for the following food sector categories:

- i. An approved scheduled processing course is required to audit against FSC 15 (canning process) qualification.

2.2.1.3 SQF may add additional requirements as needed to demonstrate competence in a particular food sector category or industry scope.

### **2.2.2 Training**

Food safety applicants shall have successfully completed the following training courses:

2.2.2.1 Successful completion of the online training course, "Implementing the SQF Fundamentals Code for Manufacturing." Alternatively, successful completion of the "Auditing SQF Systems Training" course if attended after January 2012.

2.2.2.3 HACCP training (defined in 1.2).

2.2.2.4 Successful completion of the SQF online Fundamentals examination or the Auditing SQF Food Safety Systems examination administered by SQFI and available through the SQFI web site ([www.sqfi.com](http://www.sqfi.com)).

2.2.2.5 Successful completion of "Management System Lead Auditor" training course of forty (40) hours duration (e.g., Exemplar Global, IRCA). As an alternative the applicant may demonstrate successful completion of the GFSI Knowledge Exam.

### **2.2.3 Food Industry Work Experience**

Applicants shall have at least two (2) years' work experience in a food-related technical, professional or supervisory position involving food safety accountability and the exercise of judgment in primary production or food manufacturing, as applicable.

2.2.3.1 All applicants are required to demonstrate operational experience with food hygiene and food safety based programs involving HACCP or other appropriate risk management systems. Alternatively, demonstrated experience involving equivalent practices, such as consulting or regulatory experience, that are deemed to provide experience relevant to the system being developed and the competencies described in this document for SQF auditors may be considered.

2.2.3.2 All applicants must submit an industry work experience log that meets the following criteria:

- i. Date of work history
- ii. Name and location of company where experience was gained
- iii. Position
- iv. Detailed description of the position to justify knowledge in food safety in primary production or food manufacturing
- v. Contact information for verification purposes

### **2.2.4 Food Safety Auditing Experience**

2.2.4.1 There are no minimum audit hours required for Fundamental auditor applicants however, the CB is required to conduct 10 supervisory audits that include 10 audit days and 5 food safety audits.

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The auditor shall be witnessed within the first 2 audits with the remaining audits be supervised audits, which is a combination of witness audits and review of audit reports, as part of the witness assessment.

Applicants that demonstrate 80 hours of food safety auditing or have been witnessed by a licensed certification body do not need to be witnessed. Auditing experience can be assessed through a combination of witness audits, audit report review or other means to assess auditing competency.

### **2.2.5 Food Sector Category Designation**

2.2.5.1 Except for FSC 15 (canning process) applicants do not need to qualify for specific food sector categories. Certification bodies shall assign auditors that support their food sector categories, education, training, work experience and audit history.

For those auditors wishing to audit in FSC 15 (canning process) an approved scheduled processing course is required.

### **2.2.6 Affirmation of the SQFI Code of Conduct**

2.2.6.1 Each applicant will be asked to attest that they will comply with the SQFI Code of Conduct (attachment 2) and that any complaints regarding their performance will be dealt with in a manner to prevent recurrence.

## **2.3 SQF Fundamental Auditor Application Process**

### **2.3.1 The Initial Application**

2.3.1.1 Certification bodies are required to assess each applicant to determine qualifications as outlined in this document using the form issued by SQFI. Names of auditors shall be provided to SQFI upon request. Verification and oversight by SQFI shall be conducted as needed.

2.3.1.2 Completed applications are to be maintained by the certification body and shall be accessible to SQFI upon request. It is suggested that applicants have the following documentation available prior to starting the application process:

- HACCP training certificate
- Lead auditor training certificate or GFSI Knowledge exam certificate
- Implementing the SQF Fundamentals Code for Manufacturing (online) or the Auditing SQF Systems training certificate
- SQF online Fundamentals examination or the Auditing SQF Food Safety Systems examination
- Work experience log
- Education records
- Professional development training records (if needed)
- Sponsor verification form (Attachment 3)



- Affirmation of the SQFI Code of Conduct (Attachment 2)

### **2.3.2 Re-registration**

2.3.2.1 Re-registration is not required for the SQF Fundamental Auditor. The applicant and certification body are responsible to assess the development needs and provide the necessary training to build the essential competences needed to become an SQF Food Safety Auditor.

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## ATTACHMENT 1: KEY COMPETENCIES FOR SQF FUNDAMENTALS AUDITORS

### **1. General Competencies**

Applicants must demonstrate through their qualifications and/or work experience they have achieved a satisfactory level of knowledge and experience in a particular food industry sector. All applicants must demonstrate:

- Proficiency in auditing, management and effective communication techniques.
- The ability to demonstrate the personal attributes and professional integrity necessary for the effective performance of audits.
- Knowledge and experience of auditing in the food industry.
- The ability to identify and assess potential quality defects at all links in the food supply chain.
- The ability to plan, lead and organize the audit.

### **2. Food Safety Competencies**

- The ability to identify and assess potential food safety hazards at all links in the supply chain including:
  - Biological hazards
  - Chemical hazards (including allergens)
  - Physical hazards
- The ability to assess the effectiveness of methodologies for controlling food safety hazards.
- An understanding of the current principles and practices of HACCP to the current edition of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Guidelines.
- Auditors applying for FSC 15 shall demonstrate competency in thermal-processing through an industry recognized qualification.
- Experience and a sound technical knowledge of the product and the process.
- Knowledge of relevant pre-requisite programs, industry codes of practice, legal requirements, and industry guidelines and standards.

## ATTACHMENT 2: SQF PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT

All registered SQF food safety auditors, quality auditors and technical reviewers have an obligation to maintain the integrity of the SQF Program by observing the SQFI Professional Code of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of their registration. The SQFI Professional Code of Conduct must be carefully reviewed and acknowledged as part of the applicant's registration or re-registration.

### 1.1 *Fundamental Principles*

- 1.1.1 Act professionally, accurately, honestly and impartially and in an unbiased manner.
- 1.1.2 Not to act in any way that would prejudice the reputation of the SQF Food Safety and Quality Codes and co-operate fully with an inquiry in the event of any alleged breach of the SQF Program.

### 1.2 *Relations with the Public*

- 1.2.1 Use their best endeavors to promote the worth of the SQF Food Safety and Quality Codes.
- 1.2.2 Act with professionalism and integrity when promoting their services.
- 1.2.3 Make it clear when dealing with the public, the capacity in which they are acting and on whose behalf they are acting.

### 1.3 *Relations with their Employer Colleagues/Clients*

- 1.3.1 Act with integrity. Maintain a professional, honest and trustworthy manner with each employee/client.
- 1.3.2 Inform employees and clients of any business connections, interest or affiliations, which might influence judgment or impair the equitable character of its services.
- 1.3.3 Indicate to their clients the adverse consequences that result from non-compliance with the requirements of the SQF Food Safety and Quality Codes.
- 1.3.4 Ensure their clients are fully aware of their rights to appeal a decision and the process by which they can do so.
- 1.3.5 Not disclose information concerning the business affairs or technical process of any present or former client without the client's consent.
- 1.3.6 Not accept compensation from more than one party for the same service without the consent of all parties.

### 1.4 *Relations with Peers*

- 1.4.1 The SQF auditor or technical reviewer will assist those under their supervision to develop their professional and technical skills.

*By my signature, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to follow the SQF Code of conduct at all times while representing SQF.*

**Signature of applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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**ATTACHMENT 3: SPONSOR VERIFICATION FORM**

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**APPLICANT SPONSORS**

Each applicant shall be sponsored by two people with whom they have had a food industry business relationship. One sponsor must be an employee of the certification body representing the applicant.

SPONSOR I	SPONSOR II
FULL NAME: _____	FULL NAME: _____
RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT: _____	RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT: _____
BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____	BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
PHONE: _____	PHONE: _____
E-MAIL: _____	E-MAIL: _____
SIGNATURE: _____	SIGNATURE: _____
DATE: _____	DATE: _____