



OCIA INTERNATIONAL

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Training and Obtaining Additional Inspection Approval Types

OCIA International has the responsibility to assure that all inspectors who carry out inspection(s) for OCIA are adequately trained for the type of inspection performed. For example, OCIA must annually provide information regarding the expertise, ability, and training of its inspectors in order to comply with provisions of our various accreditations.

Criteria

In order to meet the qualifications of an OCIA inspector, one should have agronomic, food technology, biological science, veterinary science, or other related experience. Hands-on experience in organic production and/or handling can also provide a sound background for inspection for OCIA. In addition, an OCIA inspector should have professional and personal skills in inspection and/or auditing. A solid understanding of OCIA's Standards and certification procedures is also essential for an OCIA inspector. For a few inspection categories additional criteria may need to be met. Please see "Additional Requirements for Specialty Crop Certification" subsection for more details.

Training

All OCIA inspectors need to complete training conducted by the Independent Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA) successfully in order to become approved by OCIA. Training equivalent to IOIA training will be considered in lieu of IOIA training if a syllabus and certificate of each course successfully completed is provided for evaluation.

OCIA inspectors must also demonstrate a commitment to ongoing education and sharpening of their skills in organic inspection and related areas. This means that each inspector must successfully complete IOIA training or other type of continuing education training related to organic inspection at least every *two years*. For more information about IOIA training, please visit the IOIA website at <http://www.ioia.net/>. In addition, when requested by the International office, each inspector must comply with requirements for professional upgrading and additional training.

Once training related to organic inspection is completed, inspectors should submit the certificate (along with a syllabus or in its place, a short description of topics covered) to the International office. These certificates and syllabi will be placed in the inspector's file and will serve as documentation of his or her continuing education.

In light of the increasing changes in regulation imposed upon the organic certification industry, it is critical that each OCIA inspector takes measures necessary to become familiar with these new requirements. These include the NOP, which imposes new requirements upon inspection for organic certification.

Among the new requirements, NOP requires inspectors to be capable to conduct residue sampling on site, if needed. This means that OCIA inspectors need to plan to acquire or upgrade their training in the basic techniques of sample collection and chain-of-custody requirements at the earliest opportunity. Contact the International office for further information.

Approval Types

OCIA approves inspectors according to the following types of inspections: farm, livestock, dairy, simple processing (usually involving on-farm processing), complex processing, maple syrup, honey, specialty crops, broker/trader/warehouse, shade-grown coffee, and community grower groups. ***Inspectors for OCIA may carry out inspections in only those types for which they are approved.***

In order to be approved in an inspection category, *one inspection report/checklist and one narrative inspection report written to OCIA Standards and covering all organic control points* must be submitted for evaluation for each type of approval requested. Please see “Additional Requirements for Specialty Crop Certification” subsection for additional requirements and criteria to be met for certain categories. *In using the main OCIA inspection report form that uses a checklist format, the comment sections need ample comments in the report submitted for evaluation. The report written in narrative format needs to supply a full picture of the inspector’s ability to address all points necessary to evaluate compliance to OCIA Standards.* Depending on the type of inspection reported, a report in certain categories can be submitted to be reviewed for approval in more than one category. *Examples include but are not limited to: Farm/Simple Processing/Dairy/Livestock categories can be covered in one report. Complex Processing covers Simple Processing and Broker/Trader/Warehouse.* If you have any question regarding what reports need to be submitted for approval, or if you are applying for multiple categories at one time, please contact the OCIA International Office for additional information regarding submission of sample reports.

Reports written for another certifying agency, with names and any information identifying the clients blacked out, are acceptable as long as they address all applicable OCIA Standards. Such reports may also be re-written to address OCIA Standards rather than submitting a report identical to one submitted to another certification agency. “Mock” or “sample” inspection reports will be accepted for evaluation. However, actual inspection reports are preferred because they provide more accurate information for evaluation.

An OCIA inspector who wishes to become approved for additional inspection approval types should submit to the International office *one inspection report/checklist and one narrative inspection report written to OCIA Standards and covering all organic control points must be submitted for evaluation for each type of approval requested.* A letter of application should accompany the reports. All application materials, including any additional materials required by a specific category (*please see below*) will be evaluated and a decision regarding the application will be communicated to the inspector. Until the International office notifies an inspector of approval for a specific inspection type, inspections of this type may not be carried out for OCIA. Please understand that approval to carry out inspections for another certifying agency does not mean approval has been granted by OCIA in those same inspection types. *Approval from OCIA for that inspection type must be received prior to conducting inspections for OCIA. ANY inspector who inspects an operation of a type for which he or she is not approved may face corrective action and jeopardize his or her status as OCIA-approved Inspector.*

Additional Requirements for Specialty Crop Certification

Community Grower Groups

Additional requirements for applicants seeking approval to inspect community grower groups are determined on a case-by-case basis. In many occasions, the completion of an apprenticeship may be required. See the “Apprenticeship” section for more details.

Shade-Grown Coffee

To become approved for Shade-Grown Coffee inspections, one must first be an OCIA-Approved inspector in the Farm and/or Community Grower Group category(ies). *This category is **NOT** open to*

those seeking first-time approval as OCIA inspectors. New applicants interested in this category must first become approved in the Farm and/or Community Grower Group category(ies) and then apply for additional approval in Shade-Grown Coffee.

To obtain additional approval for Shade-Grown Coffee inspections, *one inspection report/checklist and one narrative inspection report written to OCIA Standards and covering all organic control points must be submitted.* The same specifications that apply for reports sent in for other categories *apply for shade-grown coffee reports as well.* These reports will be evaluated for knowledge of OCIA standards for shade-grown coffee. Below is a list of additional application materials to submit:

1. A completed, signed, and dated *Inspector Application Shade-Grown Coffee Addendum* form.
2. Documentation showing that the inspector has done training and/or has experience in shade-grown coffee production within the last two years. An updated *Inspector Résumé* (or an updated *résumé* or *curriculum vitae*) and certificates of training may be accepted as supporting documentation.

Additional Requirements for New Applicants

An applicant to the OCIA Inspector Program must submit to the International office *one inspection report/checklist and one narrative inspection report written to OCIA Standards and covering all organic control points* per desired category of approval. The same requirements apply for the reports submitted by applicants and inspectors desiring additional approvals. In addition to sample reports, applicants must submit the following forms and documents:

- 1) *Inspector Application*
- 2) *OCIA International Conflict of Interest Annual Declaration*
- 3) *OCIA Inspector Work Agreement*
- 4) *Confidentiality Form*
- 5) *OCIA Inspector Résumé*
- 6) A curriculum vitae (CV) or *résumé*
- 7) Copies of diplomas and other documentation of education, professional licenses, etc. Originals should not be submitted, as their return cannot be guaranteed.
- 8) Copies of certificates of IOIA training (or equivalent) (along with a syllabus or in its place a short description of topics covered) and any other training related to organic inspection.

The current versions of OCIA forms (items 1-5) must be used. Please contact the International office to obtain these. Also, forms must be signed, dated, and filled out completely. All information submitted must be consistent. Unsigned, undated, and/or incomplete forms will delay the review process.

All documentation must be sent via mail, courier, fax, or e-mail (as long as signatures are submitted and information in the footers of OCIA forms is visible) to the International office:

OCIA International
Attn: Inspector Program Director
1340 N. Cotner Blvd.
Lincoln, NE 68505
USA

The review file must be complete with all the required documentation and sample reports prior to a decision being made. The results of the review, complete with requirements, if any, shall be promptly communicated in a letter. The applicant must understand that approval as an OCIA inspector does not guarantee work as an OCIA inspector.

Apprenticeship

New applicants should not assume that they need to complete an apprenticeship in order to become approved as OCIA inspectors. However, apprenticeships are frequently encouraged as a valuable method of obtaining on-the-job training in inspection.

During the experience, the apprentice accompanies a mentor on a series of inspections of the type for which approval is requested. Mentors should have at least three years experience inspecting for OCIA in the particular approval type for which approval is desired. Exceptions may be approved on a case-by-case basis; in order to determine if a mentor has appropriate experience, or to request an exception, please contact OCIA International. The apprentice may write an inspection report for OCIA evaluation from the third inspection. This report must include comments from the mentor and be accompanied by a letter by the mentor that assesses the apprentice. The apprentice's report may serve as one of the *two* required for evaluation for an inspection type. The apprentice inspector bears responsibility for the costs of the apprenticeship.

Before the apprentice goes on an accompaniment inspection, the *Confidentiality Form* and *Annual Declaration of Conflict of Interest* forms (dated, signed, and completed) must be in the apprentice's file. The *OCIA Subcontractor Declaration of Interest Verification Form* needs to be filled out as appropriate. The other required documents (see list in "Additional Requirements for New Applicants") can wait to be submitted until after the accompaniment inspections. However, ***all*** documents must be ***on file*** in order for the application to be processed.

In most cases, the apprentice may select his/her OCIA mentor, consistent with the guideline above. However, in special circumstances, prior approval of the mentor by the International office is required. When these circumstances arise, the necessary procedures will be communicated to the apprentice prior to the apprenticeship. The apprentice should remain in contact with OCIA throughout the apprenticeship.