

CTSI Professional Competency Framework Q&A

Please see below questions and answers that were raised in the recent CTSI Professional Competency Framework (CPCF) open surgery.

This has been sectioned into the following categories:

- RCO
- Animal Health & Welfare
- Examinations
- Training
- Other

Regulatory Compliance Officer (RCO) Queries:

Is this the level 4 RCO?

CTSI recognises the RCO level 4 qualification within the CPCF. The RCO is available to English Employers.

Rob Taylour is also happy to answer any questions about the RCO programme if colleagues want to email him at: Robert.taylour26@gmail.com

Is my apprentice who is completing his Level 4 RCO with Babington this month eligible for exemptions from the CPCF?

Yes, the RCO will give exemption from units 1 & 2 of the Trading Standards Practitioners Certificate (TSPC) (stage 1) and providing their project is trading standards based, will give them exemption from the unit 3 coursework also.

For level 4 RCO candidates who are sitting May 2021 exams - can their RCO coursework which provides exemptions from Unit 1 and 2 be submitted after September 2021?

Yes, the RCO coursework/project actually gives exemption from the Unit 3 coursework, so they can still sit their unit 3 written exam, but they will not be ratified for their certificate of completion until the RCO has been awarded in full. If they miss the September deadline they will be ratified at the next available board (July).

When undertaking the RCO and doing the written report linked to TS when does this have to be completed by and is the criteria on the website?

The RCO guidance and process is available on the stage 1 info tab of the website

Just for clarification, as an RCO apprentice presently due to finish later this year, am I able to begin studying the Unit 3 on LMS now in preparation for the exam, or should I complete the RCO first?

You can register for the RCO package and complete your training and exams for the CPCF while your RCO is being completed, should you wish to. The RCO exemption certification will not be ratified until all elements have been completed so you can get your CPCF award.

- The following statement was written in the chat during the open surgery **“Trading Standards Wales are looking at the RCO system with a view to trying to get a similar programme”**. Therefore, if you are Wales based you may wish to look into this with any apprentice scheme in Wales.

Where can we find information about the RCO qualification? Thanks

For information on the CPCF process as an RCO delegate, please see the [stage 1 info](#) tab on our qualification resource area

I have a candidate that has completed the RCO and passed the stage 1 exam that was taken in September- but has been told that they cannot register for the exams for stage 2 until she has received her certificate from CTSI. Just wondering whether this is correct and if so when the certificates will be sent out? Thank you

Once the assessment outcome has been ratified by the QAB and the candidate has received their results letter, they can register for stage 2.

Certificates have now been sent out but if they have their results letter showing they have completed all their stage 1 exams they are able to register into stage 2.

Animal Health & Welfare Queries:

Is the AHW qualification a revised version of the previous one or a totally new qualification?

This is a new qualification. It will of course have similar elements as the requirements to learning about Animal Health and Welfare legislation is needed. This qualification will recognise previous qualifications achieved under TSQF but some assessment will need to be completed.

How does AH&W qualification fit in with the CPCF framework is it now an optional module as per Food/Safety/Feed

This is a professional qualification awarded separately and sits outside of the CPCF.

Will it be possible to do the oral exam for animal health without doing the course?

No, the AHW qualification is booked as a package and includes training and all assessment. CTSI will recognise previous qualifications and apply a reduction on requirements and costs.

You mentioned the £6.5k for the RCO apprenticeship. Will this apply to AHW qualification?

No. The RCO Levey can only be used against the RCO training and assessments that are registered with the scheme.

CPCF Examination Queries:

When can we expect to hear exam dates?

The finalised timetable will be available once registration, and deferral applications close on April 1.

I assume if we have already emailed regarding deferral and it has been noted on our file, we do not require to complete the extension application referred to?

Deferral applications are available for delegates to complete & defer their unit in full to the next exam cycle.

The extension application is available to delegates wishing to sit in the May 2021 exam cycle but were unable to complete the portfolio in time and needed an extension to September.

Where can I find the dates for the exams in May as I cannot locate them on your website

Dates will not be available until the registration and deferral application closes (April 1 2021); once available they will be published to the examination information tab on the website

We have candidates for May but we will be 2 unitary authorities by then, will we be able to have 1 nominated person for the 3 candidates?

Yes, the nominated person will just oversee and ensure the integrity of the examinations are upheld.

For exams sitting in LA offices in May - can the nominated person and invigilator be the same person? And when will the exact dates and times be given?

The timetable will be finalised April 1. Where an authority can not obtain an appropriate invigilator outside of trading standards a request can be made for the nominated person to act as invigilator also. This must be requested to and agreed by the qualifications team in advance.

How, and by when, do we need to advise CTSI of the nominated person for the exams?

By April 1st candidates need to have supplied the details of their nominated person. May 1st is the deadline for the nominated person to have completed their form.

Will the W&M practical exam for May 2021 cycle be going ahead? If so, will these be in person at Teddington, or will they be done virtually in the same way as the oral and professional interview?

Yes, providing there are no issues with the venue, or government restrictions in place the Weights & Measures practical and oral examinations will be held at Teddington.

The Food/Feed oral examinations and all unit professional interviews will be held virtually.

Alternative evidence is being allowed to be submitted as part of the portfolio process in Stage 2, recognising that candidates have been *unable to complete certain elements of their portfolio, for example sampling/investigations*. As a Stage 1 candidate, the Unit 3 coursework is specific to an investigation, something I have not been able to take part in at this time. Does “alternative evidence” apply to Stage 1 candidates as well and if so how would it apply in terms of the Unit 3 coursework as it is specific to an investigation?

This had not been discussed previously but CTSI will be taking this to the QAB update meeting and a statement will be made in relation to this in due course.

How does the deferral work for stage 2 candidates who started in lieu of stage 1 results and subsequently have a resit to complete? When are their portfolios due as they can't sit the exams until potentially September?

Stage 2 exams cannot be registered for or sat until stage 1 has been completed in full. You can work with your assessor with the preparation and tasks for the portfolio/s, but this will not be verified until stage 2 has been registered into.

If a resit is being sat in September 21, a candidate would be ratified and able to register into the following May 22 exam cycle should they be successful. The deadline for registering into the May 22 exam cycle is April 1 2022.

If a candidate is claiming exemption from all but unit 3 of the Part 1, is it possible for them to do the legal exam plus one or two of the modules from part 2 at the same time?

Any Stage 1 examinations registered for are to be sat in 1 exam cycle. Stage 2 of the framework cannot be registered into until stage 1 is complete.

All of stage 2 exams don't have to be taken in the one exam sitting? this can be split over two years

That is correct, Stage 2 has a two-year deadline to complete all units and elements (extensions and deferrals are available on request).

I have a student that has DCATS with food and feed, IP, Fair Trading criminal, product safety etc but had not completed the W&M module. How does that student slot into the new qualification framework?

They are able to come in and complete the W&M unit over 2 years as an additional unit as they are DCATS qualified.

They would choose the following option on the [booking page](#) to register for their examinations and would book training as normal:

Description	Location	Start Date	End Date	
CPCF RCO Training & Examination Package		01/09/2021	30/04/2022	Click Here
CPCF Training Prep for May 2022 Exam Cycle		01/09/2021	30/04/2022	Click Here
AHW Competency Training 2021		19/04/2021	09/07/2021	Click Here
CPCF Resit Registration		10/05/2021	11/06/2021	Click Here
CPCF May 2021 DCATS Qualified Additional Unit Exam Registration		01/05/2021	31/05/2021	Click Here
CPCF Assessor Training 2020		01/01/2020	30/04/2021	Click Here
CPCF May 2021 RCO Exam Registration		24/04/2020	30/04/2021	Click Here
CPCF May 2021 Stage 2 Exam Registration		24/04/2020	30/04/2021	Click Here
CPCF May 2021 Stage 2 Exam Registration with Instalments		24/04/2020	30/04/2021	Click Here
CPCF Stage 1 & 2 Full Training Prep for May 2021 Exam Cycle		01/09/2020	30/04/2021	Click Here

If we pay in block for all units of the Stage 2, can we separate as and when we start the course? i.e. Unit 4 feed, Unit 5 and Unit 6 in one year and Unit 4 metrology the following year (not having to do all contact days for all units in the first year)

Yes. Where possible delegates should complete their training in the cycle before their exam. If a prepayment is made for the stage, the training can be booked in another training cycle when needed.

If deferring exams will there be additional contact days or tutorials put on closer to September exam dates?

Training should be completed in full with the cohort they booked into. Additional training can be requested but an additional 1day training fee may be applicable. Revision days will be recorded for delegates to download and use for revision purposes.

Sending communications to the Assessor would be really useful , rather than a Head of Service or both?!

We will arrange for assessors to be included in the newsletter mailing list

Question from one of the students in our authority - please clarify whether stage 2 is going to be over the three years?

Stage 2 requirements are to be completed over 2 full exam cycles (usually May). Due to the impact of COVID restrictions, extensions & deadlines are very flexible at the moment.

However, delegates must communicate with the qualifications team if they are not going to meet a deadline and request for extenuating circumstances. If an extension or deferral has NOT been applied for and agreed, this will class as a failed attempt at an element.

CPCF Training Queries:

What are the dates for Stage one unit 1,2, and 3?

Training dates can be found on the [CPCF Training courses page](#)

Will the training in September still be done remotely to assist Local Authorities who will struggle with the travel costs involved?

The next training cohort for September 21 in preparation for the May 22 exam cycle is currently being arranged as virtual sessions. Should we be able to host our training back in a venue, following government guidelines, this may be considered.

When will the W&M Practical and Oral training be available for booking, and what will happen should lockdown measures unfortunately still exist at that time?

Dates for the P&O training in preparation for the May 22 exam cycle should be available for booking later in the year, once we have confirmation on potential venue availability. We are currently trialling a virtual practical and oral course in preparation for the May 21 exam cycle so this could be the solution going forward should we not be able to host at venues.

Are there training dates on the website for assessors and verifiers?

The [assessor course](#) is a free online training course available to anyone wishing to assess portfolios for CPCF candidates

If an apprentice (nearly finished RCO qual) is wanting to enrol for the September cycle, what is the latest day that they can do this please?

The training booking deadline is August 1 2021 to start training in September and the Exam registration deadline will be Mar 1 2022. Have them enrol onto training even if they have not completely finished the RCO. Training is a separate entity to the CPCF assessments.

I started with Gloucestershire T/S and am looking to do Stage 1, is it possible to book on by April and do the exam in September?

You will need to book onto the September 2021 training by August 1 2021 and then register into the Stage 1 exam cycle for May 22.

Other Queries:

Is it possible to have direct communication from verifiers to candidates/assessors especially relating to the types of portfolio evidence accepted? My assessor has heard nothing from the verifier.

There should be direct communication between verifiers and assessors/candidates. Candidates or assessors will need to contact the verifier for assistance directly. If this is not occurring please do let CTSI know. [Verifiers local authorities list](#)

Can we use different assessors within our department for different portfolios (stage 2)?

Yes, providing they have completed the assessor training course and have a valid CPPD to assess.

Are there financial options for students to pay for the framework on a direct debit basis where there employing authority don't wish to finance?

We do not offer direct debit payment options however candidates and/or authorities can pay over 2 instalments.

Is there a possibility that the 2 year limit requirement for evidence is relaxed? I am thinking in relation to the investigation's portfolio in particular. Even with an extension until September it will be difficult to do two full investigations. It would help if we could go back a little further in time for evidence.

There is the option to defer your unit 5 to the May 2022 exam cycle or speak to your verifier for additional support and ideas for completing your elements. Evidence in the portfolio is recommended at not older than two years but CTSI recognise that investigations can take longer than this therefore speak to the verifier as Q and A sessions could be incorporated to keep the evidence relevant.

Also, let's not forget about our experienced officers - they need CPPD to maintain their professional competencies . CTSI don't seem to be offering enough training opportunities for experienced/qualified officers to maintain their relevant competencies.

We will feed this back to the professional training and events team to look into.

Phil Owen spoke recently at ACTSO meeting saying the new CPCF framework is going to be reviewed in near future. What's the purpose/scope of the review and are there any changes perceived at this point?

As with any new framework, a review must be available to see that what is being provided is fit for purpose. There are currently no changes in place to the framework.

Any changes that come into place post review, will be announced via the channels and all delegates currently in the framework will be made aware.