

Q&A Summary – APSCA Webinars – September 4/5, 2019

Below are answers to questions compiled from participants and attendees of the
APSCA Webinars hosted September 4/5, 2019

I. Q&A SECTIONS

- General
- Membership
- Exams

II. AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY (Breakdown)

GENERAL

Q: How does APSCA “approve” auditors?

A: APSCA does not approve auditors, they are enrolled.

Each auditor upon initial enrollment must be associated/ linked with at least 1 Member Firm. They can be employed, full-time or part-time, subcontractor or freelance. However, the audit firm needs to identify the auditor to APSCA.

Q: Is APSCA going to receive claims or suggestions, about the behavior of APSCA Members (firms and auditors)?

A: Yes we have already received feedback and you may have seen in APSCA August 2019 Newsletter also posted on our website, where APSCA held its first Disciplinary Board meeting earlier in the month. Results/ outcomes of that meeting are posted on the website.

<https://www.theapsca.org/ethics--integrity.html>

MEMBERSHIP

Q: Can an Auditor write their APSCA number in the signature of their email?

A: We suggest you do not publicly share your APSCA number. We encourage you to note that you are an “APSCA Member Auditor” in your email signature, LinkedIn, business cards, etc. but refrain from posting the actual number on anything other than a CV being given to an APSCA Member Firm and on an Audit Report which you were an active auditor.

Q: Can we use the APSCA’s Logo –on our website, promotional material and our business cards?

A: Information regarding the use of the APSCA logo is included within the Membership documentation received at the time of engagement, as well is on the Member Firms Only page of APSCA Website (www.theapsca.org).

Note, the APSCA logo is trademarked and is the property of APSCA. The logo is able to be used by **current** APSCA Member Firms.

APSCA Members can use the logo on their website or promotional material once accepted as a Member Firm, paid the annual membership fees and completed the required tasks

identified by APSCA. These requirements may be amended by APSCA from time to time. Use of the logo outside of these parameters is strictly prohibited without explicit approval by APSCA's Executive Board.

You can NOT use the logo on your LinkedIn profile or business cards.

You CAN indicate that you are an APSCA member. However, we do not advise that you place your Member Number publicly.

EXAMS

Q: How are exams scored?

A: Scoring is noted in the Auditor Handbook –Section 5

Q: In Part I and Part II exams at the end of a question where there are multiple right answers, these will be indicated as follows:

“Select all that apply (2)” means there are 2 right answers.

“Select all that apply (3)” means there are 3 right answers.

The question will only indicate if there are 2 right answers or 3 right answers – there is no trick.

If “select all that apply” is not noted it means there is only **1** right answer.

There is NEVER a case where all 4 answers are right.

Q: In part II exam some questions are worth more than 1 point, how are these noted?

A: During the Case Study, some questions may be worth more than one point, if this is the case it will be indicated with “(3 points)” or “(5 points)” at the end of the question.

Q: Does APSCA offer training to the auditors before commencing the exam?

A: No. During the 3 years that APSCA met with audit firms and discussed the process, the feedback was that auditors are trained by multiple organisations including their audit firm, additional training was not required. We have provided the Competency Framework as well as the Auditor Handbook to Members and it is the Member Firm who is responsible for ensuring that Auditors are trained and acquire the appropriate knowledge and language skills in preparation of sitting the exam.

Q: What are the exam room requirements?

A: Ensure no one else is in or can enter the room while the exam is underway. Ensure the space/ room you are testing from will be free of interruptions. If the room has a lock from the inside, a best practice is to lock the door so if someone tries to come in they are not allowed. Signs are also helpful to let people know why they can't come in to stop them from knocking. If you are testing from your hotel room ensure you put your do not disturb sign out AND if you are sharing a room let them know that you will contact them at the point you have completed the exam.

Q: What is passing grade for the exams?

A: 75% or higher for Part I and Part II, Part III is 80%.

Q: Is Exam III compatible with European Data Protection requirements?

A: Part III of the exam is an oral exam and conducted as a 1:1 interview.

The interview is conducted with a subject matter expert in the field of Social Compliance Auditing. Each auditor is asked to consent to being recorded. If you wish to not be recorded, please let your audit firm know in advance. This is compatible with data protection requirements as you are granting consent.

Q: All auditors are not native English speakers/ writers, are exams available in other languages?

A: Part I of the exam is available in 4 languages (English, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Spanish). These 4 languages were selected as they are the languages identified as advanced by more than 80% of the auditors. During 2020 we will roll out additional languages based on those languages the majority of the auditors have identified themselves as advanced in, outside of the existing 4 already available.

Part II is available in English, with Simplified Chinese and Spanish available Q4 2019. As with Part I, Part II will be available in additional languages in 2020

Part III as this is oral, will be launched immediately in a variety of languages – English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish. We will be extending these languages during 2020 as well.

Unless an auditor has identified as advanced in a language which the exam is offered, we do **NOT** suggest the auditor sit the exam until the exam is offered in their language.

Q: Is there a deadline to sit the exams?

A: Auditors who have marked themselves as advanced in English, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, or Spanish must sit Part I of the exam no later than March 2020. Part II no later than July 2020.

Q: How is the Auditor Handbook shared?

A: The APSCA Auditor Handbook is shared with Member Firms at time of exam confirmation. The Firms are responsible for sharing the latest version of the Handbook with their auditors to help them schedule and prepare for their exam once confirmed by APSCA as eligible.

Q: What are the approved resources for each exam?

A: Approved resources for each exam are noted in the Auditor Handbook.

Q: During the exam if we are disconnected can we restart the exam?

A: If you are disconnected for any reason, please re-connect and/or get in-touch with the ProctorU support team. If you do not reconnect with the Proctor once your internet comes back on line, contact ProctorU via the “Chat Now” feature. Depending on the issue, ProctorU’s support team may be able to re-connect you with the exam. Do not email APSCA or contact your Firm, go directly to ProctorU to get prompt assistance.

Q: How many questions on each exam?

A: Part 1 is 100 Multiple Choice, Part 2 is 43 questions related to case studies, and Part 3 is mainly oral, there may be 1-2 short answer questions at the end of some scenarios.

Q: Can I use a Google dictionary during the exam?

A: No. Language/ translation applications, tools, right click to get synonyms, or resources of any kind are **NOT** permitted for exams unless noted within the Auditor Handbook.

Q: Can we check if we have unanswered questions before the end of the exam?

A: There is no specific feature. If you hit submit on your exam it will tell you if there are unanswered questions. IF you have time remaining you can scroll through the exam to find the unanswered questions, however if time is up, you must submit your exam with questions unanswered.

Q: Are ASCA Auditors eligible to sit the exam?

A: ASCA auditors are not eligible to sit exams if marked at this level based on experience. If an ASCA auditor is at that level due to failing an exam previously, then they are eligible. Liaise with your Member Firm or contact APSCA if you are unsure.

Q: If you skip exam questions/don’t answer, are there deductions?

A: If you skip a question or get the question incorrect the score is the same -0.25.

Q: Can we take the exam at the same time as another auditor?

A: Yes, however there can be no more than one auditor in a room at a time. Another auditor can sit the exam at the same time, but they **MUST** be in a separate room.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY – As seen on slide 29 in webinar PPT

Use of APSCA Member Number

The question – if you are a Registered level Auditor how would you write your number is the most missed question

For Part I there are 2 questions on use of APSCA Member Number. If you read the auditor handbook this should be 2 free points!

Pre-Audit

Information requested prior to the audit to prepare

e.g. languages spoken by workers, use of labour hire agencies, recruitment agencies etc

Discrimination

Understanding what is discrimination

e.g. Employees working in similar position however not pay the same when would this be considered discrimination or not

Warning signs identifying discrimination

When hiring for certain positions, when is a health exam necessary, Hepatitis test, eyesight etc.

Gender discrimination, including not allowing female workers to perform certain jobs, even though demonstrated capable (lifting x weight, become pregnant etc)

Religious discrimination

union member discrimination

Documentation review / Management Systems

Documents to review for each section, however ones that have the most incorrect

- discrimination
- hiring and employment
- Inconsistent records, what additional records could be reviewed to validate
- underage labour –

when mistakes are identified during documentation review (e.g. payroll etc), how do you investigate whether mistakes are isolated or systemic

Protecting confidentiality of workers, during documentation review, interviews etc

How would you write on an audit report inconsistent records identified or could not fully verify records due to inconsistencies

Sampling strategies to assess working hours, payroll, interview interviews etc

Policy & Procedures, the difference between a policy and a procedures, what should be reviewed, what does good look like

Determine if policies are effectively implemented

Internal Verification

Grievance mechanism – criteria to determine if effective

Underage Labor

If see young worker, documentation indicates appropriate level, what would you ask to determine if documentation is accurate

Once identify – what next

Health & Safety

Actions taken to prevent workers from being exposed to hazards (e.g. eliminate the hazard, if not possible PPE)

When are ventilation systems required (e.g. spray painting, welding etc)

Tracking accidents & injuries including illness, what should be recorded
Fire safety rules, e.g. exit signs (including when they can be turned off – e.g. never!),
emergency lighting, exit doors etc
Evacuation drills, what documentation should be reviewed
Providing and replacing PPE – what are expectations/ requirements
Fire Aid requirements – what documents should be reviewed
Chemical safety – appropriate way to handle, move, store
Control fumes exposure

Self-Management

Working in a team and all team member do not agree on how to handle

Management Systems

Methods to validate during follow-up audits that an issue has been closed systemically
CAPA – how to determine if appropriate,
Root Cause Analysis – how to conduct

Forced Labor

Indicators of forced labor

Interviews

Sampling strategies for selecting workers
Acceptable places to conduct worker interviews
Techniques to handle nervous workers, or workers that do not want to be participate in the
process
How to write issues in the audit report without violating confidentiality of workers

Freedom of Association

What constitutes a Violation of FOA
Warning signs of potential discrimination or not respecting FOA
When can management provide comments to workers without violating FOA

Communication

Strategies to manage difficult / conflict situations

Conflict of Interest

When to disclose a potential conflict of interest at a factory or to audit firm management
What is a COI

Subcontracting

How to identify/ warning signs of potential subcontracting

Report Writing

Law, Code, Collective Bargaining Agreement, how do you write a finding which violates only 1