The World Customs Organization's

Virtual Customs Orientation Academy

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is introducing the WCO Virtual Customs Orientation Academy (VCOA) initiative. It aims at providing new Customs inductees with an understanding of international Customs standards and how they might be interpreted and applied to their future tasks. Designed to prepare inductees with basic knowledge, and skills on the international Customs standards, this serves as a complement and should not be viewed as a substitute for an administration's national training. It is available on the WCO CLiKC! web platform (Customs Learning and Knowledge Community).

Course Description

Based on WCO Members' best practices, the main purpose of this course is to convey basic Customs information and skills to newly (less than 4 years) recruited Customs officials. The course introduces inductees to typical roles and functions of Customs administrations, the concepts of clearance procedures and practices, international conventions and agreements and capacity building principles.

The course brings:

- Knowledge of the essential principles of the Customs environment, international conventions and systems;

- Basic cognitive skills required to carry-out Customs tasks;

- Core competencies to be an efficient and effective Customs professional.

This WCO course provides additional opportunity for new Customs staff to get more acquainted with the Customs Community's international standards and to better understand the relationship between national legislations and international conventions and instruments. It prepares them to their future work by fostering the adoption of a common language and therefore their cooperation capacities with other Customs practitioners. It ultimately provides a strong foundation for further career development.

At the end of the course, inductees will be able to:

1. Understand the role of the WCO and its impact on the Customs community including their own Customs administration
2. Interpret and apply Customs international conventions and tools
3. Understand Customs modernization and capacity building concepts
4. Identify and apply revenue collection principles
5. Understand and apply enforcement principles
6. Identify basic Customs procedures

This WCO VCOA course is composed of 4 mandatory modules which are virtually tutored and 2 optional modules (see Annexes).

Duration of Study

The VCOA must be finalized within a limited period of time upon successful completion of assignments and tests: 14-week duration has been established for the 13th Session.

Sessions of the Academy are offered at frequent period of time and will follow the same sequence of activities.

Admission Requirements and Etiquette

Customs officials from all Customs Administrations are welcomed to apply if compliant to the criteria set below.

To be admitted to the VCOA course, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

- A **newly recruited** Customs officer **having less than four years of service** in Customs;

- Proficiency in both **written and spoken English**;

- Good **computer skills and having access to Internet**;

- **Maximum age 35 years**;

- Be available during the **whole period** of the VCOA session and able to put the necessary time into it (min. 5 hours/week);

- Receive their **home administration's approval to enroll** into the Virtual Customs Orientation Academy.

The WCO Secretariat ensures a transparent selection process based on these eligibility criteria. Gender balance as well as fair geographical representation will be considered.

The selected participants accept the CLiKC! Disclaimer and the VCOA Charter.

Sequence of Activities

The selected participants have to fully embark on their individual learning journey at a monitored pace as soon as the session is opened. Milestones must be reached by all the participants at some defined dates: they correspond to some synchronous activities and decisive degrees of advancement. The session's closure date and potential rewarding of the certificate is fixed.

The WCO Virtual Customs Orientation Academy is structured taking into account the good practices of Members' induction training programmes and has emphasized the main modules and learning components applicable to such a world-wide project.

The Academy's learning journey consists of:

- Access to courses and reference documents:

    o interactive multimedia course: Flash, videos, .ppt, .pdf, etc.;

    o structured sequences of learning activities**;**

    o reference training material, links, etc.

- Collaborative learning activities implying interaction with the fellow participants, tutors and colleagues in the field:

    o video-conferences, forum of discussions, chats, collaborative writing projects;

    o field studies, colleagues' interviews, etc..

- Evaluation of the gained knowledge and skills:

    o on-line knowledge tests, MCQ;

    o open questionnaires, essays;

    o assignments.

The participants are invited to develop an international professional network through exchanges of views and practices with Customs officials from other administrations and regions, and through the access to recognized mentors in the global Customs Community.

Methods of Assessment and Certification

During the 14-week learning journey, the participants will be continuously assessed through various methods involving a high level of engagement from each of the participants.

The tutored course is closely monitored by the Academy coordinator from the Secretariat who is in charge of ensuring registration and access processes, the completion of the participants' learning journey on a timely basis, the facilitation of the Academy forum's discussions, and providing them

with all the assistance to complete their learning journey. The Academy coordinator assists the Virtual Tutors.

The Virtual Tutors offer the participants guidance in respect to the practical implementation of the WCO international standards and conventions. They assist candidates with content-related questions, review the assignments and facilitate discussions on some of the implementation challenges faced in the field.

The assignment and activities are reviewed by the WCO Academy Coordinator and the Virtual Tutors; the knowledge tests assess the understanding of inductees and their capacities to implement the concepts and principles attached to a specific topic; and the participants' level of interactivity, and participation are monitored and assessed throughout the learning journey.

Only successful participants will be rewarded with the VCOA Certificate.

Module 1: Introduction to Customs

Module Description

Background information about Customs, Customs environment and current challenges, is very important for newly recruited Customs officials. It provides the foundation for understanding Customs principal roles and operations. This course aims at enabling that inductees understand the Customs environment and the core concepts and values important to work in a 21st century Customs Administration.

The course covers: the history of Customs, roles and responsibilities of Customs, Customs 21st century, Customs modernization and capacity building, and how to collaborate in a Customs working environment.

Module Objectives

At the end of this course inductees will be able to:

1. Define Customs Roles and Responsibilities
2. Understand the vision of Customs 21st Century
3. Understand Customs Modernization and Capacity Building methodology
4. Support their administration's continuous Modernization
5. Understand the principal of Gender Equality

Learning Units in this module:

1.1   Core Customs Roles and Values
      1.1.1   Core Customs Values & Civil Servant Role
      1.1.2   Integrity in the Workplace
1.2   Customs in the 21st Century Vision
      1.2.1   Introduction to the Building Blocks of Customs 21st Century
1.3   Capacity Building
      1.3.1   Customs Modernization and Capacity Building
1.4   Gender Equality
      1.4.1   Why Gender Equality?
      1.4.2   Understand Gender Equality
      1.4.3   Internal Policies
      1.4.4   External Policies
      1.4.5   WCO Supports Gender Equality
      1.4.6   Implementing Gender Equality

Module 2: Introduction to Customs Procedures

Module Description

This course provides the inductees with basic knowledge and skills in Customs procedures. It focuses on importation, exportation and transit of goods, warehousing, processing, special procedures and more.

Module Objectives

At the end of this course inductees should be able to:

1. Understand the cooperation between Customs and other government agencies
2. Understand the concepts and regional integration of coordinated border management
3. Understand the international supply chain
4. Explain Customs procedures associated with the entry and release of goods
5. Understand the transit modes of goods
6. Be familiar with the general principles of the WCO Conventions, as the international standards which are the foundation of national Customs procedures
7. Be aware of the special procedures

Learning Units in this module:

2.1   International Trade
  2.1.1   Introduction to Trade Facilitation
  2.1.2   Introduction to the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

2.2   Overview of Customs Procedures
  2.2.1   Introduction to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC)
  2.2.2   General Principles and Definitions
  2.2.3   Clearance and Other Customs Formalities
  2.2.4   Temporary Admission
  2.2.5   Supply Chain Security

2.3   Cooperation between Customs and other government agencies, including Coordinated Border Management (CBM) concepts and regional integration
  2.3.1   Introduction to Coordinated Border Management (CBM)
  2.3.2   Planning Coordinated Border Management
  2.3.3   Implementing Coordinated Border Management
  2.3.4   Overview of the WCO Tools and Instruments
  2.3.5   International Organizations involved in CBM
  2.3.6   Regional Integration Trends

2.4 Single Window

    2.4.1   Understanding Single Window Environment

2.5 WCO SAFE Framework of Standards

    2.5.1   WCO SAFE Framework of Standards and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

    2.5.2   Other WCO Instruments and Tools

Module 3: Introduction to Trade Compliance Revenue Collection

Module Description

This module introduces inductees to revenue collection principles. It covers the international conventions, tools and instruments applied to the classification, valuation and origin of goods. Furthermore, provides inductees with knowledge and skills to effectively and proficiently carry out Customs revenue related tasks.

Module Objectives

At the end of this course inductees should be able to:

1. Understand the Harmonized System and the principles and rules applied to the classification of goods
2. Understand WTO valuation principles
3. Understand origin of goods procedures

Learning Units in this module:

3.1 Classification

    3.1.1   Overview of tariff and classification

    3.1.2   General introduction to the harmonized system

3.2 Customs Valuation

    3.2.1   Customs Valuation – General Principles

    3.2.2   Article 1: Transaction value

    3.2.3   Article 8: Adjustments

3.3 Rules of Origin

    3.3.1   Rules of Origin

Module 4: Customs Compliance and Enforcement

Module Description

This course covers the relevant control procedures while providing necessary knowledge and skills to implement them.

Module Objectives

At the end of this course inductees should be able to:

1. Understand the principles of Customs' Risk and Compliance Management
2. Implement goods control procedures
3. Understand passenger controls procedures
4. Explain and identify commercial fraud and money laundering
5. Identify the safety & security procedures for Customs officers
6. Get a knowledge of prosecution standards

Learning Units in this module:

4.1   Risk-based Selectivity
    4.1.1   Air Cargo Risk Indicators
    4.1.2   Commercial Cargo Profiling and Selectivity
    4.1.3   Ocean containers Risk Indicators
    4.1.4   Airport Passengers Controls

4.2   Specific Prohibitions & Restrictions
    4.2.1   Identification of Drugs
    4.2.2   Intellectual Property Rights
    4.2.3   Environmental Crime

4.3   Commercial Fraud
    4.3.1   Introduction to Commercial Fraud

4.4   Safety & Security
    4.4.1   Customs Officer Safety

4.5   Offense & Prosecution
    4.5.1   Note Taking, Report Writing
    4.5.2   Interviewing & Interrogation

4.6   Small Arms & Light Weapons
    4.5.1   Licensing and Fraud
    4.5.2   Small Arms, Light Weapons, Component Parts and Indicative Materials

Module 5: Post Clearance Audits and Control

Module Description

Controls regarding the compliance of traders to official Customs regulations, is not only done at the border. A number of other methods can be used after the importation to enforce these rules, while enabling a smooth flow of trade.

This module covers the principles and basics of post-clearance audit. **Please note that this module is not mandatory.**

Module Objectives

At the end of this course inductees should be able to:

1. Gain an appreciation of post clearance audit approaches as an effective mean for control and facilitation.

Learning Units in this module:

5.1   Introduction to Post-Clearance Audits (PCA)
    5.1.1   Introduction to PCA
    5.1.2   Background to PCA

Module 6: Risk Management Framework

Module Description

Not all movements of goods, or importers are most likely to present some risks of non-compliance with Customs regulations. To facilitate trade and Customs enforcement work, risk management is an important asset.

This module covers the principles and basics of risk management. **Please note that this module is not entirely mandatory.**

Module Objectives

At the end of this course inductees should be able to:

1. Gain an appreciation of the value of customs processes and decisions based on risk management and assessment.

Learning Units in this module:

6.1   Introduction Learning Circle and Risk Assessment
    6.1.1   Introduction to Risk Assessment
    6.1.2   Risk Preparation/Profiling
    6.1.3   Targeting
    6.1.4   Inspection Feedback Loop
    6.1.5   Evaluation of Results
6.2   Risk and Compliance Management