



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 07/22

Notification of date for withdrawal of funding currently available for:

- **Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ(V)) training to certify the export of animals and animal products to the EU and NI**

and

- **Official Controls Qualification (Animal Health Paraprofessional) - Certification Support Officer (OCQ(AHP) - CSO) training**

Date issued: 02 March 2022

Purpose

To provide notification that:

1. The funding currently available to provide free-of-charge online training for the following qualifications will be withdrawn on 5 April 2022:

- The OCQ(V) - PX (Product Exports) and, where not already held, the pre-requisite courses OCQ(V) - ES (Essential Skills) and OCQ(V) - EX (Exports General)
- The OCQ(V) - UX (Ungulate Exports) and, where not already held, the pre-requisite courses OCQ(V) - ES and OCQ(V) - EX
- The OCQ(V) - EQ (Equine Exports) and, where not already held, the pre-requisite courses OCQ(V) - ES and OCQ(V) - EX
- The OCQ(AHP) - CSO training

2. To benefit from this free-of-charge training, veterinarians must apply for the funding by 31 March 2022 and then enrol onto the relevant courses by 5 April 2022. CSO candidates can use the free code provided later in this Briefing Note (point 26) until 5 April 2022.

3. After these dates, the training will still be available to be purchased directly from the [OV](#) and [AHP](#) training websites.

Background

4. The funding offer was launched in October 2020 to subsidise training to increase certification capacity following EU Exit. There are further details in the previously issued [APHA Briefing Note 32/20](#).

Action

5. If they have not yet done so, veterinarians are encouraged to apply for funding for any of the qualifications listed above by 31 March 2022 to help support export certification in GB. They are also asked to encourage colleagues who may not currently hold the qualifications to consider applying. OVs may also wish to consider whether CSOs could be used to support them in their certification work. Free funding is also currently available to pay for registration for candidates who are not already registered on the OV or AHP databases.

6. Any veterinarians who have already applied for the funded training but have not yet enrolled are encouraged to do so before 5 April 2022. Enrolment to the courses using this offer will not be possible after this date.

7. This offer was designed to increase certification capacity. Therefore, no refunds are available to those who have already registered on the OV/AHP database and/or enrolled on these courses.

8. The funding is available for the full qualifications only and not for revalidations. If you previously held any of the required qualifications but they have now expired, you will be eligible for funding for the full courses, subject to meeting the other requirements set out below, but you will not be eligible for funding for revalidation courses.

9. Veterinarians must be registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (but may or may not currently be OVs) and be willing to offer export certification services in England, Scotland or Wales.

10. The offer, and access to any free training, may be withdrawn before 5 April 2022 if the available budget limits are reached.

11. OVs or employers of OVs who have taken up this offer must offer a service to suitable exporters. To do so, they will also need to be registered on Export Health Certificates

Online (EHCO), more details on this are available on GOV.UK. It is understood that even if a service is offered, delivery would depend on a suitable commercial contract being agreed between the Food Business Operator (where relevant) and/or the exporter and the certification service provider and this may not be possible in every case. There is no guarantee of demand for certification services.

Obtaining the OCQ(V) - PX, UX and/or EQ

12. The OCQ(V) - PX covers the export of animal products, including food for human consumption and animal by-products. Please note that Essential Skills and Exports General qualifications are pre-requisites for the Product Exports course. All three OCQ(V)s must be held before authorisation will be given to undertake certification of animal products (excluding germinal products).

13. The OCQ(V) - UX covers the export of ungulates, including equines. The OCQ(V) - EQ covers just the export of equines. As such, funding is available to undertake one, but not both, of these qualifications. Both qualifications require the Essential Skills and Exports General qualifications as pre-requisites.

14. The training provider for these courses is Improve International – further information is available on the [OV training website](#).

15. In addition to the enrolment fees for the selected OCQ(V)s, a one-off registration fee is required, and this will be met as part of the offer for those veterinarians not currently registered on the OV database. The standard fee for registration is £59 plus VAT.

16. If you wish to take up this offer you must send an email to: CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk and provide the following information:

- Your RCVS membership number
- State whether or not you are already registered on the OV database
- Which of the following qualifications you require:
 - Essential Skills (OCQ(V) - ES)
 - Exports General (OCQ(V) - EX)
 - Product Exports (OCQ(V) - PX)
 - Ungulate Exports (OCQ(V) - UX)
 - Equine Exports (OCQ(V) - EQ)

17. Your request must be made by email, not by phone. The APHA OV Team will validate your request before providing instructions by email on how to access

registration/enrolment free of charge. This must be done before registering on the OV database or enrolling on the courses, to avoid being charged. Refunds cannot be issued.

18. Applications must be received by the APHA OV team by 31 March 2022. Applications received after this date will not be processed.

19. Enrolment onto the courses must be completed by 5 April 2022.

20. After 5 April 2022, or once the free training funding has been exhausted, the qualifications can be purchased directly from the [OV training website](#).

Certification Support Officers (CSOs) – Role and Responsibilities

21. CSOs support Certifying Officers (COs) – who can be OVs holding the OCQ(V) - PX or Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) – in the delivery of Export Health Certification for animal products (excluding germinal products). CSOs are not able to support OVs for live animal or germinal products certification.

22. CSOs act in a supporting role to collect evidence under the direction of a CO to facilitate signing of an Export Health Certificate (EHC). CSOs can perform tasks to provide COs with the assurances they require to certify products for export, for example (but not exclusively) carrying out inspections, checking identification of products and checking labelling against requirements. Anything that requires veterinary judgement is excluded. Further information on the CSO role can be found on the [APHA Vet Gateway](#).

23. CSOs cannot sign EHCs.

Obtaining the OCQ(AHP) - CSO

24. To become a CSO, individuals must hold the OCQ(AHP) - CSO qualification. The qualification is obtained online and is available through the [AHP training website](#), where all the details of the training and the eligibility criteria can be found.

25. The standard fee for enrolling on the OCQ(AHP) - CSO course is £199 plus VAT (plus a one-time registration fee of £59 plus VAT).

26. However, candidates will have these fees waived if they enter the invoice code **20APAHFP** at the following stages:

- For registration on the AHP database
- For subsequent enrolment on the CSO course, following eligibility verification by a CO

Please note that the invoice code given above is only valid for the CSO qualification. Veterinarians must apply to APHA for relevant codes.

27. Enrolment onto the course must be completed by 5 April 2022.

28. Online training for the qualification will be provided free of charge as long as there is funding available. After 5 April 2022, or once free training funding has been exhausted, the qualification may be purchased directly from the [AHP training website](#).

29. Candidates wishing to become CSOs must register themselves via the [AHP training website](#) and nominate a CO to validate their eligibility before they can enrol for the training.

30. The nominated CO must personally confirm that the employer has made the required checks and make additional checks themselves as necessary, then make an online declaration of eligibility for the candidate by following the link that will be emailed to them. Details for verification include identity confirmation, a 'basic disclosure check' with no unspent convictions relating to fraud or animal and public health, minimum academic qualifications, English language skills and right to work in the UK. Details of the minimum academic qualifications are available on the [AHP training website](#).

Further Information

31. APHA reserves the right to select applications if there is excessive demand for places and will operate a 'fair usage policy'.

32. If you have any queries about the courses, please [contact Improve International](#). For veterinary queries, contact APHA at CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk

33. Guidance for Certifiers on the EHCO service can be found on the [EHC Online page](#) of the APHA Vet Gateway.

34. Guidance for Certifiers on how to register for the EHCO service can be found on the GOV.UK [EHC Online registration page](#).