PSA Lead Trainer Applicant Scoring

The following information is provided to help PSA Lead Trainer applicants understand the PSA Lead Trainer Review Process that determines if they meet the basic qualifications for becoming a PSA Lead Trainer. The PSA Lead Trainer Application consists of two components: PSA Trainer Experience and Short Answer Questions. Applications are evaluated using a standardized rubric by at least two reviewers.

**PSA Lead Trainer Application Part 1: Trainer Experience**

Applicants may opt to submit their PSA Lead Trainer Application after successfully completing a PSA Train-the-Trainer Course. It is recommended that applicants teach all of the PSA Grower Training modules before applying to be a PSA Lead Trainer because PSA Lead Trainers are expected to ensure all training objectives are achieved at each training and that all co-trainers are effectively covering content. The first part of the evaluation includes using a standardized rubric to score the applicant’s formal educational background, training and educational experience, and produce production/handling and outreach experience. Please note, any misrepresentation of education or experience on the PSA Trainer Application will result in an automatic decline of the application.

**Formal Educational Background**

Applicants may qualify through a combination of formal education, relevant certifications, or other educational experiences. Education that will help an applicant qualify in this area include:

- An Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or other advanced degree in a relevant field including, but not limited to, food science, horticulture, microbiology, and adult education
- Certifications or short courses including, but not limited to, Good Agricultural Practices, Certified Crop Advisor, HACCP, FSPCA, or other course relevant to produce safety
- Other educational experiences listed by the applicant that are relevant to produce safety

It is not necessary to have a formal degree to qualify in this area, but an applicant must have sufficient educational experiences in the relevant competency areas. An applicant may qualify through having several relevant certifications or other educational experiences.

**Training and Teaching Experience**

Applicants may qualify in this area by having experience teaching produce safety and other related courses in the past. The number of years of produce safety training experience affects the applicant’s qualification; however, a PSA Trainer new to the area of produce safety may also qualify if they have extensive experience teaching other food safety courses.

Examples of courses that affect an applicant’s ability to qualify in this area include:

- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), including PSA Grower Training Courses
- Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)
- FSPCA Qualified Individual Training
- ServSafe®
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)
- Better Process Control School
- Other courses relevant to food safety
Produce Production & Handling Experience
An applicant may qualify in this area if they have experience with produce production and/or handling. Examples of relevant experiences include growing fruits and vegetables commercially, having provided outreach or technical expertise to produce growers or packers, or other experiences that indicate knowledge of fruit and vegetable production. Experience working with produce growers as a farm consultant may also count as on-farm experience. The number of years of produce production and handling experience, including outreach experience, affects the applicant’s qualification. Other experiences may include:
- Having experience working in a fruit and vegetable packinghouse
- Having experience in produce retail handling
- Other relevant experiences in fresh produce production
- Helping a grower write a Farm Food Safety Plan
- Helping a grower prepare for an audit or inspection
- Having participated in an On-Farm Readiness Review training

Applicants need to make sure to take their time on the application and include any previous experiences they believe to be relevant for a PSA Lead Trainer. It cannot be assumed that the review committee will understand an applicant’s qualifications unless they are clearly and explicitly written on the application.

PSA Lead Trainer Application Part 2: Short Answer Questions
The PSA short answer questions are intended to assess the applicant’s knowledge in the following four competency areas: Produce Safety Scientific Knowledge and Experience, Fruit and Vegetable Production Knowledge, Effective Training Delivery, and Knowledge of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. Answers should be as thorough as possible while staying within the 350-word limit. The intent of these short answer questions is to understand how the PSA Lead Trainer Applicant would respond efficiently and concisely to a grower during a PSA Grower Training. When appropriate, the answer should cite the FSMA Produce Safety Rule and any relevant provisions. Additional information on the four competency areas can be found on the PSA website under Trainer Competency Areas.

Each answer is scored against a standardized rubric and given a numerical score that corresponds to how well the answer demonstrates competency. The chart below defines the numerical scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level of Competency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Needs Further Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meets Expectations</td>
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<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The applicant explains concepts incorrectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The applicant seems to understand basic principles, but has not explained or applied the information as requested. Follow-up required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The applicant demonstrates the ability to present and explain the content. This may include breaking information down into parts, relating the parts to the overall picture, making judgements based on standards.</td>
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Applicants that submit responses that meet expectations will be notified that they have been approved as PSA Lead Trainers. Applicants that submit responses that are below expectations will be notified that their application to be a PSA Lead Trainer has been declined and will be provided with feedback on their responses. If an applicant scores ‘Needs Further Evaluation’ on any responses, they will be provided the opportunity for an interview or written correspondence to clarify their response. In addition, applicants will be asked at least one additional question in the competency area that triggered the interview to verify their competency.

More information about the PSA Lead Trainer Review Process
- **Timeline**: Generally, the review process takes one to two months.
- **Attending a PSA Train-the-Trainer Course**: Courses are listed on the PSA website under [Upcoming Train-the-Trainer Courses](https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/train-the-trainer-courses). Information includes location, costs, and other details.
- **Additional questions or concerns**: If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please contact the PSA at psatrainers@cornell.edu for clarification.