



## APHA Briefing Note 22/18

### Introduction of Official Control Qualification (Animal Health Paraprofessional) - Certification Support Officer (OCQ(AHP)-CSO).

#### Purpose

1. To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) of the release of the Official Controls Qualification (OCQ) for Certification Support Officers (CSOs), which is an Animal Health Paraprofessional (AHP) role.
2. This qualification (OCQ(AHP)-CSO) supports the delivery of Export Health Certification for animal products excluding germplasm/germinal products. CSOs are not able to support live animal Certification.
3. The use of CSOs is expected to increase the efficiency and productivity of OVs providing export certification for animal products (excluding germplasm/germinal products). However, APHA will direct which EHCs are suitable for deployment of CSOs. An initial list of eligible EHCs will be made available as part of OV Instructions [Product Exports](#) and this should be checked by the OV at appropriate intervals.

#### Background

4. Individuals holding the OCQ(AHP)-CSO qualification and authorised by Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) will be referred to as Certification Support Officers (CSO).
5. We expect the online course to be available through Improve International from 17 December 2018.
6. Online training for the qualification will be provided free of charge to the first 200 candidates. Please note that 'Grandfather Rights' do not exist for this role.
7. CSOs can be engaged by and can only act under the direction or supervision of an Official Veterinarian (OV) and must be in an official relationship to that OV e.g. through being in the same employment, as an employee of the OV or by contractual engagement.
8. CSOs will act in a supporting role in order to provide evidence to help an OV holding the Product Exports (PX) module, in signing an Export Health Certificate

(EHC). CSOs cannot sign an export health certificate themselves.

9. CSOs can perform tasks to provide OV's 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.
10. Candidates must nominate an OV and have their eligibility validated by that OV before they are enrolled for the training. OV must check with employers of candidates enrolling for OCQ(AHP)-CSO to confirm completion of employment checks (for example identification confirmation, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), academic qualifications, language skills and right to work in the UK).
11. The minimum requirement for an individual to register for the OCQ(AHP)-CSO module is 3 A levels, one of which must be in a science or food production subject. Equivalent qualifications are eligible, for example Scottish Highers or qualifications awarded outside the UK. A university degree will negate the A-level requirement. Candidates with suitable experience, e.g. veterinary nurse qualifications (RVN) or working in a regulatory role, will be considered on merit even if they do not meet the A-level requirements. Further details are on the [AHP website](#). If you have a suitable candidate and wish to check their eligibility please email [enquiries@improve-ahp.com](mailto:enquiries@improve-ahp.com).
12. The standard fee for taking the OCQ(AHP)-CSO module is £149 plus VAT (plus a one-time registration fee of £59 plus VAT). The first 200 candidates to have their applications to enrol validated will have these fees waived. Registration and enrolment normally each require a payment. However, for the first 200 candidates they should enter the following Invoice codes instead:  
For registration on the AHP database – enter the invoice code APHCSR  
For subsequent Enrolment on the CSO course, following eligibility verification by an OV – enter the invoice code APHCSE.

APHA reserves the right to select applications if there is excessive demand and will seek to operate a 'fair usage policy' per employer.

## Further Information

If you have any queries please contact Improve International <https://www.improve-ov.com/contact> or for veterinary queries contact international trade vets Carlisle (APHA) at [internationaltradevetscarlisle@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:internationaltradevetscarlisle@apha.gsi.gov.uk).

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