

There are three overarching benchmarks against which FSPCA IAVA Lead Instructor applicants will be evaluated. They are:

1. Technical Proficiency
2. Instructor Experience in Food Defense and/or Food Safety
3. Professionalism

The benchmarks are equally weighted and the specific criteria for each benchmark are detailed below.

1. Food Safety Instructor Experience

A. Education

Applicants must have at least 30 semester hours in one or a combination of the following university level courses:

- Food Defense
- Biological Sciences
- Food Science/Technology
- Chemistry
- Toxicology
- Microbiology
- Public Health
- Environmental Health
- Food or Regulatory Law
- Related fields that provided knowledge directly related to the human food industry

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 competency area
- Certifications or short courses including, but not limited to FSPCA Intentional Adulteration Vulnerability Assessment; Preparing and Overseeing the preparation of the Food Defense Plan and its Reanalysis; Using the Key Activity Types Method to Identify Actionable Process Steps; Identification and Explanation of the Mitigation Strategies; Preventive Controls for Human Food, Preventive Controls for Animal Food, HACCP, or other courses relevant to food defense or food safety.
- Other educational experiences listed by the applicant

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.

B. Work Experience

Applicants must have at least five years of food defense or food safety work experience in/with the human food industry, in one or more of the following areas:

- Corporate Food Defense/Food Safety Function
- Food Defense/Food Safety Consulting
- Food Defense/Food Safety Auditing
- Food Defense/Food Safety Regulatory Work (inspections, policy development, compliance work)
- Facility Security
- Food Processing
- Food Testing
- Facility Maintenance
- Sanitation
- Food Safety Quality Assurance or Quality Control
- Engineering
- Trade Associations
- Other Related Experience

An applicant may qualify in this area by experience with food defense. Examples of relevant experiences include preparing food defense plans, conducting vulnerability assessments for food defense, having provided outreach or technical expertise to food facilities on food defense, or other relevant experiences that indicate knowledge of food defense vulnerability assessments. Additionally, having at least the minimum number of years of food-related work experience may be used in lieu of the education requirements mentioned in 1.A.

C. Candidate Entrance Exam

As a component of the application IAVA Lead Instructor Candidates will be administered a timed exam that tests the applicant's knowledge of the final rule, "[Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration](#)" (IA rule), and [FDA's IA rule draft guidance](#), with a particular emphasis on vulnerability assessments.

Individuals must score an 80% or higher on the exam in order to proceed as a Lead Instructor Candidate. **Individuals who score below an 80% on the exam will be removed from consideration as a Lead Instructor Candidate.**

In preparation for taking the exam, Candidates are strongly encouraged to, at a minimum, review the [IA rule](#) and available [FDA IA rule draft guidance](#). While not required before taking the exam, Candidates may also choose to take the FSPCA IA online training courses and the FSPCA IA Vulnerability Assessment Participant course (if currently available), in preparation for the exam.

Exam FAQs

Q: How many questions are there on the exam?

A: There are 40 questions comprised of multiple choice, and True/False.

Q: How will I know if I got answers correct or incorrect?

A: You will not be told if you answer questions correctly or incorrectly.

Q: How much time do I have to complete the exam?

A: You will have 60 minutes to complete this exam.

Q: What if I have technological glitches?

A: The time given has allowed for technological glitches and the exam saves each answer before allowing you to proceed to the next question.

Q: If I start the exam, may I exit and return later to finish?

A: No, if you exit the exam after clicking "Proceed," the clock will continue counting down, and unless you have answered 80% correctly, you will fail the exam. The timer **cannot** be reset.

Q: How will I know if I passed the exam?

A: At the conclusion of the exam, you will receive your percentage score. You **MUST** enter this score into your IA VA Lead Instructor application.

Q: What happens if I fail the exam?

A: Individuals who fail the exam may re-take the exam after a period of 90 days from the time/date of their exam.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions about, or issues with, the exam?

A: If you have any questions or issues, you are to email LMSadmin@ifpti.org or call 269.488.3258. **Please note: They are unable to allow you to retake/restart the exam, and/or add additional time.**

2. Instructor Experience in Food Defense and/or Food Safety

Applicants must identify specific courses/programs in which they have participated **in an instructor capacity**. The committee will determine relevance of the experience and preference may be given to instructional experience in the following areas:

- Food Defense
- Preventive Controls for Human/Animal Food
- Foreign Supplier Verification Programs
- HACCP
- Academic Teaching
- Combinations of different food defense/food safety courses

Applicants may qualify in this area by having experience teaching food defense, food safety and other related courses in the past. The number of years of food defense or food safety training experience affects the applicant's qualification, however, an instructor new to the area of food defense may also qualify if they have many years of experience teaching food safety courses.

3. Food Safety Instructor Experience

FSPCA VA Lead Instructor Candidates must possess unquestioned professional integrity. FSPCA reserves the right to deny an applicant based on concerns regarding their professionalism.

A. Professional References

Each applicant must provide 3 professional references that can answer questions such as:

- Does the Candidate demonstrate the skills necessary to be a good instructor (e.g., strong presentation skills, reliability, clarity, force of presence, organization, patience)?
- Are there any negative behaviors that may impact the Candidate's performance as a VA Lead Instructor (e.g., difficulty following instructions, difficulty interacting with peers and/or colleagues)?
- Is the Candidate able to teach the standardized curriculum, maintain proper course records, and/or maintain confidentiality?
- Would you recommend the Candidate as a VA Lead Instructor?

FSPCA reserves the right to seek out additional references to evaluate the Candidate, if necessary.

B. Attestation

As part of the application process, VA Lead Instructor Candidates must sign an attestation agreeing to teach the VA Participant course in accordance with the FSPCA VA standardized curriculum and they must acknowledge that failure to do so is grounds for dismissal as an FSPCA VA Lead Instructor.