## Allergens and Intolerants in Food

# Allergens and Intolerants - guidance for the criteria

# Introduction

This Handbook is an extension to **Part I - Using the TLM INGOTS competence assessment and certification platform.** In this particular version of Part II, we present the guidance for assessors on an additional unit, not foreseen at the beginning f the project, which the THESS partners found of importanse and great use - **Allergens and intolerants in food.** This document outlines the assessment criteria agreed by the partners, their explanation (extended criteria), and guidance as to their possible context and interpretation, including the evidence required to support the award/qualification.

## Level Descriptors

Assessors must always be aware that whatever a specific criteria formulation reads, it must be interpreted in the context of the level descriptors, as outlined by the QCF and EQF.

This particular THESS qualification is designed at QCF Level 2, which is mapped to EQF Level 3.

- Achievement at Level 2 reflects the ability to select and use relevant knowledge, ideas, skills and procedures to complete well-defined tasks and address straight-forward problems. It includes taking responsibility for completing tasks and procedures and exercising autonomy and judgment subject to overall direction or guidance.

- Candidates for qualification at this level are expected to:

    1. use understanding of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems;

    2. interpret relevant information and ideas;

    3. be aware of the types of information that are relevant to the area of study or work.

- When performing actions (applied knowledge), candidates should:

    1. complete well-defined generally routine tasks and address straight-forward problems;

    2. select and use relevant skills and procedures;

3. identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions;

4. identify how effective actions have been.

- With appropriate guidance, candidates should take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures and exercise autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance.

**General requirements**

- Conformance of candidate's individual performance to unit criteria and standards must be confirmed by a trained assessor.

- Centres, in collaboration with the assessors, must ensure that there is a system in place allowing collection and storage of routine evidence of students' work (e-portfolios), to the extent that this is required by the qualification level. E-portfolios should be in a format allowing online access, on request, by a TLM account manager.

- When the assessor is satisfied with a candidate matching all the criteria to the specification subject to the guidance below, the Centre can request a review of the e-portoflio by an account manager.

- If the account manager confirms the assessor's judgements, the candidate's award/certificate/diploma is unlocked and can be printed out from the system.

**Method of assessment**
Assessors can use the criteria to determine levels of prior learning through dialog with the candidate, direct observation and any other appropriate and relevant evidence. They can score each of the criteria "L", "S", "H". "N" indicates no evidence and this is the default setting. "L" indicates some capability but some help still required and the candidate is not secure with that particular criterion. "S" indicates secure mastery of the criterion. "H" indicates that the candidate is operating beyond the basic requirements of the criterion.  If all criteria are matched with "S" or "H", the unit is passed. All criteria must be at least "S" for a pass.
***Expansion of the assessment criteria***

## 1. Understand the individual's responsibility with regard to the dangers of allergens and intolerants.

**1.1 Identify the consequences and symptoms of allergen and intolerant contamination.**
The learner should be able to identify and recognise the symptoms of contamination from allergens and intolerants based on his/her knowledge of their nature and consequences. There should be a clear understanding that allergens provoke an immune response, while intolerants provoke a chemical reaction. Full understanding must be demonstrating on the life-treatening nature of anaphylaxis, a severe immune reaction to allergens. Candidates should be able to enlish the most common physiological reactions to allergens (rash, itching, swelling, etc.) and to intolerants (bloating, stomach cramps).

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

**1.2 Identify and manage allergens and intolerants as a food hazard.**
Within the context of working with food, and based on the knowledge related to 1.1 above, the learner must demonstrate understanding of the 3 food safety hazards: biological (infections and

intoxications resulting from bacteria, viruses or parasites), physical (physical objects/foreign bodies which contaminate the food due to improper handling), and chemical (arising from contamination druring production/transportation/handling/storing, heavy metals, natural chemical contaminants (e.g. shellfish, mushrooms), allergens (eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame seeds, soy, sulphites, tree nuts and wheat), agricultural residues (pesticides, fertilizers, fungicides, antibiotics and growth hormones). The learner should be aware of the first actions which need to be taken in case a reaction is triggered due to allergens or intolerants. There should be clear awareness of the varied degree of urgency of action required by one or the other, and that medical assistance may be needed in some cases.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 1.3 Take responsibility for allergen management.

Allergen management starts with allergen risk assessment. The learner must be able to discuss allergen risk assessment in a very broad context, demonstrating awareness of the different elements: people, raw materials and supply chain, manufacturing (premises, equipment, processes), cleaning, new product development and re-formulation, packaging.
**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 1.4 Recognise the legal requirements for a food business to apply a food safety management system based on the Codex principles of HACCP, and allergen control management.

The learner should be able to define the legal requirements for a food business in his/her own country, as well as the applicable EU legal framework for the food sector. At minimum, basic knowledge of the HACCP system is expected from the learners.
**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

## 2. Eliminate potential sources of allergen contamination.

### 2.1 Read and interpret labels and record the presence of allergens and intolerants.

The learner must be able to locate, read and interpret labels on food and food products. Assessment may be carried out by providing a set of food products, labels, or pictures thereof, and observe while the learner reads, sorts and explains the information on allergens.
**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 2.2 Identify the sources of allergens and intolerants.

This criterion is closely related to knowledge being demonstarted in 1.2. The learner should clearly understand that although allergens and intolerants may be quickly and easily identifialble when considered as a theory in a learning setting, in real life they may come from a much larger spectrum of sources. This means that when discussing fish allergy (as an example), there must be an awareness of the fact that many sub-products and derivatives trigger the same allergic reaction: fish (all species - for this particular allergy, people who are allergic to fish are allergic to all species), fish extracts, fish sauce, fish oils, fish paste, Worcester sauce (some recipes), Omega-3 rich oils derived from fish, fish gelatine (except some uses). Same approach applies to intolerants - not only the "trigger" substance should be identified, but also its different forms and the products in which they may be found.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

**2.3 Recognise the hazards of cross-reactivity.**

The learner should be able to explain the term cross-reactivity/cross-aleergies and illustrate it by at least one example. The learners are not expected to know the whole range of possible cross-allergies, but they must be well aware of the general concept and be able to discuss the possible implications to their work. As a minimum, they should understand that allergic reactions may arise from consuming foods which have no explicit allergen labelling, and that a particular attention must be given in the context of this criterion to customers which make active inquiry as to the contents of a food or a meal. While the learner (either as a learner, or a food worker) can not be expected to replace doctor's advice, he/she must be prepared to provide the customer with full information on the ingredients (or pass the inquiry further (e.g. to a supervisor, manager, cook, etc.) for immediate consideration).

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

**2.4 Provide accurate information to customers.**

The learners should recognise the need for the customers to be provided with accurate, sufficient and actionable information regarding food and food products. This may be achieved by labelling (text, pictograms, colours) and/or oral communication. The information given to the customer must be clear, sufficient, unambiguous, and properly timed in order to allow the customer to make decision and.or take action if necessary.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

**2.5 Control deliveries, storage, stock rotation and supplier specification to protect against allergen and intolerant contamination.**

The learner should identify the raw materials, the supply chain, and the storage (as part of the manufacturing) as important elements of allergen risk assessment and allergen management (see criterion 1.2). Specific policies and practices which help prevent allergen and intolerants contamination, e.g. know that supplies of certain foods should only be accepted if the delivered food is within or below certian temperature levels, has a good visual appearance, etc. We advise that assessors consider this criterion in a pair with 3.4 below.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

## 3. Prepare allergen and intolerant free food, safely.

**3.1 Identify safe food handling practices and procedures for preparing, and serving both “specific allergen" free and "intolerant" free food.**
The learner must be able to outline such (specific) practices and procedures for food handling, preparing, and serving food which is "free" of specific allergens or intolerants, e.g. gluten free, etc. The learner should use examples derived from a food business context (food processing, restaurant, fast food, catering, etc.) where there is client presence/involvement. The examples must clearly stress the importance of acquiring and providing relevant, reliable, sufficient, and timely information on food ingredients, they way it was prepared, and possible traces of allergens.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

**3.2 Conduct a hazard analysis..**

Conducting a hazard analysis is HACCP's Principle 1. It consists of two stages: hazard identification and hazard evaluation. During the first stage, a list is developed of the potential biological, chemical or physical hazards that may be introduced, increased, or controlled at each step in the food production/processing/handling process. In stage two a decision is taken as to which potential hazards must be addressed in the HACCP plan. Each potential hazard is evaluated based on the severity and its likely occurrence.
**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 3.3 Reduce contamination risks associated with workflow procedures.

The learner should demonstrate knowledge of the various workflows occuring in a particular workplace (for the purposes of the assessment this could be a generic case/setting), and discuss in detail how different operations may bring a contamination risk, if not carried out properly. Once this is clearly described, actions which may reduce or eliminate the risk can be outlined.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 3.4 Identify storage methods to avoid cross-contamination.

Based on their knowledge of storage requirements for different foods and food products, the learners should be able to outline practical solutions for storing different products in a way which avoids cross-contamination, e.g. using different colour chopping borards and sets of knifes/tools to chop different foods, etc. It is important that learners are aware of the cross-contamination sources and mechanisms - microbes may be transferred from hands/clothing to food, from used and then unwashed surfaces and tools to tood, or from raw food getting in contact with cooked food. Storage methods may include the type of storage containers, the cleaning of these containers, proper labelling of stored food, separation of different types of food, etc.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

## 4. Understand the importance of effective communication.

### 4.1 Match effective customer communication to circumstances.

The learners must demonstrate that they are able to tailor the communication process and the type/amount of information/detail they provide, based on the perceived or declared interest of the customer. An active inquiry about the food composition on behalf of a  mother of small children in a restaurant requires an information and communication approach which is different from the one appropriate in food labelling (where the interest is passive and the information follows legally-outlined guidelines), or the one used in peer work discussion at a food processing workplace (while still discussing a customer-related case).

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 4.2 Use effective all round communication with accurate information to avoid contamination through misunderstanding.

Effective communication at the workplace is paramount to managing food hazards. Comprehensive, accurate, and timely information exchange, especially when coupled with a robust HACCP system, can contribute to reducing the risk of contamination. This criterion should underline the importance of communicating information within a food safety context, and could be assessed in conjunction

with criterion 4.3 immediately below.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### 4.3 Maintain records and instructions.

The learner should understand the importance of maintaining records for the purposes of transparency and traceability. He/she should be able to locate, read, and interpret written instructions related to allergens and intolerants as part of the larger food safety domain. The learner should also demonstrate that he/she is able to quickly pass instructions to other people (colleagues and customers) regarding potential hazardous situation. Recording and reporting real and potential cases of food hazards must be considered and discussed. This criterion also relates to HACCP Principle 7.

**Evidence:** Written statements/documents, test, discussion with assessor, observation.

### Using a test in the assessment process

A detailed test was prepared by the methodological experts of the THESS project, which can be used to assess learners' competences in the subject matter. Considering the level of the qualification (Level 2 / EQF Level 3), the test should not be the only evidence, but rather a supplement tool to confirm a broad rabge of inter-related competences.

| Learning resources | |
|---|---|
| Food allergy training online from the UK's Food Standards Agency | http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/ [1] |
| Food allergy research and education | https://www.foodallergy.org/allergens [2] |
| Food allergy information - labelling | http://www.foodallergens.info/Legal/Labelling/Labelling.html [3] |
| Food intolerance information | http://www.allergyuk.org/food-intolerance/food-intolerance [4] |
| Food allergy and food intolerance | http://www.eufic.org/article/en/expid/basics-food-allergy-intolerance/ [5] |
| Supporting people with allergies | http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/what-is-anaphylaxis/knowledgebase/legislation-on-food-allergens?page=7 [6] |
| Guidance on Allergen Management and Consumer Information | http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/maycontainguide.pdf [7] |
| Food allergies and food intolerances: symptoms and management | http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/recognising_allergies.html [8] |
| European Commission - Food Safety portal | http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/index_en.htm [9] |
| EU legislation on food information to consumers | http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/labelling_legislation/index_en.htm [10] |
| SME food allergen labelling guidance published | http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2014/6140/sme-allergen-guidance [11] |
| EU regulations on food information for consumers & food allergen labelling | http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/eufic-la-pres.ppt [12] |
| InformAll Allergenic Food Database | http://www.inflammation-repair.manchester.ac.uk/informall/allergenic-foods/ [13] |
| European Food Safety Authority | http://www.efsa.europa.eu/ [14] |
| HACCP Principles & Application Guidelines (FDA) | http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/HACCP/ucm2006801.htm [15] |
| Allergen risk assessment | http://www.foodallergens.info/Manufac/Assess.html [16] |
| CCP - Prevention of cross-contamination | http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/cshrcrosscontam2010.pdf [17] |
| 'CookSafe' - assist catering businesses understand and implement a HACCP | http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/csintroduction.pdf [18] |
| Video resources | |
| Allergen Awareness - Food Allergy Awareness 2014 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhrtFzH42jc [19] |
| Understanding Food Allergy (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, UK) | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKViKC3u9hk [20] |
| Allergens (Unilever Food Solutions UK & IE) | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyDqrhQLOHM [21] |

**Source URL:** https://theingots.org/community/Thess/fal2u1x

**Links**
[1] http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/
[2] https://www.foodallergy.org/allergens
[3] http://www.foodallergens.info/Legal/Labelling/Labelling.html
[4] http://www.allergyuk.org/food-intolerance/food-intolerance
[5] http://www.eufic.org/article/en/expid/basics-food-allergy-intolerance/
[6] http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/what-is-anaphylaxis/knowledgebase/legislation-on-food-allergens?page=7
[7] http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/maycontainguide.pdf
[8] http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/recognising_allergies.html

[9] http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/index_en.htm
[10] http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/labelling_legislation/index_en.htm
[11] http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2014/6140/sme-allergen-guidance
[12] http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/eufic-la-pres.ppt
[13] http://www.inflammation-repair.manchester.ac.uk/informall/allergenic-foods/
[14] http://www.efsa.europa.eu/
[15] http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/HACCP/ucm2006801.htm
[16] http://www.foodallergens.info/Manufac/Assess.html
[17] http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/cshrcrosscontam2010.pdf
[18] http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/csintroduction.pdf
[19] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhrtFzH42jc
[20] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKVjKC3u9hk
[21] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyDqrhQLOHM

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