

# The World Customs Organization's Virtual Customs Orientation Academy

The World Customs Organization (WCO) has the pleasure to introduce the WCO Virtual Customs Orientation Academy (VCOA). The Academy aims to provide new Customs officers 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. The course will be held 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.

### Duration of Study

The duration of the VCOA is **14-weeks**, with participants needing to complete assignments and activities by specified deadlines throughout the course.

### Admission Requirements and Etiquette

Customs officials from all WCO Member Customs Administrations are welcome 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 continued access to the internet**;
- Be available during the **whole period** of the VCOA session and able to put the necessary time into it (min. 8 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 must also 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. 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 e-learning modules courses and reference documents
- Collaborative learning activities involving interaction with the fellow participants, tutors and colleagues in the field:
  - o Live seminars, forum discussions, group work.
- Evaluation of gained knowledge and skills:
  - o on-line knowledge tests, MCQ;
  - o written 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 Mission and Values of the WCO and 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 21<sup>st</sup> century Customs Administration.

The course covers: the roles and responsibilities of Customs, Customs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Customs modernization and Gender Equality and Diversity.

### **Module Objectives**

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

1. Explain the role of the WCO.
2. Outline the use of WCO instruments and tools within your Customs administration.
3. Explain the importance of promoting Integrity within Customs administrations.
4. Identify the WCO tools and instruments for promoting Integrity among WCO Members.
5. Examine the policies and procedures implemented within your Customs administration for promoting Integrity.
6. Explain the benefits of promoting Gender Equality & Diversity within Customs.
7. Recognize the links between Integrity and Gender Equality & Diversity.

### **Learning Units in this module:**

#### **1.1 The role of the WCO and Customs**

- Welcome to the World Customs Organization (WCO)
- WCO Core Activities
- Customs in the 21st Century

#### **1.2 Integrity in Customs**

- Understanding Corruption and Integrity in Customs
- Institutional Response To Corruption
- Individual and Managerial Responses to Corruption
- Tools Assisting the Implementation of the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration

#### **1.3 Gender Equality & Diversity**

- Why Gender Equality?
- Understand Gender Equality
- Internal Policies
- External Policies
- WCO Supports Gender Equality

## **Module 2: Introduction to Customs Procedures**

### **Module Description**

This module 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. Explain what trade facilitation is and its benefits of trade facilitation for different stakeholders.
2. Describe the general principles of the WTO Trade Facilitation agreement and its relation to Customs procedures.
3. Describe the general principles of the Revised Kyoto Convention and its influence on national Customs procedures.
4. Examine how Customs procedures are implemented in your Administration.
5. Evaluate the extent to which national Customs procedures are compliant or non-compliant with the RKC.
6. Explain the concept of Coordinated Border Management.
7. Illustrate and compare the forms of cooperation between Customs and other stakeholders at the border, including regional and government agencies and private sector.
8. Recognize the WCO instruments and tools relating to the coordination of procedures and formalities.

### **Learning Units in this module:**

#### **2.1 International Trade**

- Introduction to Trade Facilitation
- Introduction to the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

#### **2.2 Overview of Customs Procedures**

- Introduction to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC)
- General Principles and Definitions
- Clearance and Other Customs Formalities

#### **2.3 Coordinated Border Management (CBM) and related WCO tools**

- Introduction to Coordinated Border Management (CBM)
- Planning Coordinated Border Management
- Implementing Coordinated Border Management
- WCO SAFE Framework of Standards and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

## **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. Describe the importance of commodity classification for Customs and trade.
2. Understand how to navigate and classify products in the Harmonized System.
3. Examine the classification procedures within your Customs administration.
4. Explain the main principles of Customs Valuation and the WTO Valuation Agreement.
5. Interpret and apply the principles of the WTO Valuation Agreement.
6. Describe the main principles of Rules of Origin.
7. Explain the main Rules of Origin concepts within Preferential Trade Agreements.
8. Illustrate how Origin Certification and Verification are applied within your Customs administration.

### **Learning Units in this module:**

#### **3.1 Classification**

- Understanding and navigating the Harmonized System
- Classifying products in the Harmonized System
- Good Classification Work Model & Advance Rulings

#### **3.2 Customs Valuation**

- Introduction to the WTO Customs Valuation Agreement
- Transaction value method (Articles 1 & 8)

#### **3.3 Rules of Origin**

- Rules of Origin
- Preferential agreements
- Origin Certification & Verification

## **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. Identify the prohibited and restricted goods threatening borders.
2. Recognize the actions and procedures Customs can take to combat the threat of prohibited goods and offenders.
3. Explain the principles of Customs Risk Management and Supply Chain Integrity.
4. Apply procedures for identifying risk indicators in maritime and air cargo shipments.
5. Identify vulnerabilities, and potential risks associated with the international movement of goods.
6. Identify the safety & security procedures for Customs officers
7. Analyze and present the procedures for handling seizures and evidence within your Customs administration.

### **Learning Units in this module:**

#### **4.1 Specific Prohibitions & Restrictions**

- Threats to Customs and Enforcement agencies and how to deal with them
- Specific Prohibitions & Restrictions including Drugs and drugs pre-cursor chemicals, Intellectual property rights, Environmental crime, Commercial fraud, Firearms and explosives, Strategic goods etc.

#### **4.2 Risk Management and Supply Chain Integrity**

- Risk management: Introduction and principles
- Passenger Risk Management
- Understanding Global Supply Chain Integrity
- Global Maritime Supply Chain and its Challenges
- Global Aviation Supply Chain and its Challenges
- Illicit Trade Tactics

#### **4.3 Operational Practices for Enforcement and Seizures**

- Security and Safety of Customs Personnel
- Seizures management
- Evidence and Rules
- Case Management