

Chapter 10 Operational Training

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1. OV Training

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Process and legal requirements

This guidance document details the process and the requirements to be fulfilled in order for a veterinarian to be appointed as an OV under (EU) 2017/625 and (EU) 2019/624.

1.1.2 Eligibility for appointment as an OV

To be eligible for appointment as an OV, the candidate must:

- hold a veterinary degree (see topic 1.5 on 'OVs from other countries' regarding equivalent qualifications from other countries)
- be a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)
- have successfully passed the theory examination at the end of a university OV course
- have successfully completed their practical probationary period and passed the assessment which is conducted at the end of the probationary period

1.1.3 OV role

The following summarises the main duties and responsibilities of an OV according to legal requirements. **Reference:** (EU) 2017/625 Article 18

- food chain information (FCI)
- ante-mortem inspection
- animal welfare
- post mortem inspection
- specified risk material and other animal by products (ABPs)
- laboratory testing
- health marking of carcasses of domestic ungulates, farmed game mammals other than lagomorphs, and large wild game, as well as half carcasses, quarters and cuts produced by cutting half-carcasses into three wholesale cuts.

1.1.4 OV auditing tasks

Currently OVs do not carry out auditing tasks as these are performed by designated FSA VAs, however OVs will assist in collecting evidence on compliance of the systems below, which is used during audits. They must also gain auditing experience as part of their Probationary Period.

Audit of good hygiene practices and hazard analysis and HACCP based procedures:

- checks on FCI
- design and maintenance of premises
- pre-operational, operational and post-operational hygiene
- personal hygiene
- training in hygiene and in work procedures
- pest control
- water quality
- temperature controls
- controls on food entering and leaving the establishment and any accompanying documentation
- verification that FBO applies HACCP based procedures continuously and properly
- verification of compliance with microbiological criteria
- verify application of the identification mark.

1.1.5 OVs other tasks

- communication of inspection results

- decisions concerning FCI
- decisions concerning live animals
- decisions concerning animal welfare
- decisions concerning meat
- enforcement
- supervision of MHIs carrying out official controls.

1.2 The University course

1.2.1 Legal requirements

The competent authority may appoint veterinarians who have passed a test meeting the requirements contained in (EU) 2019/624 Annex II.

1.2.2 Theoretical syllabus

An OV must have an adequate knowledge of the following areas:

- National and Union legislation on human health, food safety, animal health, animal welfare and pharmaceutical substances
- principles of the common agricultural policy, market measures, export refunds and fraud detection (including the global context: World Trade Organisation sanitary and phytosanitary agreement, Codex Alimentarius, the World Organisation for Animal Health)
- essentials of food processing and food technology
- principles, concepts and methods of good manufacturing practice and quality management
- pre-harvest quality management (good farming practices)
- promotion and use of food hygiene, food related safety (good hygiene practices)
- principles, concepts and methods of risk-analysis
- principles, concepts and methods of HACCP, use of HACCP throughout the food production food chain
- prevention and control of food-borne hazards to human health
- population dynamics of infection and intoxication
- diagnostic epidemiology
- monitoring and surveillance systems
- principles and diagnostic applications of modern testing methods
- information and communication technology when relevant as working tools
- data-handling and applications of biostatistics
- investigations of outbreaks of food-borne diseases in humans
- relevant aspects concerning transmissible spongiform encephalopathies TSEs
- animal welfare at the level of production, transport and slaughter
- environmental issues related to food production (including waste management)
- precautionary principle and consumer concerns
- principles of training personnel working in the production chain
- health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products
- fraud aspects.

1.2.3 Practical training subsequent to the university course

Once the candidate has passed the theoretical examination at the end of the OV university course, they must carry out practical training, for a minimum of 200 hours. During this period, the NOV works under the supervision of an existing OV.

1.2.4 Universities

The contact details for universities delivering OV courses are as follows:

Langford Continuing Education Unit
University of Bristol School of Veterinary Science
Langford House
Langford
Bristol
BS18 7DU

Tel: 0117 3941649

Website: bristol.ac.uk/vet-school/

E-mail: langford-ce@bristol.ac.uk

1.2.5 University examination

After undertaking the university training course, the veterinarian must pass a test to confirm knowledge of the subjects contained in the OV theoretical syllabus.

The Competent Authority (CA) may not require the candidate to complete the OV course, or certain parts of it, if it is satisfied that the candidate has acquired the required knowledge as part of:

- a veterinary degree
- though continuous professional development
- as a result of a post graduate qualification
- past experience, for instance candidates with sufficient experience as an OV in other Member States

In any of the circumstances detailed above, and subject to agreement from the CA, the veterinarian may be permitted to complete only part of the modules, or none of them, but they **MUST** sit and pass all aspects of the exam. The candidate should contact the University for further information in relation to the specific arrangements for sitting the examination.

1.3 The probationary period

1.3.1 Appointment as a Novice OV

Once the veterinarian has passed the university test and becomes a NOV, they should complete the form at annex 2 on 'Application for OV appointment and authorisation' and submit to CSU, along with a copy of the University certificate.

CSU York Transactions Team
Room 112
Food Standards Agency
Kings Pool, Peasholme Green
York
YO1 7PR

Telephone: 01904 232177

E-mail: CSU@food.gov.uk

CSU will provide the NOV with:

- a letter of appointment from FSA, providing information regarding the probationary period and incorporating a schedule detailing OV practical experience requirements for the different types of establishments
- FSA OV authorisation

1.3.2 Practical training

The legislation requires the OV to carry out practical training for a probationary period for at least 200 hours under the supervision of an existing OV before starting to work independently.

During their probationary period, the NOV needs to gain experience in all areas covered in the university training syllabus.

Additionally, they should develop knowledge and experience of:

- FSA working practices
- FSA IT systems and procedures (e.g. Innova)
- FSA audit of FBO food safety management systems

The NOV must not personally conduct audits but should observe and assist with the audit process to develop their auditing skills and gain an understanding of the auditing procedures.

1.3.3 Supervision

The NOV must work under supervision of an OV (Supervisory OV (SOV)) during the probationary period. The veterinary contractor employing the NOV will nominate a supervisor.

Regular contact must be maintained between SOV and NOV. Both SOV and NOV must demonstrate that they have followed up the issues discussed between them (e.g. by way of entries in the 'Learning log and portfolio of experience').

1.3.4 OV practical experience requirements

The NOV is responsible for ensuring that the visits and a minimum of 200 practical training hours in specific types of establishments have been met. Although the FSA takes a flexible approach with regards to the minimum number of training hours in specific establishments, it is mandatory that the hours in establishments listed on the 'OV practical experience requirements' (Appendix A of the letter of appointment) are met.

The NOV must keep a record of the total number of hours completed in each type of establishment as part of their 'Learning log and portfolio experience'.

The table below contains details of the establishments, species and minimum total hours that every NOV must complete during their probationary period.

It also provides details and suggestions on how the NOV will be able to achieve satisfactory learning processes on the specific requirements for these establishments, and how they will be able to gain the necessary knowledge in auditing FSMS.

For other types of establishment and the hours that the FSA strongly recommends, refer to annex 5 on 'OV practical experience requirements' in this chapter.

Red meat slaughterhouse (covering at least cattle, sheep and pigs slaughter)	Work as slaughterhouse OV (if possible with co-located cutting plant) under supervision of the SOV
Red meat cutting plant	Conduct unannounced inspections (UAI) and shadow audits in cutting plant with an appointed VA
White meat slaughterhouse (covering at least poultry slaughter)	Work as slaughterhouse OV (if possible with co-located cutting plant) under supervision of the SOV
White meat cutting plant	Conduct UAIs and shadow audits in cutting plant with an appointed VA
Minced meat establishment	Conduct UAIs and shadow audits in cutting plant / processing plants with an appointed VA
Meat preparations establishment	Conduct UAIs and shadow audits in cutting plant / processing plants with an appointed VA
Meat products establishment	Conduct UAIs and shadow audits in cutting plant / processing plants with an appointed VA
Total minimum hours	200

Visits to a wild game establishment are not compulsory; however, if the NOV wishes to gain OV appointment in relation to wild game, they must complete the following activities and allocated compulsory hours (*):

Establishment	Activity	Minimum hours
Approved Game Handling Establishment	Dressing of wild game: large: deer	14(*)
Approved Game Handling Establishment	small: game birds, lagomorphs	7(*)
Approved Game Handling Establishment	Cutting of wild game	7(*)

Part of the statutory requirements regarding OV training and probationary period is that this training must include the auditing of FSMS.

In order to gain this experience, the NOV must accompany (shadow) a VA in at least 1 full FBO Audit of FSMS. This audit must cover as many activities as possible, and both slaughterhouse and cutting plant activities must be included.

The training must include the understanding of the audit process and familiarization with audit outcomes and reporting systems.

1.3.5 NOV tasks

The NOV may conduct the following tasks in approved establishments:

- inspection tasks (ante mortem and post mortem)
- other checks (welfare, ABP, SRM, etc)

The NOV may charge when carrying out the above tasks by completing the relevant timesheet and code. However, when both the SOV and NOV are in attendance, the contractor may only charge for one person.

The NOV should accompany a VA auditing FBO procedures to ensure the NOV becomes familiar with the auditing systems and procedures, including writing the audit report.

The NOV must not personally conduct audits but may assist with the audit process (e.g. by providing evidence collected by ongoing supervision of FBO's own procedures in slaughterhouses) to develop their auditing skills and gain an understanding of the auditing procedures.

1.3.6 Learning log and portfolio of experience

The NOV must ensure that their 'Learning log and portfolio of experience' is completed before the assessment of competence takes place.

Note: The 'Learning log and portfolio of experience' is provided to the NOV by their employing Contractor practice.

1.3.7 Essay

The NOV is required to choose a relevant topic and carry out a critical evaluation in relation to public health, animal health and / or animal welfare. The essay / report must contain a minimum of 800 words and a maximum of 1000 words.

In agreement with their Contractor, the NOV must send their proposed report / essay topic title, along with a brief description (no more than 300 words) of its contents and structure to CSU, for agreement as to the relevance and suitability of the chosen topic.

The topic of the essay / report is to be approved by the Training and Development Portfolio Leader and by the relevant subject Portfolio Leader (either an FVL or an AVL) within 10 working days. If the suggested topic is not deemed to be appropriate, the FVL will give advice and guidance as to potential alternatives.

1.4 Assessment of NOVs

1.4.1 Assessment request

The NOV, in consultation with his employing contractor practice, is responsible for requesting the assessment of competence. This request should be made to CSU.

The following documents should be sent when requesting the assessment:

- completed 'Assessment request' form (see annex 6)
- copies of 'Certificates of practical experience' (see annex 5)
- a copy of the essay / report, with a copy of the notification from the Portfolio Leaders confirming that the topic is acceptable

These should be sent at least 15 working days before the date on which the NOV expects to complete their OV Assessment. Do not send the original documents with the 'Assessment request' form.

1.4.2 Assessment procedure

Once the 'Assessment request' form has been received by CSU and the practical experience requirements verified, CSU will notify the employing Contractor practice, who will allocate an assessor and arrange a date and venue for assessment.

As soon as the NOV has been offered a date for the assessment, they must submit a copy of their 'Learning log and portfolio of experience' and a copy of the completed essay / report to the appointed assessor, to arrive at least 5 working days before the date of the assessment.

On the assessment day, the NOV needs to present the original completed 'Learning log and portfolio of experience' to the assessor.

The assessor will conduct the assessment through observation, questioning, exploration of actions taken, evidence of liaison with establishment teams(s) and discussions regarding the practical experiences that the NOV has undertaken during the probationary period.

The assessor may also ask questions in relation to the contents of the completed 'Learning log and portfolio of experience', the essay / report and establishments other than the type at which the assessment is taking place.

The assessor will complete an 'Assessment of practical application experience' form, giving feedback regarding the evidence gathered during the assessment day. The outcome of the assessment will be stated; the individual will either have been successful or will require further experience. In the case of the latter, guidance will be given as to the amount and type of further experience required.

Note: All NOVs must successfully complete their practical training and assessment within 12 months of completion of the OV course.

The completed 'Assessment of practical application experience' must be sent by the assessor to CSU, who will notify the NOV of the outcome within 10 working days of receipt.

1.4.3 Successful NOV

After the completion and successful achievement of the assessment, the NOV will receive a letter and a copy of the 'Assessment of Practical Application Experience' from the CSU, confirming that they may begin working independently as an OV, including the conduct of audits.

This letter will be copied to the employing contractor.

Reference: see annex 5 on 'Assessment of practical application experience' and annex 8 on 'Official Veterinarian confirmation of appointment letter' in this chapter.

1.4.4 Unsuccessful NOV

If after the completion of the assessment, the NOV has not shown the level of competence / experience required, CSU will forward the completed 'Assessment of Practical Application Experience' to the NOV, within 5 working days of receipt.

The 'Assessment of practical application experience' will define the areas requiring further attention, and the suggested additional hours of experience required.

Arrangements to cover any skills gap(s) need to be organised between the NOV and their employing contractor.

The NOV should continue to complete the 'Learning log and portfolio of experience' during the additional hours required.

Note: Authorisation to work as an NOV will be withdrawn by the FSA for any NOV who does not successfully complete the practical training and assessment within 12 months of completion of the OV course.

When the NOV and SOV are satisfied that the further experience required from the initial assessment has been gained, a re-assessment should be requested following the process as defined in sub-top 1.4.1 on 'Assessment request' as defined above.

Notwithstanding the over-riding 12 month period as mentioned above, where a NOV has reached 400 hours within their probationary period and has not successfully passed the assessment, their

future as a NOV with the FSA will be considered.

1.4.5 Appeal procedure

If a NOV disagrees with the outcome of an assessment, they should put their appeal in writing, outlining their grounds for appeal, to CSU, within 10 working days of the receipt of the assessment decision. If the appeal is considered to have merit, a re-assessment will be arranged by CSU, to be carried out by a different assessor. The outcome of this re-assessment will be final.

1.5 OVs from other countries

1.5.1 RCVS membership

OVs are required to be members of the RCVS to complete their practical in plant training.

The RCVS will be able to confirm the equivalency of veterinary qualifications obtained in other member states.

1.5.2 OVs from other Member States

In accordance with Directive 89/48/EEC (Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications) and Section 1.2.2 of the Food Law Code of Practice (made under the Food Hygiene (E/S/W) Regulations 2006), an OV from another member state may feel it unnecessary to undertake the entire OV designation course and / or undertake the 200 hours practical NOV training, as they consider they have sufficient knowledge and experience of the requirements detailed in (EU) 2019/624, Annex II, Chapter II including domestic legislation and enforcement procedures.

1.5.3 OVs from Third Countries

Where the OV comes from a third country (outside the EU) they must confirm that their veterinary degree and OV designation are acceptable and equivalent to the similar qualifications issued in the EU. The RCVS can confirm its status.

1.5.4 Required knowledge

Regardless of when the OV qualified and depending on whether they have had a gap in their employment, the OV must be acquainted with:

- post 2006 EU hygiene legislation,
- domestic hygiene, animal health and welfare legislation
- associated EU, FSA and Defra guidance documents
- knowledge of veterinary risk assessment and enforcement
- drafting and service of formal notices
- evidence gathering techniques

1.5.5 OV University course exam

All prospective GB OVs must sit and pass all aspects of the OV course university exam and will be required to provide the following documentary evidence:

- their veterinary degree
- post graduate qualification in veterinary public health
- documentary evidence of past experience

The candidate should contact a university providing OV courses if they wish to submit themselves direct for the examination.

If the OV fails the university examination, they may be required to sit the entire OV course before reassessment.

1.5.6 Assessment of Competence

On successful completion of the University examination, OVs are required to successfully undertake an in-plant assessment of competence, irrespective of whether they have been required to undertake the minimum 200 hours practical experience.

The OV must demonstrate experience of FSA documentary procedures and certification (for example audit of FBOs, wild game, meat products, meat preparations, ready to eat etc). These documents will form part of the assessment.

Whilst experience of working as an OV in a country outside GB may be counted towards / in lieu of the 200 hour practical experience period, such hours must be certified (by letters of reference or endorsement from the CA or governing body) and documented in the portfolio of practical experience.

Letters of reference should specify relevant information such as length of time working as an OV, type of premises, etc.

The OV must follow the procedure outlined in topic 1.4 on 'Assessment of NOV's' by submitting their portfolio of practical OV experience and essay to FSA, in order that an in-plant assessment may be arranged.

The OV must be able to demonstrate competence in line with the 'Day one competencies' detailed in annex 9.

If the OV passes the FSA assessment, they may be appointed as a fully qualified OV.

If the OV fails the FSA assessment, they will be required to undertake plant based practical experience in the areas where they failed to achieve the necessary standard as outlined by the assessor, then be re assessed.

2. UAI training

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2.1 Introduction

To enable MHIs to undertake enforcement action whilst conducting UAls, the FSA requires the MHI to carry out theoretical and practical training for a probationary period as required.

During this period, the MHI will undertake at least 10 UAls, under the supervision of the FVC.

EC law indicates Official Auxiliaries (OAs) 'may only collect information regarding good hygienic practices and HACCP-based procedures' in their role of assisting the OV in the specified audit and inspection tasks.

2.2 Classroom training and examination

An MHI must have adequate knowledge of the following areas when carrying out enforcement activity:

- knowledge of legislative requirements, for example, minced meat / meat preparations temperature control limits
- essentials of food processing and food technology
- principles, concepts and methods of good manufacturing practice and quality management
- promotion and use of food hygiene, food related safety (good hygiene practices)
- principles, concepts and methods of risk-analysis
- principles, concepts and methods of HACCP, use of HACCP in food production and processing
- prevention and control of food-borne hazards related to human health
- assessment of food safety management systems
- investigations of outbreaks of food-borne diseases in humans
- relevant aspects concerning TSEs and ABP
- enforcement procedures

After undertaking the classroom training course, the MHI will undertake tests to confirm knowledge of the subjects detailed above via a range of enforcement scenarios during the classwork. Once the MHI has passed the classroom enforcement scenarios they must carry out practical training and be assessed by an FVC.

Note: MHIs must pass each classroom enforcement scenario in addition to the FVC assessment before they can carry out enforcement during UAls.

2.3 Probationary period: Practical experience

During their probationary period, the MHI should gain experience in all areas covered in the training.

Additionally, they should develop knowledge of:

- FSA working practices
- FSA audit of FBO food safety management systems

The MHI must work under supervision of a FVC during the probationary period. Regular contact must be maintained between FVC and MHI.

Both FVC and MHI must demonstrate that they have followed up the issues discussed between them (e.g. by way of entries in action plans and portfolios of evidence created by the MHI - see topic 2.4 on 'Portfolio experience')

The FVC is responsible for ensuring that the required 10 UAIs, under their supervision, have been conducted by the MHI. This should include a minimum of 2 accompanied inspections.

2.4 Portfolio of experience

The MHI must maintain a portfolio which demonstrates appropriate experience.

An assessment of competence will take place at the end of the probationary period and the portfolio will be one of the main components of the assessment. It should therefore be completed as fully as possible, making sure that entries are made for areas where experience has been gained.

The MHI should demonstrate through their portfolio that all of the learning areas listed below are covered, including details of what has been found, discussed, researched (for example, phone calls, liaison with other enforcement bodies, FBOs, other colleagues)

- environmental issues related to food production (including waste management)
- precautionary principle and consumer concerns
- principles of training of personnel working in the production chain
- an aptitude for multidisciplinary co-operation

These areas are incorporated in the MHI theoretical classroom training programme.

Performance evidence can include records of 'live' observations carried out by the MHI. These observations can be collated on reports and will be assessed after the event.

Variety is also important. The evidence should include a range of conversations or meetings with different people and about different topics. It is acceptable for the MHI to use the same evidence more than once.

The MHI may obtain witness testimonies from supervisors or colleagues to show evidence that they may not have been able to demonstrate to the assessor through observation.

There may be times when an MHI will produce several samples of evidence, but if the assessor is still not confident that they clearly show the candidate's competence, they will ask for additional evidence to be provided

Quality of evidence is considered more important than quantity to avoid the assessors time be taken up with sifting through large volume of evidence.

Evidence requirement	Criteria
Appropriate	Content is appropriate to the level required
Reliable	Is produced unaided and represents the normal standard of the MHIs work and work of the same quality can be reproduced
Valid	Meets the performance criteria in the syllabus, for the range of knowledge and skills
Current	Meets the performance criteria, for the range of knowledge and skills set out in the syllabus; an assessor would ask the MHI to provide new evidence to ensure that their skills and knowledge are still up to date

Portfolio experience evidence requirements

Evidence requirement	Criteria
Current	The FVC must be satisfied that evidence of prior achievement is good enough to show that the candidate is currently competent

Evidence requirement	Criteria
Sufficient	There are enough samples of evidence to show competence That the samples show consistency in competent performance
Consistent	The FVC is satisfied that the candidate will be able to perform at this standard in future

2.5 Assessment procedure

Once the MHI has completed the required training programme, passed the enforcement scenario exercises and completed the required amount of practical visits they should request an assessment from the FVC and liaise with the ITL to allocate an appropriate time at an appropriate venue.

On the assessment day, the MHI needs to present their portfolio of experience to the assessor. The FVC will conduct the assessment through observation, questioning, exploration of actions taken, evidence of liaison with establishment teams(s) and discussions regarding the practical experiences that the MHI has undertaken during the probationary period.

The FVC may also ask questions in relation to the contents of the completed portfolio of experience. After the assessment, the FVC will complete an 'FVC assessment of MHI' report, giving feedback regarding the evidence gathered during the assessment day.

The outcome of the assessment will be stated; the individual will either have been successful or will require further experience. In the case of the latter, the FVC should advise as to the amount and type of further experience required.

MHIs will be notified of the outcome by the FVC at the earliest opportunity following assessment.

CSU will forward the completed 'FVC assessment of MHI' report to the MHI within 5 working days of receipt.

Where the MHI is unsuccessful the 'FVC assessment of MHI' report will define the areas requiring further attention, and the suggested additional hours of experience required. Arrangements to cover any skills gap(s) need to be organised between the MHI and the FVC.

The MHI should continue to complete their 'Portfolio of evidence' during the additional hours required.

Note: Authorisation to carry out enforcement work will not be granted by FSA to any MHI who does not successfully complete the practical training and FVC Assessment within three assessment attempts.

When the FVC is satisfied that the further experience required following the initial assessment has been gained, they should inform the MHI to request a re-assessment, following the process as defined in sub-topic 1.4.2 on 'Assessment procedure' above.

If, after their third unsuccessful assessment, an MHI disagrees with the outcome of the assessment, they may appeal in writing, outlining their grounds for appeal, to CSU, within 10 working days of the receipt of the assessment decision.

If the appeal is considered to have merit, a re-assessment will be arranged by CSU, to be carried out by a different FVC. The outcome of this re-assessment will be final.

2.6 Internal verification

An internal verifier (FVL) from within FSA will check the quality of the FVC work.

They may wish to review the MHI's portfolio of evidence to sample evidence assessed, or may wish to speak to MHIs to check how well they feel they are being supported to achieve the authorisation to carry out UAls.

There will also be a verification check by FVLs of MHI's activities and overall quality of UAls and resulting enforcement activities taken. Furthermore, verification visits will be conducted for live field-based checks twice per year.

2.7 CPD requirement

A CPD requirement of two days per year must be completed by MHIs who carry out enforcement activity. The criteria for training will be established via the Technical Development Programme and publicised appropriately.

3. PIA Training

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3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Introduction

This document contains information in relation to the training and authorisation of slaughterhouse staff to perform official control duties in white meat slaughterhouses as Plant Inspection Assistants (PIAs).

The FSA is no longer responsible for training PIAs, but is the CA to authorise PIAs to form part of the independent inspection team under the supervision, direction and responsibility of the OV.

There are three different groups of slaughterhouse staff qualified to work as part of the independent inspection team:

- those trained and assessed by OVs before 2006 (pre 2006 PIAs)
- those trained and qualified under the award scheme operating between 2006 – March 2009
- those trained and qualified under the new award scheme since March 2009

Note: PIAs already authorised under previous arrangements will remain authorised, subject to ongoing satisfactory performance of official control duties.

The training course will be provided by training centres that have been approved by awarding bodies. FBOs interested in training PIAs should contact the approved awarding bodies for further information on approved training centres.

Once an individual has successfully passed the examination to become a PIA, the FSA may authorise them to work as part of the inspection team.

3.1.2 Legislation

EU 2017/625 Article 18 allows Member States to permit slaughterhouse staff to take over the activities of OAs in controlling the production of poultry and rabbits provided that they have undergone training and passed a test in accordance with the requirements set out in point 5 of Chapter III of Annex II of EU 2019/624 in so far as they apply to the tasks they are authorised to undertake.

3.2 Overview and process map

3.2.1 Use of slaughterhouse staff

The Regulations permit the use of slaughterhouse staff to carry out tasks of the OAs and form part of the CA's independent inspection team only at establishments producing poultry and rabbit meat that have a proven record of a sustained and effective food safety management system based on HACCP principles.

Depending on the characteristics of the establishment applying for this flexibility, the period to be taken into consideration for the risk analysis might vary. For further information, refer to MOC Chapter 2.10 Inspection and Attendance Section 2.3.

3.2.2 FBO role

FBOs wishing to use PIAs for the first time should notify the ITL at the earliest opportunity.

Where a PIA system is already in place and new staff are being trained to be PIAs, the FBO should advise the OV so that arrangements can be put in place for an assessment to be made once the qualification has been obtained.

It is recommended that the FBO, the PIA candidate, the slaughterhouse OV and the training provider consult each other during the process.

3.2.3 PIA Role

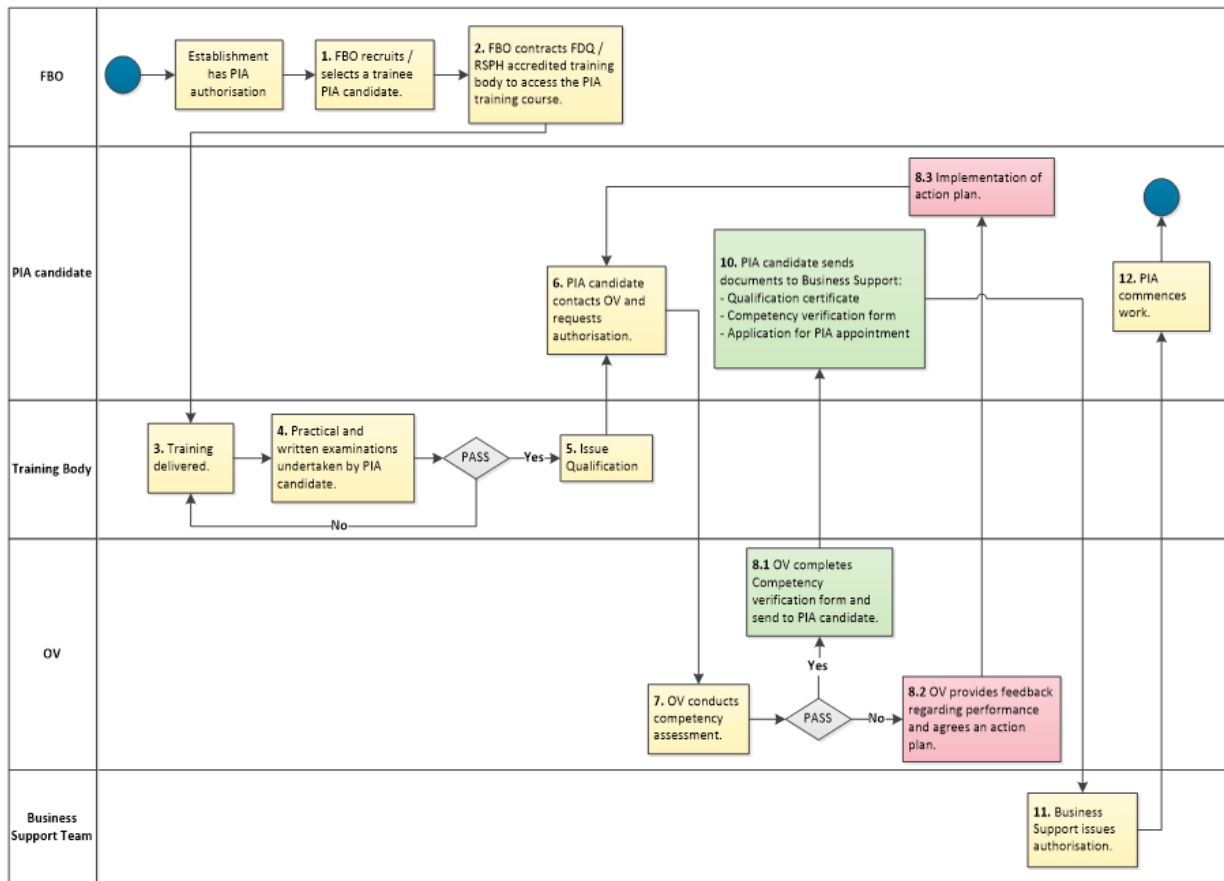
PIAs can work in place of OAs with regard to the specific tasks that they are authorised to perform. PIA authorisations are now species specific (broilers and hens; ducks and geese; turkeys; farmed wild game) and not plant specific. Any previous authorisation will need to be amended to reflect this change. All PIAs must be subject to regular checks by the OV to assess their ongoing competency to carry out official duties.

3.2.4 OV role

PIAs work under the supervision, direction and responsibility of the OV. They are subject to regular checks by the OV to assess their ongoing competency to carry out official duties.

3.2.5 Process map

Updated [Once the establishment has been authorised by the FSA to establish a PIA system, the following steps need to be followed:



1. The FBO will select (or recruit) the PIA candidate(s)
2. The FBO will contract an FDQ/RSPH accredited training body to access the PIA training course
3. The training will be delivered to the selected candidate(s)
4. The PIA candidate(s) will have to pass the required written examinations
5. Once passed the relevant examinations, the candidate(s) will receive the qualification from FDQ/RSPH
6. The PIA candidate(s) will contact the plant OV to request authorisation
7. The OV will conduct a competency assessment
8. If the candidate(s) pass the OV assessment, the OV will complete the competency verification form (Annex 11) and will send it to the PIA candidate(s); if they do not pass the OV assessment, the OV will provide feedback on the reasons why and will agree an action plan (once the action plan is completed the candidate will request a new authorisation to the OV)
9. Once they have received the competency verification form from the OV, PIAs will send the following documents to Corporate Support Unit csu@food.gov.uk:
 - Qualification certificate
 - Competency verification form (Annex 11)
 - Application for PIA appointment (Annex 12)
10. Business Support will issue the authorisation
11. PIA(s) can commence work under the supervision of the OV.

Further details of the process are provided in the sections below.]

3.3 PIA Qualification

3.3.1 Level 2 award for proficiency in poultry meat inspection

The FSA worked with Improve (the Sector Skills Council covering the meat sector) as well as the British Poultry Council, awarding bodies and sector employers to develop a new qualification for slaughterhouse staff (PIAs).

The Level 2 Award for Proficiency in Poultry Meat Inspection has been designed to equip individuals with the knowledge and understanding to enable them to work as members of teams that carry out official controls in poultry slaughterhouses.

3.3.2 PIA syllabus

The Level 2 award is divided into three units:

1. introduction to food safety management;
2. regulations and responsibilities; and
3. post mortem inspection of poultry with a choice of either:
 - broilers and hens
 - turkeys
 - ducks and geese
 - non-hunted game birds

Each unit is assessed by an examination.

Holders of the qualification will have a broad knowledge and understanding of food safety and food hygiene and understand the regulatory framework within which the meat industry operates. They will also have a good appreciation of the anatomy, physiology, pathology, production methods and inspection procedures for the specific species chosen for unit 3.

3.3.3 Provision of training

Training is provided by trainers that have been approved by either of two awarding bodies, the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and the Food and Drinks Qualifications (FDQ).

Anyone seeking information about the training and qualification should contact:

- RSPH - [Royal Society for Public Health](#)
- FDQ - [Food and Drinks Qualifications](#)

Note: The FSA is no longer involved in the training of PIA candidates and is not the competent authority to approve the qualification.

3.4 Assessment of PIA competency by the OV

3.4.1 OV evaluation of candidate

Once a PIA candidate has obtained a Level 2 Award for Proficiency in Poultry Meat Inspection, the OV will carry out an initial evaluation to verify the candidate's competence to perform their duties to a satisfactory standard as part of the inspection team. This is particularly important at establishments where the OV has no previous knowledge of the candidate.

3.4.2 Authorisation request

The FBO or PIA candidate is responsible for requesting authorisation. This request will normally be made once the candidate has obtained the PIA qualification. This request should be made to the slaughterhouse OV, allowing enough time for all the necessary arrangements to be made.

The OV must make a note of such a request in the Day book and inform the FVC.

3.4.3 OV requirements

The assessment of competency can only be carried out by OVs that:

- have successfully finalised their probationary period as a NOV) and are a fully appointed OV
- have appropriate experience (not less than 6 months) in the relevant species that the PIA candidate is to handle

The OV may at their own discretion seek assistance from OAs in conducting the assessment of PIA candidates.

3.4.4 Coding and charges

Assessment and supervision of PIA candidates is considered to be a standard requirement of the CA within the current regulatory framework.

For the day to day supervision of PIAs within normal processing hours, the **INSP** code must be used by all FSA personnel involved.

However, for assessment of competency prior to PIA authorisation, the **HASL** code must be used.

3.4.5 Assessment

The OV will conduct the assessment of the candidate through questioning and observation, including on-line post-mortem inspection for a period under the direct supervision of the OV. The OV may at their discretion seek information from poultry meat hygiene inspectors (PMHIs) for this assessment.

Candidates must demonstrate that they:

- understand the responsibilities of the FSA particularly in relation to their duties
- recognise the different conditions found at post-mortem inspection as described in all the 'poultry condition cards'
- are able to record the above conditions in a satisfactory manner
- are able to cope with the speed of the line in which the carcasses are presented
- follow good hygiene practices
- understand and are able to complete any paperwork associated with the performance of their official duties

PIAs have already demonstrated competency to obtain their qualification certificate. The OV should nevertheless be satisfied that they can carry out their duties effectively at the establishment where they will be working. The duration of the assessment will therefore depend on the particular circumstances of the establishment, including whether the OV has previous knowledge of the candidate or whether training was carried out at the plant or elsewhere.

The OV will complete a 'Verification of Competency' form recording the outcome of the assessment.

The completed form should be retained at the establishment filing system for 6 years.

Reference: See annex 11 on 'Verification of Competency'.

If unsuccessful see subtopic 3.5.2 on 'Unsuccessful PIA candidate'.

Note: There will be no PIA rebate until the PIA has been authorised by the OV to work as part of the CA independent inspection team and appears as such on the FSA central database. The OV must be under no pressure to authorise a PIA until confident that the required criteria have been fulfilled.

3.4.6 Transferring of PIAs between establishments

PIAs may move between establishments, providing these are processing the same species for which the PIA is authorised. No additional authorisation is necessary.

PIAs can carry out post-mortem inspection duties only in establishments that have been authorised to operate a PIA system. PIAs may be used to carry out these duties provided the OV is notified in advance and OVs at the receiving establishment are provided with a proof of qualification and an evidence of their fitness for purpose (e.g. report from the OV at the PIA's base establishment).

Note: Establishments operating a PIA system require full time OV supervision and the transferring PIAs are subject to standard performance monitoring checks of the resident OV.

3.5 Appointment of successful PIA

3.5.1 Appointment procedure

The successful candidate should request official authorisation as a PIA for the relevant species and send the following information to the FSA:

- application for PIA authorisation form Annex 12
- copy of Level 2 Award certificate issued by RSPH or FDQ
- the 'Verification of Competency' form signed by the OV (Annex 11)

E-mail: csu@food.gov.uk

The PIA will receive an authorisation from FSA at York, with information on their duties and responsibilities.

3.5.2 Unsuccessful PIA candidate

If the OV is not satisfied that the PIA candidate has demonstrated the knowledge and skills required to become authorised, the OV will document the areas requiring further training or development in the last section of the 'Verification of Competency' form.

When the PIA candidate is satisfied that the further training required from the initial assessment has been undertaken, a re-assessment may be requested – see previous subtopic 3.4.2 on 'Authorisation request'.

3.5.3 Appeal procedure

If a PIA disagrees with the outcome of an assessment, they may appeal, in writing, within 10 working days of the receipt of the assessment decision. The appeal should outline their grounds

for appeal and be sent to CSU.

The CSU York Transactions Team will pass the appeal to the relevant FVC. The FVC, after considering the case and available evidence, may organise a re-assessment by a different assessor. The outcome of this re-assessment will be final.

3.6 Monitoring PIA performance

3.6.1 Ongoing review and assessment of PIA performance

Where an FBO has a PIA system in place, OV's must monitor PIA performance on an ongoing basis and identify issues where their performance affects the level of hygiene at the premises, with a special emphasis on the product being processed.

The OV must supervise the PIA's work and carry out regular performance tests to ensure their suitable performance.

The OV must supervise the PIAs daily. In addition to the daily supervision the OV is to conduct PIA performance checks weekly and record the results of these in the table of the form PIA PM-1. The OV should initial the relevant box in the bottom section of 'PIA supervision and monitoring form (PIA PM-1)' to record that they have supervised the PIA.

The OV can ask a PMHI to assist in monitoring PIA performance on each shift for sites where P MHI's assist with the official controls. The PMHI should record their monitoring on the PIA PM-1 form and report any deficiency to the OV. Completed PIA PM-1 forms should be kept in the establishment file for six years.

Where the OV considers the performance of the PIAs to be unsatisfactory then the PIAs shall be replaced by OAs.

At an individual level, OV's must monitor the effectiveness of post-mortem inspection carried out by PIAs, using the same measures as for assessing MHI's. Please refer to MOC Chapter 2.4 on 'Post-mortem, health and identification marking' for details.

3.6.2 Withdrawal of PIA authorisation

In cases where the performance of a PIA is found unsatisfactory during an establishment assessment visit or daily OV supervision and/or performance monitoring of the PIA, the FSA can suspend or revoke the PIA authorisation following the required protocol.

All records and letters regarding PIA performance and supervision/monitoring should be kept by the OV in the plant.

See below process summary:

Step	Process summary
1	The OV informs the PIA about all observed deficiencies and areas of poor PIA performance. A clear timeframe for improvement is agreed, if necessary. All discussed deficiencies and actions are summarized in a letter to the PIA, with a copy of the letter given to the FBO.
2	The OV monitors the PIA performance and records evidence of good and poor practices (Day Book entries, PMI PM-1 form, AUD 9-2).
3	OV writes to inform the PIA about the observed improvement of the performance, closing the case.

4	Should the PIA performance fail to improve, the OV recommends the revocation of the PIA authorisation to the Operations Head Veterinarian and informs the FBO / PIA about the recommendation in writing.
5	Operations Head Veterinarian gathers required evidence and makes a decision, following consultation with the local FSA team. The Operations Head Veterinarian should inform the FBO and the PIA of his decision in writing. If the PIA authorisation is withdrawn the Operations Head Veterinarian should notify CSU.
6	The FBO / PIA returns the authorisation by recorded / registered post to PIA Authorisation Return CSU York Transactions Team

In cases where serious concerns are raised regarding the performance of a PIA their authorisation can be immediately suspended by an OV following consultation with an FVC / FVL. In these instances, the FBO has to be informed about the reason of suspension and requested to remove the person from the PIA duty until a decision is made on further steps.

4. Wild Game Training

In this section

[4.1 Introduction](#)

[4.2 The wild game course](#)

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Purpose

This document contains information on the training available for OVs and OAs that will carry out official duties at approved Game Handling Establishments (GHEs) and that gained their authorisation prior to 2006.

This training will enable them to become appointed in wild game under (EU) 2019/624. OVs appointed after 2006 should follow the NOV guidance. OAs who qualified prior to 2006 should undergo this training and be appointed by the FSA prior to carrying out official control duties in an approved GHE.

4.1.2 Prerequisites

To be eligible to become appointed for wild game the candidate should:

- hold a veterinary degree
- be a member of the RCVS

4.1.3 Working arrangements

Authorisation will only be issued after both parts of the training have been completed and the individual assessed, therefore, all wild game candidates should complete both theoretical and practical training prior to carrying out inspection duties in approved GHEs.

4.1.4 OV and OA wild game inspection role

The table below summarises the main inspection duties and responsibilities of FSA staff specific to wild game.

Tasks	OV/OA Role
Inspection tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wild game FCI • animal welfare • wild game post-mortem inspection • wild game ABPs • health marking of large wild game, as well as half-carcases, quarters and cuts produced by cutting half-carcases into three wholesale cuts
Other tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication of inspection results • decisions concerning wild game FCI • decisions concerning wild game meat • enforcement • OV supervision of OAs carrying out official controls

4.2 The wild game course

4.2.1 Legislation

This training enables the OV / OA to have adequate knowledge of wild game topics, to maintain up to date knowledge and to keep abreast of new developments up to the training date.

4.2.2 Theoretical training

The OV / OA should have an adequate knowledge of the following areas:

- background knowledge of the wild game meat industry including processing and inspection of wild game
- small and large wild game animal identification
- hunting seasons
- post-mortem inspection of small and large wild game
- storage and transport of small and large wild game
- notifiable diseases of small and large wild game
- HACCP principles applied to wild game
- wild game traceability
- health marking of large wild game
- ID marking of small wild game
- handling of ABPs at approved GHEs
- record keeping at approved GHEs
- export of wild game

The OV theoretical training and assessment has to be delivered by a wild game appointed FVL / FVC.

The OA theoretical training can also be delivered by a wild game appointed OV (but not an NOV). However, this needs to be cleared with the Business Manager prior to the training taking place.

4.2.3 Practical training

Once the OV or OA has been given the theoretical training and been assessed and signed off by the trainer as being competent they will have to carry out practical training for a minimum time of:

- 2 hours observing the dressing in large game
- 2 hours observing the dressing in small game
- 1 hour observing the cutting of small and / or large wild game

Practical training and assessment of practical training must be carried out by a wild game appointed OV (but not an NOV) or FVL / FVC.

Ideally, practical training should occur after the candidate has undergone the theory part; however, this is not compulsory and practical training may be carried out before the theory takes place. Please discuss this with your trainer prior to commencing the training.

4.2.4 Assessment

The delegate is responsible for ensuring that the 'Certificate of wild game experience' is signed by the trainer.

The assessment may be done at the end of each training period.

Note: Where candidates feel they would like further training before being assessed, they should inform the trainer and agree with them subsequent training sessions and the date when the assessment will take place.

The assessor will conduct the assessment through observation, questioning, exploration of actions taken, and discussions regarding the practical experiences that the candidate has had during the training period.

The candidate should bring the 'Certificate of wild game experience' with them to all training sessions so that it can be signed off by the trainer. The assessor will complete the 'Certificate of wild game experience' giving feedback as regards the evidence gathered during the assessment day and the outcome in relation to the individual either being successful or requiring further experience.

In the case of the latter, the assessor will have to provide an estimate of the amount and type of further experience required.

When the candidate and trainer are satisfied that the further experience required from the initial assessment has been gained, a re-assessment should be requested at the end of the final training session.

It should be noted that where an individual has reached 35 hours within their training period and has not successfully passed the assessment, the assessor will make a decision with regards to their future as a wild game appointed OV/OA with the FSA.

4.2.5 Appointment

Once the OV / OA has completed the theoretical and practical training and each aspect of the training has been signed off by the trainer they should send a copy of the 'Certificate of wild game experience' to their HRA.

The OV / OA will receive an amended authorisation covering wild game.

4.2.6 Appeal procedure

If a candidate disagrees with the outcome of an assessment, they should put their appeal in writing outlining their grounds for appeal to CSU 10 working days of the receipt of the assessment decision.

If FSA considers the appeal to have merit, a re-assessment will be arranged to be carried out by a different assessor. The outcome of this re-assessment will be final.

5. Annexes

The following documents can be accessed by FSA staff in internal files:

- Annex 1: OV Training – Theoretical syllabus
- Annex 2: OV Training – Application for OV appointment and authorisation
- Annex 3: OV Training – Sample OV appointment letter
- Annex 4: OV Training – Learning log and portfolio of experience
- Annex 5: OV Training – Certificate of practical application experience
- Annex 6: OV Training – Assessment request form
- Annex 7: OV Training – Assessment of practical application experience
- Annex 8: OV Training – Sample OV confirmation letter
- Annex 9: OV Training – Day one competencies
- Annex 10: UAI Training – FVC assessment of MHIs
- Annex 11: PIA Training – Verification of Competency
- Annex 12: PIA Training – Application for PIA Appointment
- Annex 13: PIA Training – PIA Performance Monitoring
- Annex 14: Wild Game Training – Certificate of wild game experience