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Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
(A Statutory Authority established under the Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006)
(Training Division)
FDA Bhavan, Kotla Road, New Delhi-110 002

Dated: 29-05-2020

Sub: SOP for Conduct of Food Safety Training & Certification (FoSTaC) Courses Online

In view of COVID-19 pandemic, it has not been feasible to conduct regular FoSTaC courses through classroom method of instructions, wherein the trainees are required to be physically present. Therefore, to mitigate the spread of corona virus and continue training of Food Safety Supervisors across the country, it has been decided to conduct FoSTaC courses online. The online courses will comprise of instructions for the relevant course, online assessment and compulsory training on COVID-19 precautions. No physical trainings are to be planned/ conducted by Training Partners (TPs) until further order.

2. While online training is cost effective and has a wider reach, it also has a number of disadvantages. The major disadvantages are distraction of trainees and poor internet connectivity. The under mentioned paragraphs explain in detail the procedure to be followed by Training partners for conduct of online FoSTaC courses.

Training SOP

3. **Mobilization & Registration Process.** Mobilization of FBOs and registration on FoSTaC portal is the most important step in the FoSTaC programme. All training partners, trainers and other associates are to widely publicise FoSTaC programme on social media. TPs may circulate the training registration link or any other tool such as google form to capture data for registration of trainees. Use of social networking apps such as Whatsapp and Telegram may be judiciously utilized. Certified trainers and trainees may be encouraged to post the FSS certificate on Facebook/ Instagram while tagging the respective TP, FSSAI and FoSTaC. In addition, TPs may employ other methods as considered suitable to enhance mobilization and registration of trainees.

4. **Selection of Online Training and Assessment Platform.** There are various online meeting platforms available in the market such as Gotomeeting and Webex etc. TPs may use any of such platforms for conduct of online training, whilst ensuring that the selected online platform is user friendly, secure, interactive and with good audio/video quality. **In addition, TPs are also required to have access to online assessment software/ platform for assessment of trainees.** TPs may either purchase or liaise with other training partners who have online assessment software/ application. **It is reiterated that TPs are not authorized to conduct online training if they do not have online assessment facility and no certificates would be generated for such online trainings.**

5. **Delivery Protocol and Assessment.** Training partners are to nominate a Training Coordinator (TC) who must log in 30 minutes before the session. The TC is to mark attendance of trainees before the start of session and brief the participants about the online training etiquettes like keeping the microphone on mute mode etc. TC is to ensure that those trainees who do not

attend the full training session are not eligible to undertake the assessment. However, such trainees may be permitted to attend the next training session by the TPs at no additional cost, in case the reasons for logging off from previous session are found to be genuine. The attendance is to be made available to the trainer at the end of training session. **The batch size of online trainings should not be more than 100.**

6. **Duration of Online Courses.** Considering the constraints posed by online trainings as compared to classroom trainings, the duration of online FoStaC courses has been amended and is placed at Appendix. The trainers may further divide the course into multiple sessions to enhance training effectiveness. **A 1 hour on COVID-19 precautions is mandatory as part of all 19 courses of FoStaC.** FSSAI team may monitor any training and review recordings to assess the trainer's performance. Further, FSSAI reps may join any online training programme and assessment to check the proficiency of Training Partner and Trainer. Any deviation from the SOP may lead to stoppage of online trainings for such TPs.

Note- As continuous engagement for 08 hours in online training can be a challenge, therefore, a session of 04 hours duration has been decided. The duration of session may be further revised depending upon feedback received after 1 week.

7. **Fee for FoStaC Courses.** The fee for the courses may be mutually agreed between the FBO/trainee and Training Partner. However, as there is no requirement to hire physical space, it is understood that the fee for online courses would be substantially less than the physical classroom courses. Any exorbitant charging of fee by any TP brought to the notice of FSSAI may be suitably acted upon.

8. **Online Assessment.** The assessment of trainees is to be online using any of the available software/ platforms in the market. Google form may be utilised in case assessment platform is not available. The assessment link to be shared with each trainee at the end of the session. The link so shared should have a time limit. The assessment questions and answers are to vary for each training session. Question format is to be as follows:-

- Display an image (image of a kitchen or a working station etc depending on the course requirement)
- Make a question based on that image (please create questions to assess the observation power, knowledge gained during the session and decision making ability)
- Each Question is to have four multiple choice options.
- Total number of questions to be 20. Each right answer will give 5 marks and wrong answer -1 mark. A trainee is to get atleast 50% marks to be assessed as FSS.
- Time to be given for assessment is 30 minutes. Link should not remain active after 30 minutes of assessment.

The concept of poll questions may also be introduced by TPs. In this method, the assessor may check the understanding of participants by publishing poll questions related to the topic which pop up on trainee's window with 1 min or more deadline. This score can also be added to get a score of a participants' assessment. But even in this case, training partner is required to follow above mentioned steps for assessment. Those TPs who do not have access to any online assessment platform, can opt for this method.

The online assessment is a temporary measure and likely to be modified with gain of experience and feedback. Physical FOSTAC whenever resumed, will follow the earlier prevalent model of assessor.

9. **Steps to be Followed by Training Partners.** To start online trainings, Training Partners are required to formulate their own detailed SOP which should be in consonance with the SOP issued by FSSAI. The SOP so formulated is to be shared with FSSAI (FoSTaC team). Further, the steps to be followed by a TP after mobilization of trainee for any particular course would be as follows:-.

- a) TP is to schedule a training on the necessary delivery platform and share the link with trainees. **Link is also to be shared with FSSAI.**
- b) TP is to upload training calendar on FoSTaC portal.
- c) During or after training, attendance is to be marked on FoSTaC portal against enrolled participants.
- d) TP is to create a link for assessment which is to be shared with the participants at the end of each session.
- e) **Each session is to be recorded compulsorily and retained by TP for a duration of 10 days.** Training Partner will share the recording with FSSAI as and when asked for. TPs can create their own YouTube channel with training videos and other creatives, if required. Those links can be shared with FSSAI to have a combined repository. Such recordings may also be hosted on FoSTaC portal / FSSAI youtube channel also for the purpose of training.
- f) Post-assessment scores are to be uploaded on FoSTaC portal for certification.
- g) Training coordinator is to guide the trainees on procedure to be followed to download the FoSTaC certificate.

Note - Few slides as “how to use the app- guide” are to be kept ready with respect to the training platform. For example, how to download the app, how to join the training, etiquette to attend an online session etc

10. All TPs who are approved for conduct of online trainings are to submit feedback and suggestions on completion of 5 trainings, so as to revise the guidelines and make the online trainings more efficient and organized.

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Pritha Ghosh
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To

All Training Partners – For compliance please.

Duration of Online FoSTaC Courses

Sl No	Level	Present duration	Modified duration for Online Course
1	Basic	4 Hours	2 hours for basic + 1 hour COVID Training
2	Advanced	8 Hours	6 hours for actual training + 1 hour COVID Training (into two sessions- Fore Noon and After Noon Session)
3	Special except Milk	8 Hours	6 hours for actual training + 1 hour COVID Training (into two sessions- Fore Noon and After Noon Session)
4	Special course for Milk & Milk Product	12 Hours	7 hours for actual training + 1 hour COVID Training (into two sessions- Fore Noon and After Noon Session)