

Integrated Food Safety System

National Curriculum Standard

FAQ

2016

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What is the Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS)?

The IFSS represents a seamless partnership among federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal agencies (strategic partners) to achieve the public health goal of a safer food supply. An IFSS also actively solicits input and support from stakeholders.

The seamless operation of IFSS strategic partners will:

- Plan and prioritize work to coordinate resources.
- Use foodborne illness outbreak data to inform the development of evidence-based food safety policies and programs, and criteria to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Implement efficient, prevention-focused, risk-based inspections and sample collections.
- Share data among strategic partners.
- Promote use of compliance and enforcement tools for achieving compliance with food safety laws and regulations.

An IFSS strives to leverage the participation, coordination, resources, and authorities of all regulatory partners to protect the food supply.

What is the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP)?

The Partnership for Food Protection is a group of dedicated professionals from Federal, State, and Local governments (partner agencies) with roles in protecting the food supply and public health. PFP is the structure used to meld and coordinate representatives with expertise in food, feed, epidemiology, laboratory, animal health, environment, and public health to develop and implement an Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS).

- Goal: *Mutual Reliance* for a Safer Food Supply through *Collaboration, Sharing Solutions, and Solving Problems*
- Charge: To work towards the development of an Integrated Food Safety System

What is the Partnership (PFP) doing with Regards to Training?

- The PFP is comprised of 7 workgroups with the Training and Certification Workgroup charged with improving training programs under an Integrated Food Safety System.
- The other workgroups include: IT, Work Planning, Compliance and Enforcement, Response, Outreach, and Lab

Why are We Looking to Improve our Regulatory Training Program?

Continuous improvement is a given: FDA's Division of Human Resource Development is dedicated to developing and delivering the most up-to-date and needed training to the US regulatory community. We have now included professionals in the adult training and education field so that we can use recognized methods and processes to insure valid and defensible training.

- Call to action from PFP and other interest groups
 - 1998 50-state meeting
 - Identified need for regulator training
 - PFP concept discussed
 - 2008 50-state meeting

- Call to action to advance IFSS through a commitment to training
- PFP officially created
 - 2014 Partnership for Food Protection Strategic Plan
- PFP issues the Strategic Plan which outlines the vision, objectives, and direction each workgroup should work towards in creating and implementing an IFSS Training and Certification Workgroup assigned with two objectives: 1) Create a common curriculum for regulator training that would help insure a competent workforce doing comparable work across strategic partners 2) Provide input on and disseminate the products coming out of Training Summit.

What is the Training Summit?

The Regulatory and Public Health Partner Training Summit or simply Training Summit is a forum where stakeholders can meet to share their vision for developing a National Curriculum Standard for training Integrated Food Safety System regulators using *best practices* in training and professional development, discuss curriculum development, and find opportunities to continuously improve the quality of and access to training.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) executives and leaders in the training community met in 2015 to discuss the emerging Integrated Food Safety System National Curriculum Standard. This standard represents the grass-roots efforts of dedicated public health and regulatory experts who share in the vision of an Integrated Food Safety System Training Community. This inaugural meeting was a first-of-its-kind event and laid the groundwork for subsequent Training Summits. The next face-to-face Training Summit is scheduled for September 13-15, 2016.

Who is Participating in Improving Regulator Training?

A diverse group of professionals with expertise in the job duties and functions (federal, state, local, PFP Training and Certification Workgroup); experts in the creation and delivery of competency-based learning events; academia; training institutes; FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs Division of Human Resource Development.

What is a Job Task Analysis?

A *job task analysis* deconstructs a job into duties, tasks, and steps. For example, the job of a homeowner can be broken down into duties, such as maintaining the yard, which in turn can be broken down into different tasks such as mowing the grass. The steps involved in this task would be to (1) prep the lawnmower, (2) turn on the mower, and, (3) run the mower over grass that needs to be cut.

What is the National Curriculum Standard (NCS)?

The NCS establishes the standard for national training program content and identifies the knowledge, skills, abilities and other attitudes or attributes (KSAO) as well as expected levels of performance to be able to conduct specific job activities or tasks. The NCS is the '*backbone*' in identifying what the training content needs to address for Food Protection Professionals to be successful in their job. It also identifies career paths that are pertinent for each of the jobs in the curriculum framework. The NCS utilizes a blend of two methods to identify curriculum KSAOS, competencies and JTAs. The competency statements and JTAs are then utilized to draft the course.

Why is a Dual Training Development Approach used (Job Task Analysis vs Competency-Based Approach)?

There's more than one way to skin the cat: By combining both approaches, you take the best of both worlds. For example, polling alone may include a certain margin of error. By utilizing both approaches you can essentially reduce the margin of error and double-check the process and thus provide more validity to the end product.

- Both approaches are valid ... both use a validation study through a wider audience
- The JTA breaks down the duties, tasks, and steps (= backbone) of the job and delineates **how the job is actually currently performed**. The JTA is helpful for a job that is linear and involves a lot of steps because it helps to outline all the steps of the job (Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3).
- The competency-based approach associates the different job components with respective statements of expectations for the KSA's. **It identifies what the job should be**. The competency statements then evolve into learning objectives. This approach puts more emphasis on the cognitive aspects of the job performance and is useful when a job requires a lot of critical thinking (non-linear job). It provides a deeper understanding of why a step is taken, a relevant issue when considering compliance.

What are the Benefits of the NCS?

- The NCS establishes the KSA's and expected performance levels (how well one would need to know it or do it) at different stages of a professional career(Entry level through Leadership).
- It provides a deliberate order by sequencing the training along ones career path within the NCS framework.
- It enables the development of equivalent and comparable training to meet the standard by any training organization using the NCS.
- It helps managers to determine whether someone has the right skillset to do the job prior to being hired. A benefit is the development of products such as the competency assessment tool which can also be used as a self-assessment for job performance to determine if training is needed.
- The curriculum framework outlines the actual courses, learning events, assessment tools, or other opportunities to gain the needed competencies to perform the duties and tasks of the job.
- And finally: It produces valid and defensible training. At the end of the day...How do we know our training is any good?

What are Benefits of the Curriculum Framework?

- To provide a vision and roadmap for an integrated, open-sourced, career-spanning food safety regulatory training system.
 - Open-source cataloging system
 - Helps identify content areas in which food protection professionals should receive training

- Helps identify competencies for each content area
- Assists in the placement of learning events available from any provider

How will the NCS affect the Various Training Standards that are currently in Place?

Going through the process is not going to happen overnight; it will take some time because stake holders will need to understand what is occurring and why. The standards were initially built with the best intentions and are now being revised and validated by professionals skilled in adult training and education principles and theory so the training is valid and defensible. The cycle of continuous improvement will eventually ensure that all standards are updated.

The past 20 years have seen considerable progress in this area and new positions, such as ISS/ISD, I/O Psychologist, and Psychometricians were created to collaborate with our Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in using various methods and processes to develop sound training and learning events.