



**GFSI** BENCHMARKING REQUIREMENTS VERSION 2021

# PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION BODIES

## PART III

Requirements for the competence  
criteria of the professional  
recognition programme

# Introduction

The Global Food Safety Initiative is a Coalition of Action from the CEO-led Consumer Goods Forum, bringing together retailers and manufacturers and an extended food safety community to help oversee food safety standards for businesses and help provide access to safe food for people everywhere. Its ambition is to strengthen and harmonise food safety systems so they are able to feed the growing, global population and develop markets that can deliver food safely, no matter where in the world the consumer is.

GFSI's benchmarking and harmonisation of Professional Recognition Programmes for food safety auditors fosters mutual acceptance of those auditors across the Certification and Food industries, reducing the need for duplicated verification of auditor competences including in the scopes of those Benchmarking Requirements, and facilitating access to the profession through a professional framework.

The GFSI Benchmarking Requirements are composed of the following documents:

- Part I: specifies the GFSI Benchmarking Process, the method for the recognition and ongoing oversight of food safety Professional Recognition Programmes. The objective of this document is to clearly lay out this process. Further details may be provided upon request and during the application process.
- Part II (Requirements for the Management of Professional Recognition Programmes) and Part III (Requirements for the competence criteria of the Professional Recognition Programmes): specify the requirements that the Professional Recognition Body needs to fulfil to achieve GFSI recognition.
- Part IV (Glossary of terms): defines the terms used in the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements. It is an

integrated part of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements and definitions shall be applied accordingly in GFSI-recognised Professional Recognition Programmes.

The GFSI Benchmarking Requirements for Professional Recognition Programmes are built through consensus of experts; they form a shared and widely accepted understanding of what constitutes a robust food safety Professional Recognition Programme.

The GFSI Benchmarking Requirements are furthermore submitted to extensive public consultation during their development; this ensures a wide review of the proposed approach and fosters the aforementioned mutual acceptance.

Part III of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements, this document, defines the key elements required in a Professional Recognition Programme in relation to the competence of a registered auditor.

It applies to any Professional Recognition Programmes being submitted for GFSI benchmarking.

GFSI requires Professional Recognition Bodies (or PRBs) to address each key element outlined in this document in their recognised Professional Recognition Programmes (or PRPs).

The detailed content of each individual Professional Recognition Programme shall however be independently developed and is not expected to be a direct copy of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements.

GFSI has defined in a glossary terms used in key elements. The glossary is an integrated part of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements and definitions shall be applied accordingly in Professional Recognition Programmes.

## SECTION 1: QUALIFICATION PREREQUISITES

REFERENCE	ELEMENT	REQUIREMENTS
1.1	PRP pre-requisites	The Professional Recognition Body shall define pre-requisite criteria for auditors applying for registration
1.2	Knowledge and skills through education and experience	The pre-requisites shall include criteria confirming the knowledge and skills equivalent to a higher education that includes general food-related or bio-science discipline or equivalent experience.
1.3	Knowledge and skills through education and experience	The pre-requisites shall include assessed criteria confirming knowledge and skills equivalent to a "higher level" HACCP training programme (including knowledge assessment by an examination and skill practices by means of application) based on Codex Alimentarius accepted by the Professional Recognition Body (based on criteria defined in Part II, section 6).
1.4	Technical aspects of food	The pre-requisites shall include criteria confirming experience in the food industry, taking an active role in food safety responsibility for the equivalent of at least five years full time work.

## SECTION 2: PROFESSIONAL STANDARD AND CONDUCT

REFERENCE	ELEMENT	THE PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION CRITERIA SHALL INCLUDE
2.1	The principles of ethics and integrity	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the principles of ethics and integrity, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the knowledge of ethical principles</li> <li>the skills required to apply the Professional Code of Conduct (ISO 19011 current version, #4a and #7.2.2)</li> </ul>
2.2	The need for independence	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the need for independence, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the knowledge of sources of conflicts of interest</li> <li>the skills to maintain impartiality during audit process (ISO 19011 current version, #4a)</li> </ul>
2.3	Recognition of own limits and need for specific external expertise	<p>The knowledge and skills required to recognise their own limitations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The knowledge of Principles of auditing as defined in ISO/IEC 19011 current version, #4); sector-specific audit criteria, principles and practices</li> <li>The skills to recognise when external expertise is required (e.g. interpreters, technical experts, IT infrastructure) and able to accommodate this when audit planning, or can promote an alternative arrangement</li> </ul>
2.4	Advocacy of the profession	<p>The knowledge and skills required to advocate for the profession, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The knowledge to understand the importance and benefits of the audit function</li> <li>The skills to explain the value of the audit function</li> </ul>

## SECTION 3: TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF FOOD

REFERENCE	ELEMENT	THE PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION CRITERIA SHALL INCLUDE
3.1	The external environment	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the regulatory and legal framework within which the auditee operates (ISO/TS22003 table C1), including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The knowledge to understand applicable food safety regulation and legislation and the governing bodies applicable to the auditee</li> <li>The Skills to identify when applicable regulatory and legislative requirements need to be considered and incorporates when verifying audit evidence to determine level of conformity</li> </ul>
3.2	The external environment	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Food safety management appropriate to the audited organisation and audit scope when communicating with others, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The knowledge of Food safety management principles, Organisation types, size, governance, structure and workplace practices (ISO/IEC 17021)</li> <li>The Skills to apply the above principles during an audit.</li> </ul>
3.3	The external environment	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Principal stakeholders' requirements appropriate to the organisation and their application, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The knowledge of Stakeholders' requirements applicable to the audit,</li> <li>The skills to identify, interpret and apply stakeholders' requirements applicable to the audit</li> </ul>

3.4	Food Safety Management	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Food safety management system models and frameworks (the core elements of a management system and the interrelationship between top management responsibility, policy, objectives, planning, implementation, measurement, review, and continual improvement) and approaches to verify the adequacy and effectiveness of the management system during audit, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of Food safety management system requirements applicable to the audit</li> <li>• The skills to identify, interpret and apply the management system model requirements applicable to the audit</li> </ul>
3.5	Food Safety Management	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Supply chain management practices and systems to assure the safety, quality, legality and authenticity of all raw materials, ingredients, goods and services and approaches to verify their adequacy and effectiveness during audit, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of Sector specific threats and vulnerabilities in the food supply chain</li> <li>• The skills to identify and verify supply chain management controls applicable to the audit</li> </ul>
3.5	Food Safety Management	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the identification of food safety culture practices and approaches, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of food safety culture and principles of what drives and sustains a strong food safety culture</li> <li>• The skills to identify and challenge beliefs, mindset and behaviours related to food safety culture. Can assess criteria of maturity. Can gauge effectiveness of approaches, practices and activities at driving and sustaining a strong and positive food safety culture</li> </ul>
3.6	Industry expertise	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the Application of hazard analysis principles and categorisation, implementation, validation and verification of controls, and approaches to verify their adequacy and effectiveness during audit, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the Codex Alimentarius hazard analysis principles, control measure categorisation and validation methodologies, verification mechanisms</li> <li>• Skills to identify and verify the extent of implementation of hazard analysis principles, control measure categorisation, control measure validation and verification arrangements applicable to the audit scope/ scope of registration of the auditor</li> </ul>

3.6	Industry expertise	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the Identification of food safety hazards and methods for control (food safety hazards encompass microbiological, physical, chemical, allergenic, radiological, and those arising from food threats and food fraud), and approaches to verify their adequacy and effectiveness during an audit, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of Food safety hazards typically associated with organisation being audited and options/methodologies to control these hazards, food defence principles food fraud principles</li> <li>• Skills to challenge the approaches to the identification of food safety hazards, food safety threats (defence) and food safety vulnerabilities (fraud) applicable to the scope of registration of the auditor</li> </ul>
3.7	Industry expertise	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the Identification of good manufacturing practices (prerequisite programmes) and approaches to verify their adequacy and effectiveness during audit, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of Prerequisite programmes typically associated with the scope of registration of the auditor</li> <li>• Skills to challenge the extent to which the prerequisite programmes implemented conform to requirements and are effective at controlling food safety risks</li> </ul>
3.8	Operational capability	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Auditing principles as defined in ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.11, ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.2, ISO/TS22003 table C 5, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of the principles of auditing</li> <li>• The skills to apply a process and risk-based audit approach as opposed to a clause-by-clause approach</li> </ul>
3.9	Operational capability	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Quality management and quality improvement as defined in ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.11, ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.2, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge to understand a risk-based approach to auditing</li> <li>• The skills apply audit principles; ongoing professional development and improvement</li> </ul>
3.10	Operational capability	

## SECTION 4: OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES

REFERENCE	ELEMENT	THE PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION CRITERIA SHALL INCLUDE
4.1	Auditing fundamentals	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Auditing principles as defined in ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.11, ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.2, ISO/TS22003 table C 5, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of the principles of auditing</li> <li>• The skills to apply a process and risk-based audit approach as opposed to a clause-by-clause approach</li> </ul>
4.2	Auditing fundamentals	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Quality management and quality improvement as defined in ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.11, ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.2, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge to understand a risk-based approach to auditing</li> <li>• The skills apply audit principles; ongoing professional development and improvement</li> </ul>
4.3	Data management and protection	<p>The knowledge and skills related to information gathering, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge to gather audit evidence from documents, interviews, surveys and observations</li> <li>• The knowledge to gather and process data in compliance with the law and certification programme requirements</li> <li>• The skills to gather and prioritise information from documents, interviews, surveys and observations</li> </ul>
4.4	Data management and protection	<p>The knowledge and skills related to the analysis of information, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of Information analysis techniques using appropriate software tools where necessary</li> <li>• The skills to gather and prioritise information from documents, interviews, surveys and observations, critically analyse information received using appropriate software tools where necessary and available, interpret the findings and assess their meaning/ impact on food safety, and use Information and Communication Technologies, data systems and documentation systems as required</li> </ul>

4.5	Data management and protection	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Report writing as per ISO/IEC 17021-1 A.2.8, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge to report the audit and write clear and objective audit findings</li> <li>• The skills to write audit reports including clear and</li> </ul>
4.5	Data management and protection	<p>The knowledge and skills related to data protection, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge to manage confidential information, in line with applicable legislation, company and Certification Body's policies</li> <li>• The skills to manage confidential information and fulfil applicable legislation, company and Certification Body's policies related to data protection</li> </ul>
4.6	Personal effectiveness	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Planning and preparation, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of Audit planning principles and methods</li> <li>• The skills to plan and prepare an audit</li> </ul>
4.7	Personal effectiveness	<p>The knowledge and skills related to decision making and evaluation, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of Decision-making principles and methods</li> <li>• The skills to make decisions based on objective evidence</li> </ul>
4.8	Personal effectiveness	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Monitoring and reviews, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of monitor and review progress during an audit</li> <li>• The skills to monitor and review an audit</li> </ul>
4.9	Personal effectiveness	<p>The knowledge and skills related to feedback, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of when feedback is required</li> <li>• The skills to offer feedback</li> </ul>

## SECTION 5: BEHAVIOUR

4.10	Communication	<p>The knowledge and skills related to Oral communication for a range of audiences and contexts (ISO 17021-1 A.2.10) (ISO 17021-1 A.2.9) (ISO 17021-1 A.2.7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of communicate orally in a range of styles</li> <li>• The skills to use a range of techniques to effectively communicate orally to a variety of audiences in a range of contexts, effectively ask the right person the right question, and listen to others for proper understanding</li> </ul>
4.11	Communication	<p>The knowledge and skills related to written communication for a range of audiences and contexts (ISO 17021-1 A.2.10) (ISO 17021-1 A.2.9) (ISO 17021-1 A.2.7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of communicate in writing in a range of styles</li> <li>• The skills to use a range of techniques to effectively communicate in writing to a variety of audiences in a range of contexts</li> </ul>
4.12	Communication	<p>The knowledge and skills related to manage and resolve conflicts, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge of processes for conflict resolution</li> <li>• The skills to call on and use a range of techniques to manage conflict in a positive manner</li> </ul>

REFERENCE	ELEMENT	THE PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION CRITERIA SHALL VERIFY THAT THE AUDITOR
5.1	Objectivity	Demonstrates impartiality and objectivity in communications and when making audit conclusions
5.2	Objectivity	<p>Raises audit findings based on fact not opinion and demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a systematic approach</li> <li>• consideration of all applicable food safety hazards, threats and vulnerabilities</li> <li>• prerequisite programmes Inclusive of consideration of regulatory, legislative and other stakeholders' requirements</li> </ul>
5.3	Objectivity	Gathers relevant information from documents, interviews, surveys and observations
5.4	Objectivity	Considers food safety management principles throughout the audit process and reports objectively and without bias or prejudice
5.5	Objectivity	Makes decisions taking into consideration audit evidence, audit criteria, the process being audited and food safety risk
5.6	Objectivity	Has consideration of regulatory and legislative requirements applicable to the auditee in conformity decision
5.7	Objectivity	Adopts a science-based approach when verifying the identification of hazards, threats and vulnerabilities
5.8	Objectivity	Considers regulatory and legislative requirements when determining if a management system is conforming

5.9	Objectivity	Considers all stakeholders' requirements within the context of the management system being audited (i.e. the auditor shall confirm whether the prerequisite programmes conform to all applicable requirements)
5.10	Communication	Communicates the required information clearly accurately, adapting the language and style to suit the audience/recipient
5.11	Self-development	Continually self-evaluates performance and seeks opportunities to improve and grow – willing to learn from situations
5.12	Attention to details	Accurately represents the audit process
5.13	Attention to details	Audit report demonstrates consideration of all applicable audit criteria, the audit scope and the audit objectives
5.14	Self-management	Does not take conflict personally – retains self-control and self-confidence even in the face of opposition or challenge
5.15	Self-management	Acts with resilience and fortitude even when faced with challenges
5.16	Self-management	Selects appropriate means to achieve the task, within the time available; identifies objectives for tasks; identifies areas of key importance and reflects these in the audit plans
5.17	Self-management	Gives information accurately (and assertively and at appropriate times to appropriate people, in order to confidently make, present and support decisions, even if the auditee disagrees)
5.18	Observant	Is perceptive to the immediate situation and circumstances in which they are operating. (ISO 19011)
5.19	Decisive	Makes timely and sound decisions based on the analysis of available information even in the face of ambiguous or conflicting evidence or when there is an associated risk. (ISO 19011)
5.20	Culturally sensitive	Behaves in a culturally sensitive manner (organisationally or regionally) and adapts approach or behaviours to these differences appropriately (ISO 19011)

5.21	Collaborative	Understands their role in a team and works collaboratively when needed, to ensure effective working relationships aimed at achieving the desired outcome. (ISO 19011)
5.22	Flexible	Identifies when it is appropriate to amend approach to achieve desired outcome (ISO 19011 - 'Versatile')
5.23	Diplomatic	Behaves tactfully when dealing with individuals (ISO 19011)
5.24		Demonstrates due care and attention to comply with site requirements



## SECTION 6: ATTITUDE

REFERENCE	ELEMENT	THE PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION CRITERIA SHALL VERIFY THAT THE AUDITOR
6.1.1	Professionalism	Demonstrates professionalism throughout the audit
6.1.2	Professionalism	Acts with integrity, honesty and ethically
6.1.3	Professionalism	Respects and complies with the Code of Professional Conduct
6.1.4	Professionalism	Only undertakes audit activities if competent to do so
6.2.1	Acts as an advocate	Advocates food safety management principles and their values
6.2.2	Acts as an advocate	Advocates stakeholders' requirements and their implementation
6.2.3	Acts as an advocate	Advocates management system principles, requirements, and their implementation with respect supply chain management
6.2.4	Acts as an advocate	Advocates hazard analysis principles and requirements and their implementation
6.2.5	Acts as an advocate	Speaks positively about the audit function, acting as an ambassador for its use
6.2.6	Acts as an advocate	Advocates Certification Programme and GFSI Open to improvement – proactively seeks opportunities for self-assessment and improvement
6.3.1	Professional development	Approaches self-development positively - recognises the importance of CPD in maintaining competence
6.3.2	Professional development	Decisions are unbiased and related to the task

6.4.1	Objectivity	Remains objective and focused on the task
6.4.2	Objectivity	Seeks to communicate with maximum accuracy, transparency and without prejudice or bias
6.4.3	Objectivity	Report reflects an objective and focused approach to the audit; respectful in communication with all audiences
6.4.4	Objectivity	Report reflects an objective and focused approach to the audit; respectful in communication with all audiences
6.5.1	Sensitivity	Approaches conflict positively (aims for win/win)
6.5.2	Sensitivity	Willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view (ISO 19011)
6.5.3	Sensitivity	Applies emotional intelligence
6.6.1	independence	Remains independent when resolving issues arising during audit where independence may be compromised