

IFS Exam Regulation

for IFS Food and IFS Logistics
(pure logistics auditors)



VERSION 7

APRIL 2025

ENGLISH

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PART 1: IFS EXAMINATION PROCESS FOR IFS FOOD AND IFS LOGISTICS

General rules for IFS Examinations

1 Purpose of the examinations

- To assess auditor competences
- To examine the candidate's professional knowledge about:
 - The IFS Standard content
 - Food legislation and special food and logistics issues
 - Food technology related to food safety and product conformity including basic food processing techniques
 - How to apply the IFS Standards to the case studies to assess ability of the candidate to collect evidence and to compare it to specific standard requirements, while interpreting and evaluating the findings impartially as an auditor.

2 Nature of the examinations

The IFS Examination process has two (2) parts: one written and one oral. In general, the oral part of the examinations takes place after successful participation in the written examination.

The IFS Food Written Exam is divided into two (2) main sections:

- General exam (independent of product and tech scopes the auditor is confirmed for)
 - Part 1: Multiple choice questions about the content of the IFS Food Standard and Doctrine
 - Part 2: Multiple choice questions about basic scientific knowledge and elementary food processing techniques (tech scope F)
 - Part 3: Multiple choice questions about basic knowledge on EU legislation
- Tech scope exam(s) (dependent on the tech scopes the auditor has applied and is confirmed for)

For IFS Food, there are five (5) different and specific tech scope(s) exams: tech scopes A, B, C, D and E. Each exam consists of multiple-choice questions related to the relevant tech scope and is assessed independently.

Requirements and conditions for admission to the tech scope exam(s) are laid down in the currently valid IFS Food Standard and, if applicable, the current IFS Doctrine.

The IFS Logistics Written Exam consists of three (3) parts:

- Part 1: Multiple choice questions about the IFS Logistics Standard and Doctrine
- Part 2: Multiple choice questions about basic scientific knowledge and elementary logistics processes (including tech scope D)
- Part 3: Multiple choice questions about specific audit situations

See also § 12 for the conditions and evaluation.

The **oral examination** is intended to assess the candidate's suitability as an auditor and their specific professional knowledge needed for the specific scopes, by analysing and simulating an audit situation based on a case study.

3 General requirements for admission to the IFS Examinations

The candidate shall fulfil the requirements laid down in the current IFS Standards (Part 3, chapter 3) and IFS Doctrine, if applicable.

4 Languages of examination

For language requirements and regulations, please see chapter 3 of part 3 of the IFS Standard and the current IFS Doctrine. A language approval can also be obtained by passing the general written exam or oral exam in the respective language.

5 Breach of regulations

A breach, in regard to the written and oral exam, may include:

- The terms and conditions of the IFS Examinations not being respected
- The candidate has no ID document and they cannot be identified
- The candidate displayed inadequate or suspicious behaviour during the exam
- The candidate attempts to cheat during the examinations

A breach of regulations leads to failure of the exam, in addition:

- A formal and usually unintentional breach leads to a maximum 6-month suspension or
- A deliberate breach (deception) leads to a 12-month suspension

6 Communication of the examinations results

The examination results will be communicated within 10 working days by the IFS Office to the candidates via the certification body. Non-exclusive auditors will receive the results directly.

7 Inspection/review of written examination documents

After communication of the examination results, the candidate who failed or the corresponding trainer of the certification body can review their examination documents in the presence of a person nominated by the IFS Offices:

- Not later than four (4) weeks after results have been communicated by IFS Offices and
- Not within four (4) weeks prior to the date of their next written examination attempt
- However, the candidate is neither allowed to make copies of the documents nor to take notes.

The IFS Offices commit to archive the last examination documents.

8 Objections and complaints

Objections or complaints arising from IFS Examinations shall be made in written form and addressed to the IFS Offices within seven (7) days of the results being communicated. The IFS Offices are responsible for taking appropriate actions.

9 Registration and approval as an IFS Auditor

The registration and approval processes for IFS Auditors are described in the relevant IFS Standards (see part 3, chapters 2 and 3 of IFS Standard and the current IFS Doctrine, if applicable).

10 Maintenance of the approval after change of IFS version

In case of update/modification of the scope names and/or numbers by the IFS Offices, the auditor's scopes will be updated accordingly (this update may be based on further objective documents or evidence requested by the IFS Offices).

11 Cancellation policy

The certification body, or the non-exclusive auditor respectively, is required to inform the IFS Offices immediately, if a candidate is unable to attend the confirmed examination session.

Unexcused failure to appear at the written and/or oral examination will be rated as not passed.

Cancellations are only accepted if they are made in writing. The following charges will be applied based on the date of the cancellation notice:

- No charges will be applied if the cancellation is made 4 weeks prior to the examination.
- Up to 1 week (7 calendar days) prior to the examination session, 50% of the examination fee will be charged.
- Less than 1 week (7 calendar days) before the start of the examination session, 100% of the examination fee will be charged. The same applies in case of non-attendance.

An oral exam session can be cancelled if the minimum number of candidates is not reached (3 persons). In this case, the decision will be generally communicated by IFS two weeks prior to the exam session.

IFS is authorized to cancel an examination session due to circumstances beyond the control of IFS and due to an important reason (for instance acute sickness of the examiner). In that case, already registered candidates will be informed immediately. Any refund concerning the candidate's expenses for travel, accommodation and absenteeism is not possible.

12 Evaluation of the general written exam, tech scope(s) exam and oral exam

- The required minimum score in order to pass the general written exam is 60 % for the full exam and 50% for each individual part of the exam.
- If a candidate fails at the general written examination, they can make a second attempt. If the second attempt also results in a failure, six (6) months shall have passed before the general written examination can be repeated. The date for a new possible exam is calculated from the last general written examination date plus six (6) months.
- To pass a tech scope exam, as a pre-requisite, the auditor needs to pass the general written exam. Each tech scope exam is evaluated independently and is considered as passed when a score of at least 60 % is attained. In case of failure, they can attend a second time at the next possible session. After a second failure, they will be blocked for three (3) months for the respective tech scope. The new possible examination date after a blocking period shall be at least three (3) months after the last written examination for this tech scope. If the candidate passes one of the tech scope exams, they are approved for this tech scope, independently of the results of the other tech scopes exams. If an auditor fails the general written and/or oral exam, they will not receive any approval for the tech scope(s).
- Example: A candidate requested tech scopes B, C, D and E. They passed the general exam and reached over 60 % for tech scopes B and D exams but failed the tech scopes C and E exams. With final approval as an IFS Auditor, they will be approved for tech scopes B and D and are allowed to perform IFS Food Audits for these tech scopes. They can take a second attempt at tech scope exams C and E and if they are successful, they will also be approved for these additional tech scopes. In case of a second failure, the candidate will be blocked for three (3) months for tech scopes C and E.
- A candidate who has passed the general written examination is then admitted to the oral examination. The oral examination can be repeated. If a candidate fails the first attempt, they can be admitted to the next possible oral examination. On repeated failure, the candidate may only participate in IFS Examinations after having observed two (2) additional full IFS Food (respectively Logistics) Audits as a Trainee. They will then be admitted to two (2) further attempts at taking the oral examination, if necessary.
- Note: The oral examination shall be passed no later than four (4) years or the period the same version of the standard is valid, if it is less than four (4) years since having passed the general written examination. This includes all attempts at the oral examination.
- Note: Passing the written exam will only be valid during the same version of the Standard. With a new full version of the IFS Standard the candidate shall start again with the full examination process (written and oral exam).

- Note: If for exceptional reasons the written and the oral examinations take place at the same time and the candidate only passed the oral exam, the general written exam shall be passed within a one year period.

Specific rules for IFS Re-approval

13 Maintenance of approval after the two (2) years period (= re-approval)

For the general process of maintenance of approval after the two (2) year period, see IFS Standard part 3, chapter 3 and the current IFS Doctrine, if applicable. If the auditor fails to meet the requirements for the re-approval process, the auditor shall participate in the IFS oral examination again. Furthermore, the certification body shall perform a sign-off audit again for the auditor being re-approved for the same scope(s). This possibility is only available within a timeframe of one year after the approval ended and only under the same version the auditor was approved for before.

PART 2: RULES FOR THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION AND TECH SCOPE EXAM

14 Application process for the written examination

- When all requirements for the application are fulfilled, a confirmation will be sent to the candidate via the certification body (for exclusive auditors) including the date, time and place (if applicable) of the written examination. The certification bodies are responsible for communicating this to their candidates.
- Non-exclusive auditors are responsible for the entire application process. They will be contacted directly by IFS Offices.
- In respect of deadlines: registrations which are sent after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

15 Tech scope exam(s), in addition to general scope extension requirements (for IFS Food only)

- The tech scope exam(s) can be taken directly following the initial general written exam.
- For extension of tech scope(s), auditors are required to provide the same evidence as for initial approval and shall additionally pass a tech scope written examination organised by IFS Offices. The examination for separate tech scopes can be taken at the next remote tech scope exam session in compliance with the registration deadline scheduled by IFS.
- In general, the same rules as for the initial exam apply.
- The auditors can only perform IFS Audits according to the scopes approved by IFS.

16 Duration of the written examination

- The duration of the current version of the IFS Food general written examination is two (2) hours.
- The candidate can attend the tech scope exam(s) for each requested and confirmed tech scope. The duration for each tech scope exam is 20 minutes.
- The duration of the current version of the IFS Logistics general written examination is 90 minutes.

17 Rules during the examination

- For online examinations, the additional rules of “IFS_Terms_and_Conditions_IFS_Online_Exam” apply.
- In the case of face-to-face sessions, each candidate shall sign the attendance sheet when entering the exam.
- The IFS Proctor verifies the identity of all candidates before starting the exam.
- Participants who arrive after the examination has started will no longer be accepted. Entering and leaving the exam room during the examination is not accepted. If a candidate needs to leave the room for a specific reason, they have to get the permission of the IFS Proctor. Only one person at a time is allowed to leave the room.
- As soon as one candidate has finished the exam and left the room, no other person is allowed to exit and re-enter.

PART 3: RULES FOR THE ORAL EXAMINATION

18 Registration for the oral examination

- Only candidates who have passed the general written examination can be registered (for combined sessions the registration includes both, written and oral examination).
- The certification bodies, or the non-exclusive auditor respectively, will inform the IFS Offices about the chosen date which the candidate applies to take the oral examination on.
- If candidates apply for several languages, the IFS Offices have the right to choose the language of examination.
- It is possible to apply for the use of an interpreter in the on-site oral exam. In this case, the interpreter shall be nominated by the certification body or the non-exclusive auditor when registering for the oral examination. The name of the interpreter will be documented; they shall not be an IFS Auditor, TTT or Reviewer or IFS Auditor in qualification process.
- IFS Offices will announce and confirm the place and time of the examination.
- IFS Offices will identify and assign the appropriate case study for the oral examination and prepare the documentation.
- In case of a second attempt of the oral examination, IFS Offices will choose a case study which is different from the one provided for the first attempt.
- Candidates who have failed their first attempt at the oral examination should be re-examined by at least one new examiner. Should this not be possible, the examiner(s) can be the same.
- If the candidate declares and confirms in writing that they are not competent for the scope and respective case study provided for this examination, they can make the decision to withdraw from the examination (the examination is suspended). In this case the scope will be eliminated from the candidate's CV.
 - If the candidate's CV is approved for other scopes, the candidate has the possibility to participate in the next oral exam session with a case study related to one of these other scopes. This new participation is considered as a second attempt.
 - If the candidate's CV has only been approved with the cancelled scope, the candidate shall start the complete exam process from the beginning, with a new validated CV.
- In case of an obvious mistake by the IFS Offices in choosing the case study, the IFS Examiner can change the case study (scope) before the exam starts.

19 Procedure of the oral exam session

- The examination team consists of at least two (2) people and at least one of them will be a validated IFS Oral Examiner. The exam consists of one case study that the candidate should read carefully and put themselves into the position of the auditor. The examiners represent the assessed company.
- Examiners have access to the CV with the audit experience of the candidate.

- The duration of the oral exam is
 - for native speakers: 70 minutes per candidate,
 - for non-native speakers: 80 minutes. If an interpreter takes part in the examination, the duration will be extended to 90 minutes.
- The IFS Examination Team verifies the identity of the candidate at the beginning of the examination.
- There are a maximum of 5 minutes for identity verification and the introduction.
- In general there are 10 minutes for the candidate to read the case study and reflect on the case.
- Approx. 30 to 40 minutes are given for the simulation of the audit situation and/or questions on technical competences related to the case study.
- Then there will be approx. 15 minutes to draw conclusions, in particular to assign a clear IFS Score (A, B, C, D, Major, KO) for identified IFS Food or IFS Logistics Requirements and to explain to the simulated assessed company the reasons for assigning those scorings. At this stage the examiners might challenge these results when acting as the assessed company, to check the communication skills and the confidence of the candidate.
- The oral examination is intended to assess candidates' suitability as auditors by verifying specific skills, such as their:
 1. Technical knowledge
(Knowledge of the audited products and processes)
 2. Amplitude
(Identification of all relevant topics of the case)
 3. Depth
(Investigating the most relevant topics of the case from several angles including cross-checking)
 4. Adherence to Product & Process approach (versus pure management system approach)
 5. Identification of relevant IFS Requirements, based on the collected evidence during audit simulation (Knowledge of the standard/ doctrine)
 6. Scoring (Evaluation of requirements with appropriate justification)
- The candidate leaves the room while the examiners discuss the performance and make a decision about the evaluation (passed or failed).
- The result is communicated to the candidate and – if this is the case – the reason for failure will be explained to the candidate.
- Records are taken in the form of key words/input of examiners and questions and answers of candidates.
- Summary of important points of the evaluation of the candidate are documented in an evaluation sheet.
- All material and documents provided by the examiners (including the case study, the notes taken by candidate on paper) shall be given back at the end of the examination to the IFS Offices. If the oral exam is performed remotely, the notes shall be destroyed in front of the camera.
- During a remote oral exam, the entire session will be recorded and the "IFS_Terms_and_Conditions_IFS_Food_Logistics remote oral Exam" shall be fulfilled by the candidate.

20 Material to bring/provided/forbidden for the candidate

The IFS Office provides the following for the on-site oral exam:

- The case study (for the simulation of the audit situation) based on the scope(s) the candidate is registered for
 - Some sheets of blank paper
 - One IFS Food Standard or IFS Logistics Standard in the language of the examination
- Everything else is forbidden (e.g. electronic devices).

During a remote oral exam, the “IFS_Terms_and_Conditions_IFS_Food_Logistics remote oral Exam” shall be fulfilled by the candidate.

21 Code of conduct for examiners

In general, examiners are expected to have a clear record of impartiality and independence. In case of doubt, the candidate can decide not to participate in the oral exam. This decision shall be stated before the exam starts. Further actions shall be discussed with IFS Management GmbH.

To ensure confidentiality, the examiners shall sign an obligation of non-disclosure and code of conduct including the following topics:

- Data security (persons, results, documents, contents of exams)
- Impartiality and independence

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