Examiners report

CTSI Professional Competency Framework

Stage 2 Professional Interview: Unit 6 Regulating Markets June 2023

General

A total of twenty-eight candidates attempted the regulating markets professional interview during this round, the highest number since the CPCF has been offered, achieving between 43% and 90%, and significant proportion of the marks fell in the central band of 50% to 70%. All candidates passed prior to moderation, and whilst the majority were good, some were truly excellent.

A total of five scenarios were used for this round, reflecting the number of candidates entering and the fact that the interviews had to be conducted over the course of four days. All candidates were allocated their scenario in advance of the interview and five questions were posed in each interview.

The scenarios used were drawn from product safety through to foreign bodies in food along with other regulatory issues, and considered product and activity risk, along with process and market risk. The examination is primarily a verbal problem-solving exercise under examination conditions, which requires the candidate to consider a brief regulatory scenario which they may encounter during their daily work and determine what actions could arise out of it. Ten minutes reading time provides the candidate with the opportunity to consider this and then the questions are used to guide the discussion. Often candidates provide discussion of questions not yet asked, but this can be considered a good thing as it demonstrates that they require no prompting to consider the holistic regulatory response. There are no right or wrong answers, just justifiable regulatory responses to the scenario and question. Consideration of the optimum response is obviously part of the process, and where candidates considered this in the context of their own authority this was marked appropriately.

The questions are written to avoid focus on the technical detail of regulation and therefore specialist study in product safety, food or feed does not offer advantage if a question is asked relating to past study. Where knowledge is required of specialism this is provided within the training delivery or the online study materials.

All questions require a consideration of the following elements:

1. What is the problem, and what does a successful response look like?
2. How serious is the problem, and what priority should a trading standards service give it in the scheme of tasking work?
3. This will generally lead to some form of risk analysis and possibly a strategy to address this.
4. Regulatory action will be a risk management action, designed to eliminate, mitigate or warn.
5. There are usually a range of regulatory tactics which can be used to manage the risk, in the immediate, medium and long terms.
6. Metrics for assessing the change in risk following regulatory action should be capable of determination.
7. Are there any future actions in relation to other regulators or the rest of the market. How has what been done within the scenario inform current and future market risk?

Some questions deviated from this general model, but not in a significant way. The key to doing well in this exam in experience, and the application of the learning which is conducted in the classroom or online to the real-world situations which trading standards professionals encounter on a daily

basis. It is clear that those candidates with the most practical experience tended to do best in the examination, and the complementary activities of portfolio building also assists with this.

While many candidates had said everything that they wished to say well before the time limit of 20 minutes on the questions, some found that they needed all of the time available. In general, there was no significant correlation between the marks awarded and the time taken, although there were exceptions to this.

Candidates were all very professional in their approach and clearly understand the expectations of the examination and approach it in a positive way. The result of this is a 100% pass rate – well done!