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**Qualification Specification**  
Highfield Level 3 International  
Award in Effective Auditing and  
Inspection

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Key Facts .....	3
Qualification Overview.....	3
Entry Requirements .....	3
Delivery and Assessment Ratios .....	3
Guidance on Delivery .....	3
Guidance on Assessment.....	4
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).....	4
Guidance on Internal Quality Assurance .....	4
Geographical Coverage .....	4
Tutor/Assessor Requirements .....	4
Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations .....	5
ID Requirements .....	5
Progression.....	5
Useful links .....	6
Recommended Training Materials .....	6
Appendix 1: Qualification Unit.....	7

## Highfield Level 3 International Award in Effective Auditing and Inspection

### Introduction

This specification is designed to outline all you need to know in order to offer this qualification in your Centre. If you have any further questions, please contact your Centre Manager.

### Key Facts

<b>Duration</b>	8 hours
<b>Assessment Method:</b>	Multiple-choice question examination

### Qualification Overview

This qualification is aimed at supervisors, team leaders, chefs, QA staff and managers working in a variety of industries where verification, auditing (including internal auditing and supplier auditing) or inspection is undertaken. Industries may include all sectors of the food industry, consumer products, hospitals, laboratories, pharmaceuticals, warehousing and retail. The qualification is also suitable for student environmental health officers.

This qualification will provide learners with theoretical knowledge on how to effectively carry out audits/inspections, including: the purpose of audits/inspections and the role of the auditor/inspector, how to methodically approach the planning of audits/inspections, how to collect and analyse data and the purpose and content of an audit/inspection report.

**Important Note: Highfield recommends that you contact the relevant Government Department in the country that you want to deliver this qualification, to ensure that local laws are being adhered to and that there are no additional approval requirements. It may be that you are required to register as a training provider within the country itself. Highfield approves centres based on its own criteria but does not represent any other organisations or regulatory departments.**

### Entry Requirements

There are no prerequisites for this qualification. However, it is recommended that candidates have suitable technical knowledge of the relevant practices and procedures which will be subject to audit/inspection.

Centres are responsible for ensuring candidates can meet the necessary level of language in which the course is being delivered. It is recommended that learners are a minimum of 16 years of age.

### Delivery and Assessment Ratios

To effectively deliver and assess this qualification, it is recommended that centres do not exceed the ratio of 1 qualified tutor/assessor to a maximum of 20 learners in any one instance.

### Guidance on Delivery

The total qualification time for this qualification is 8 hours, which may be adjusted in accordance with learners' needs and/or local circumstances. This qualification will usually be delivered in a classroom

environment, however, if it is delivered via e-learning or a blended learning approach, then GLH would be adjusted accordingly.

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### Guidance on Assessment

This qualification is assessed by a multiple-choice question examination. This method of assessment is an end-of-course exam and must follow the Highfield Qualifications Examination and Invigilation Procedures. The examination for this qualification contains **30** questions that must be completed within **60** minutes. Successful learners must achieve a score of at least **18** out of **30** (60%). Learners will achieve a Distinction at **24** out of **30** (80%).

The examination will be completed via Highfield's e-assessment platform [www.highfieldworks.com](http://www.highfieldworks.com) and the result will be available instantly. If a paper-based examination is requested as a special consideration, completed examination papers should be returned to Highfield for marking. Results will be provided to the centre once the marking and quality assurance checks are completed.

Centres must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a learner (including any internal quality assurance and invigilation) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

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### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Centres may apply to use recognition of prior learning or prior achievement to reduce the amount of time spent preparing the learner for assessment.

For further information on how centres can apply to use RPL as described above, please refer to the recognition of prior learning (RPL) policy in the members area of the Highfield website. This policy should be read in conjunction with this specification and all other relevant Highfield documentation.

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### Guidance on Internal Quality Assurance

Highfield recommends that centres have a robust mechanism in place for quality assurance. The quality assurance checks of the training delivery and assessments must be completed by a competent person at the centre, who must ensure that all Highfield training and assessment paperwork is completed to the correct standard and within the timescales advised by Highfield. Persons completing the quality assurance function, should not have been involved in any aspect of the delivery/assessment of the course they are quality assuring.

Highfield will conduct external quality assurance engagements to support Centres in the effective implementation and on-going management of this qualification. For example, this could be conducted via Highfield sampling Centre paperwork or conducting support visits to Centres.

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### Geographical Coverage

This qualification is for learners outside of the UK.

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### Tutor/Assessor Requirements

Highfield requires that nominated tutors for this qualification meet the following standards:

- **hold a relevant qualification or have relevant experience in auditing and inspection, which could include any of the following:**
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- Highfield Level 3 Award in Effective Auditing and Inspection (RQF) **and** practical experience of carrying out audits/inspections
- Lead Auditor and practical experience of carrying out audits/inspections
- Environmental Health Officer qualification
- any other qualification and/or experience in the subject area that is at least equivalent to the qualifications outlined above
  
- **hold a recognised teaching qualification, which could include any of the following:**
  - Highfield Level 3 International Award in Delivering Training (IADT);
  - Highfield Level 3 or 4 Award in Education and Training;
  - Highfield Level 3 PTLLS,
  - Diploma or Certificate in Education;
  - Any other qualification and/or experience deemed appropriate by Highfield

Registered tutors are expected to keep up-to-date with developments in this subject through continuous professional development.

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### Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Highfield has measures in place for learners who require additional support. Reasonable adjustment such as additional time for the exam; assistance during the exam, such as using a scribe or a reader; translations; requests for remote delivery, is available upon approval from Highfield. Please refer to Highfield's Reasonable Adjustments Policy for further information/guidance on this.

<https://www.highfieldinternational.com/downloads>

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### ID Requirements

All learners must be instructed to bring photographic identification to the assessment to be checked by the assessor. The assessor must note the type of photo identification provided by each learner on the learner list document. Highfield will accept the following as proof of a learners' identity:

- National identity card (e.g. Emirates ID card);
- Valid passport (any nationality);
- Signed photo card driving licence; or
- Other photographic ID card, e.g. employee ID card (must be current employer), student ID card

For more information on learner ID requirements, please refer to the Highfield Examination and Invigilation Regulations within the Core Manual.

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### Progression

On successful completion of this qualification, learners (depending on the industry they work within) may wish to continue their development by undertaking one of the following qualifications:

- CQI and IRCA Certified ISO 9001 Quality Management System (QMS) Auditor/Lead Auditor training course
- Highfield Level 4 qualifications in Health and Safety, Food Safety and HACCP

Highfield offers a range of qualifications to help learners progress their careers and personal development. Please contact your Centre Manager for further information.

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### Useful links

The following links are recommended to support centres in the delivery of this qualification:

- [www.highfieldqualifications.com](http://www.highfieldqualifications.com)
- [www.highfieldinternational.com](http://www.highfieldinternational.com)
- [www.highfieldproducts.com](http://www.highfieldproducts.com) (Highfield Products)
- International Organization for Standardization - <https://www.iso.org/>
- British Retail Consortium - <https://brc.org.uk>
- SALSA - [www.salsafood.co.uk](http://www.salsafood.co.uk)

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### Recommended Training Materials

The following resources have been reviewed by Highfield Qualifications and are recommended as possible training materials for users of this qualification within the **food industry**:

- Griffith, Chris. Effective Auditing & Inspection Skills Course Book. Highfield International Ltd.
  - Sprenger, Richard A. Level 3 Award in Effective Auditing and Inspection Skills PowerPoint. Highfield International Ltd.
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## Appendix 1: Qualification Unit

**Unit 1:** Principles of Effective Auditing and Inspection (International)  
**Level:** 3  
**Duration:** 8 hrs

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
<i>The learner will</i>	<i>The learner can</i>
<b>1. Understand the importance of undertaking effective auditing/inspection</b>	1.1 Explain the purpose of an audit/inspection 1.2 Outline the benefits and limitations of audits/inspections 1.3 Explain the implications of undertaking an inadequate audit/inspection
<b>2. Understand the competencies and characteristics of an effective auditor/inspector</b>	2.1 Recognise the competencies required by an auditor/inspector 2.2 Recognise how the conduct and characteristics of an auditor/inspector impacts on an audit/inspection
<b>3. Understand the importance of a planned approach to conducting effective audits/inspections</b>	3.1 Explain the stages involved in the auditing/inspection process 3.2 Explain the factors that influence the frequency and duration of audits/inspections 3.3 Describe the basis for audits/inspections 3.4 Outline methods of collecting accurate and comprehensive data
<b>4. Understand how to analyse and use evidence collected to inform the audit/inspection process</b>	4.1 Explain the importance of converting raw data into coherent facts 4.2 Explain the importance of determining the sources of problems 4.3 Explain the purpose of an audit/inspection report

### Amplification

#### Learning Outcome 1

1.1 Purpose of an audit/inspection to include:

- Knowledge of the following terms and the difference between them: audit, auditor, auditee; inspection; internal (1st party), 2nd party and 3rd party audits; desk-top audits; full, superficial, partial, vertical and horizontal inspections/audits
- Confirmation that standards have been achieved and customer's requirements met with an appropriate level of due diligence.
- Assessing current level of compliance and identifying areas of non-compliance
- Ensuring that the business is operating safely/within expected boundaries
- Identification of training needs
- Contribution to continuous improvement and culture

## 1.2 Benefits and limitations of audits/inspections.

### Benefits to include:

- Identification of good areas and those needing improvement
- May identify deficiencies before they occur
- Contribution to strategic planning
- Aids due diligence
- Maintains certifications
- Reduces risk of harm, complaints and potential fines and prosecutions
- Supporting a positive culture for compliance
- Can be used for marketing

### Limitations to include:

- Can disrupt business and staff may be taken away from other duties
- May be seen as negative by staff
- Staff may act differently when audited, so gives false impression
- Too few or too many audits/inspections leading to inadequate timeframes or fatigue
- May only produce a snapshot
- Difficulty in ensuring consistency leading to poor perception of value

## 1.3 The implications of undertaking an inadequate audit/inspection, to include:

- A superficial audit/inspection could lead to non-detection of serious non-conformances - customers may be given false sense of security, it could result in serious criticism of company and auditor and there is the potential for legal action, allegations of incompetency and job losses

## Learning Outcome 2

### 2.1 Competencies of auditor/inspector to include:

- Characteristics – personal and professional
- Knowledge and experience of operation
- People skills

### 2.2 Ways the conduct and characteristics of an auditor/inspector impact on an audit/inspection to include:

- Preparation
- Opening meeting and observing common courtesies
- Questioning techniques
- Thoroughness
- Flexibility considering new evidence
- Avoidance of ritualistic defects and solutions (for example, only looking for obvious noncompliance; not assessing application of systems, accepting compliance at face value; instigating simple corrections such as disposing of food past its best before date as opposed to identifying the reason this has occurred and root cause etc.).
- Ability to use a risk-based approach
- Look, listen, ask, check model



- Role of internal auditor to advise and educate, change attitudes and overcome barriers to change, handling problems and difficult auditees
- Time management
- Overcoming language and cultural differences
- Body language and setting a suitable standard

### Learning Outcome 3

#### 3.1 The stages involved in the auditing/inspection process, to include:

- Audit process: agree scope, develop schedule based on risk, identify suitable auditor, identify requirements and prepare checklists, aide memoir etc., establish timings, conduct audit, agree non-conformances, verify documentation, communicate findings
- Importance of planning and preparation to ensure an effective audit/inspection
- Audit cycle (planning and preparation, opening meeting, on-site inspection, analysis, closing meeting, written report and verifying effective completion).
- Understand the difference between audit scope and depth and identify factors which may influence this, such as production times, seasonal production, time available etc.
- Importance and examples of auditor having suitable and correct equipment to conduct the audit and verify controls and claims
- The importance of considering the timing of the inspection/audit (time of day/year)
- Purpose of opening and closing meetings
- Information required for a closing meeting
- Importance of re-visit or follow up inspection

#### 3.2 Factors that influence the frequency and duration of audits/inspections:

- • Product safety risk
- • Published standards
- • Historical compliance
- • Complaints
- • Introduction of new equipment/processes/products
- • Compliance with legal/certification body requirements

#### 3.3 Basis for audits/inspection, to include:

- Different types of standards used for auditing (e.g. company standards, customer standards, legislative standards etc.)
- Importance of constructing a 'model' (standards that may be expected in accordance with bench-marking similar industries) against which to inspect/audit
- Order and logical flow of audit to include all required aspects
- Differences found between the model and the premises inspected/audited will identify corrective actions
- Use of checklists and aide memoires as a basis and the appropriateness of their usage in different situations
- Relevant legislation
- Complaints

#### 3.4 Explain how to collect accurate and comprehensive data:

- Importance of accurate and comprehensive data collection
- Understanding the difference between objective and subjective evidence
- Methods of data collection including simulation, reconstruction, checking records, observation, and asking questions
- Effective questioning and listening techniques - understanding of the types of questions available and why they should be used and types of questions which shouldn't be used
- Equipment commonly used when auditing/inspecting
- Importance of gaining objective evidence to confirm or refute claims and use of more than one form of evidence (triangulation of information derived from observation, questioning and examining records)

#### Learning Outcome 4

##### 4.1 Importance of converting raw data to coherent facts, to include:

- The importance of using evidence to support claims
- The use of indicators in assessing the potential for future non-conformance

##### 4.2 Importance of determining the sources of problems, to include:

- Identifying the root cause of problems
- Differentiation between immediate and permanent solutions
- Importance of taking context into account when determining action

##### 4.3 The purpose of a report, to include:

- Business can use to make improvements, and/or as evidence of compliance and due diligence
- Communication tool
- Tool to achieve change, the report is not an end, it encourages continuous improvement
- Recognising different types of non-conformances