

CanadaGAP Auditor Requirements

Effective April 1, 2026, all candidates seeking qualification as a CanadaGAP auditor must meet the criteria below to be eligible for admittance into the CanadaGAP Auditor pool.

This document is organized into six sections, as follows:

1. Education Requirements
2. Training Requirements
3. Experience Requirements
4. Other Skills Required
5. Requirements for Auditor On-boarding by Certification Bodies
6. Maintenance of Auditor Competencies and Ongoing Monitoring by Certification Bodies

All candidates must submit evidence of their background/experience (e.g., curriculum vitae, training certificates, education, transcripts, etc.) to the Certification Body (CB). These are reviewed first by the CB for suitability, and then the CB provides copies of relevant qualifications to CanadaGAP for review and approval/registration before a new auditor can be brought on board by the Certification Body.

IMPORTANT NOTE to Potential Auditors:

- Neither the Certification Body nor CanadaGAP offers pre-qualification of candidates, nor do they evaluate a candidate’s credentials prior to taking the CanadaGAP Auditor Training course. Prior to investing in training, it is the candidate’s responsibility to determine if eligibility requirements are met. A tool is provided on the CanadaGAP website to assist candidates in evaluating themselves against the CanadaGAP auditor requirements.
- Likewise, completing CanadaGAP auditor training is no guarantee that a Certification Body will consider a candidate or bring a newly trained auditor on board. It is recommended that you contact the Certification Body for whom you are interested in working, to inquire whether they are seeking to qualify new CanadaGAP auditors in your area.
- Witness audits cannot occur until the certification body has received approval from CanadaGAP that the auditor meets all other qualifications requirements (e.g. training, education, work experience, etc.).

1. EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

To audit CanadaGAP certification options that are not GFSI-recognized (e.g., Option A1, A2, E, F)	To audit CanadaGAP certification options that are GFSI-recognized (i.e., Options B, C, D)
<p>✓ Two (2) years post-secondary education, preferably in an agricultural/crop, food related or bio-science based discipline</p>	<p>✓ Two (2) years post-secondary education in an agriculture/crop based discipline or, as a minimum, successful completion of a food related or bio-science higher education program</p> <p>Additional Education Required of Group Management System (GMS) Auditors:</p> <p>✓ At least a post high school diploma (minimum course duration of 2 years) in a discipline related to crop production</p>

2. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

a. All CanadaGAP Auditors:

✓	<p>Successful completion of a training course in HACCP based on the principles from Codex Alimentarius (i.e., an “Introduction to HACCP” course), of 2 days’ duration (minimum 16 hours) with an examination at the end. Auditors must demonstrate competence in the understanding and application of HACCP principles. Ideally, but not necessarily, this training is completed prior to CanadaGAP auditor training. Auditors must provide detailed information about the content of the course to the Certification Body. Also acceptable for CanadaGAP auditors is successful completion of the CanadaGAP Auditor Training “Introduction to HACCP” unit including exam.</p>
✓	<p>Successful completion of recognized training in audit techniques based on quality management systems (QMS) or food safety management systems (FSMS) – duration 1 week/40 hours with an examination at the end. Content must cover concepts related to professional conduct and conflict management; communicating and interacting with clients; personal safety; general auditing principles and auditor skills. Ideally, but not necessarily, this training is completed prior to CanadaGAP auditor training. Auditors must provide detailed information about the content of the course to the Certification Body. Examples of the principles to be covered in training: for QMS (ISO 19011 and ISO 9001); for FSMS (ISO 19011 and ISO/22003-1 or ISO/22003-2). A number of the total 40 hours can be derived from successful completion of scheme-specific auditor training (e.g., 10 hours for the CanadaGAP auditor training course).</p>
✓	<p>Successful completion of CanadaGAP Auditor Training pre-course assignment, consisting of material specific to CanadaGAP Manuals. The pre-course assignment is provided by CanadaGAP to the approved training provider. Completed assignments must be graded by the trainer/training provider. Passing grade is 80%.</p>
✓	<p>Successful completion of CanadaGAP Auditor Training Course (see outline below). Passing grade is 80%.</p> <p><u>CanadaGAP Auditor Training Course Outline:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction to the CanadaGAP program and manuals, including the scope and goals of the program ➤ Produce Food Safety 101 – potential hazards in fresh produce, pathogen pathways and how on-farm food safety programs reduce risk ➤ Regulations that affect Canadian Operations – review of areas covered by prevailing legislation (e.g. provincial and federal regulations) ➤ How to use the Audit Checklist – overview of checklist, answering questions, detailed comments, scoring, auto failures, dealing with different commodities ➤ Review of the Program Requirements – Interpretation of the requirements in the manuals, develop clear understanding of what an operation has to do in order to be compliant ➤ Roles and Responsibilities of the CanadaGAP Auditor – auditor skills, effective communication and questioning, preparing for and conducting an audit ➤ Strategies for Assessing Compliance – how to interpret test results (e.g., water tests), product and chemical application trace-back exercises, assessing records ➤ HACCP Overview – review of the seven HACCP principles, the CanadaGAP generic HACCP model ➤ Repacking and Wholesaling - requirements, scope, and how to audit these operations ➤ Written Exams, including case scenarios

✓	<p>For Repacking and Wholesaling scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The separate module within the CanadaGAP auditor training course must be successfully completed for those wishing to audit to this scope, including the exam. Passing grade is 70%. ➤ For already qualified CanadaGAP auditors who wish to add this scope to their training, contact the Certification Body and the CanadaGAP office regarding training. ➤ Any auditor who will be performing Repacking and Wholesaling audits first needs to complete a witness audit at a Repacking and Wholesaling operation, prior to auditing such operations on their own. This witness audit is additional to the witness audit requirement in Section 3.3.1.2 B i) j. The witness auditor must have previously completed five (5) Repacking or Wholesaling audits on their own to qualify as a witness auditor.
✓	<p>For the Addendum for Pollinator Health (optional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Successful completion of the CanadaGAP Pollinator Health Addendum Training.

b. Additional Training Required of Group Management System (GMS) Auditors:

✓ Successful completion of a **Lead Assessor** training course based on ISO 19011 principles, with a minimum duration of 37 hours. The course must be externally recognised by the industry. The certificate must specify the course content and duration. Successful completion must be indicated on the certificate. Lead Assessor training course must cover: applicable standards on quality auditing, auditing techniques, focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication) and reporting, and a practical case study.

3. EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

a. All CanadaGAP Auditors:

✓	At least 2 years full time work in a dedicated food safety role in food production or manufacturing, retailing, inspection or enforcement, preferably in the fruit and vegetable industry. * SEE NOTE BELOW
✓	Work experience in fresh fruit and vegetable farming and handling (note: must include some on-farm experience). This work experience may be concurrent with the 2 years' experience in food safety-related functions.
✓	Experience in on-farm food safety auditing, preferable (not mandatory)
	* NOTE: If CanadaGAP is in doubt about the candidate's two years' of food safety experience, CanadaGAP may request the applicant to provide further information supporting their food safety background/knowledge and may also request that the candidate complete the General Competency Exam. Successful completion of the General Competency Exam is not an automatic substitute for the two years of food safety experience.

b. Additional Experience Required of Group Management System (GMS) Auditors:

✓ Practical auditing experience of minimum 10 days in management systems (e.g., ISO 9000, ISO 14000, ISO 22000, OSHAS 18000), BRC, IFS, GLOBALG.A.P. Option 2 or 4 audits, producer group audits of organic growers or others). This does not include witnessing or shadowing others' audits, but includes being witnessed or shadowed as auditor-in-training.

4. OTHER SKILLS REQUIRED:

✓	Proficient in software applications (e.g., Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel)
✓	Competence in interacting effectively with producers and producer organizations. Excellent written and verbal communication skills
✓	“Working language” skills in the corresponding working language (English/French), including locally used specialist terminology in the working language.
NOTE:	<i>Further federal/provincial/territorial/municipal regulations may apply in some jurisdictions (e.g., l’Ordre des agronomes du Québec). The auditor and Certification Body agree to comply with all such requirements.</i>

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITOR ON-BOARDING BY CERTIFICATION BODIES:

a. All CanadaGAP Auditors:

✓	Successful completion of at least two shadow audits (i.e., following a more experienced auditor and having an opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification, guidance, interpretation or other forms of coaching). The more experienced auditor being shadowed must meet requirements set out in the CanadaGAP Program Management Manual, Section 3.3.1.3.2 and be approved by CanadaGAP. Qualifying auditors may be required by the Certification Body to cover their costs to participate in the shadow audit; the Certification Body will advise of the anticipated costs prior to the candidate agreeing to seek qualification.
✓	Successful completion of at least one witness audit (i.e., performing an audit under the supervision of a qualified, experienced auditor and/or program expert). Witness audits shall be carried out only AFTER the certification body has received approval from CanadaGAP that the auditor meets all other qualification requirements (e.g. training, education, work experience, etc.) The witness audit must occur after the shadow audits. Costs for the qualifying auditor as well as the supervising auditor/program expert will be borne by the Certification Body. If a program expert is used, CanadaGAP must approve a competent person. The supervising auditor must be a lead auditor and/or identified with substantiating evidence as a qualified witness auditor by the Certification Body and must be approved by CanadaGAP as per Section 3.3.1.3.2.
✓	Successful completion of the auditor training program established by the Certification Body, which must include a period of supervised training to cover the assessment of knowledge and skills related to applicable laws and regulations, specific audit techniques and specific knowledge of fresh fruit and vegetable production and handling; assessment of the auditor’s ability to apply knowledge and skills; and a documented sign off of the satisfactory completion of the training programme by the appointed competent supervisor. Auditors will be assessed on their performance over three (3) audits in accordance with the Certification Body’s written programme and as a pre-requisite to meeting applicable requirements of CanadaGAP.

b. Additional On-boarding Requirement for Group Management System Auditors:

✓ Successful completion of one (1) shadow audit and one (1) witness audit on a producer group, by an already qualified group auditor. CanadaGAP must approve all other credentials before the potential auditor can complete a witness audit.

NOTE TO CERTIFICATION BODIES: CanadaGAP Program Management Manual, Component Section 3.3.1.2, *Program Auditor Requirements* contains more information, including specifics related to auditor competency, personal attributes, maintenance of auditor competencies, qualifications of the supervising auditor for shadow and witness audits, and other related requirements.

6. MAINTENANCE OF AUDITOR COMPETENCIES AND ONGOING MONITORING BY CBs

- On-going monitoring and evaluation of the Auditor by the Certification Body must include:
 - participation in random evaluation process, to help determine auditor compliance and consistency of results, to potentially include:
 - witness audits;
 - review of auditor's scoring/audit results;
 - annually, participation in group exercises/calibration/refreshers training session(s) organized by the CB
 - participation in, at a minimum, one additional witness audit within a three-year period. This does not include witness audits completed specifically to meet requirements for scope extensions (such as Repacking and Wholesaling and GMS). In those cases, the certification body must still do a witness audit at a regular CanadaGAP audit within the three-year period;
 - scheduled performance review once every four years to determine if auditor meets current auditing requirements; re-evaluation to comprise of program participant feedback, results of witness audits and applicable courses attended
- Complies with continuing education provisions as set out below:
 - maintains working knowledge of food safety and industry related matters and the Program;
 - attends training courses and seminars, as applicable, including **mandatory** calibration and refresher training offered by the Certification Body and/or CanadaGAP;
 - completes specific continuing education requirements, as determined through assessments and monitoring by the Certification Body; and
 - the certification body must maintain written records of all relevant training undertaken.
- Possesses auditor liability insurance consistent with the Certification Body's policy
- Knowledge of current federal/provincial/territorial/municipal regulations relevant to food safety. The Certification Body is responsible for providing appropriate training, ongoing updates and support with respect to any applicable legislation, according to each jurisdiction in which Services are delivered.

To maintain status/registration as a Program auditor, auditors must complete:

- For auditors approved to conduct audits for GFSI-recognized certification options: At least five (5) on-site audits per year at five (5) different organizations (clients) participating in GFSI-recognized CanadaGAP certification options
- For auditors approved to conduct audits for non-GFSI recognized certification options: At least five (5) on-site audits per year at five (5) different organizations (clients) participating in ANY CanadaGAP certification options
- On-going monitoring and evaluation by CanadaGAP, including but not limited to:
 - Witness audits (i.e. CanadaGAP program personnel accompanying auditors during on-site audits)
 - CanadaGAP spot checking audit reports
 - Ongoing training (e.g. webinars, conference calls, training notes, etc.)
 - At regular intervals, **compulsory** participation in refresher training (e.g., webinars, conference calls) for CanadaGAP auditors; and
 - Successful completion of any applicable refresher assessments