



# MASTER FISHMONGER CANDIDATE GUIDE



MASTER  
FISHMONGER  
STANDARD 



This booklet contains all the information you will need to apply as an MFS Master Fishmonger on the Master Fishmonger Standard. It is designed to support the knowledge and experience of candidates, trainers and assessors whilst at the same time avoiding prescribed techniques.

Developed by the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers (The Fishmongers' Company), the Master Fishmonger Standard strives to foster excellence within the fishmonger trade by encouraging and enabling a high standard of skill, and the growth of knowledge about seafood, fishing, aquaculture and the seafood industry.

### **Participation Statement**

The Master Fishmonger Standard (MFS) recognises that there are a considerable variety of fishmonger-related qualifications, provided by a range of independent companies and training organisations. The MFS aims to integrate these courses under one umbrella framework, providing a system of nationally recognised grades which reflect both the knowledge and qualifications of a fishmonger. As a truly independent organisation, the Company will govern the Standard, with training and assessment provided by Company-approved regional delivery centres and assessors.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many people have contributed to the preparation of this handbook by attending MFS working party meetings and by making detailed and constructive comments on the draft. Grateful thanks are due to all members of the MFS Steering Group for their help in the production of this publication.

## WELCOME

Passionate about fish and the environment whilst upholding the heritage and craftsmanship of the fishmonger trade, the Master Fishmonger Standard celebrates professional excellence by certifying fishmongers with extensive professional skills and knowledge.

To be a certified MFS fishmonger shows a true commitment to the trade and to the future of our oceans.

## SCOPE OF THE STANDARD

Recognising achievement across all levels and different disciplines, the Master Fishmonger Standard is composed of four tiers;

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### **MFS Recognised Fishmonger**

An individual relatively new to the trade, but who demonstrates exceptional drive and tenacity.

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### **MFS Advanced Fishmonger**

An experienced and dexterous individual with a passion for the trade.

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### **MFS Master Fishmonger**

An innovative, knowledgeable and high-skilled fishmonger, with a wealth of experience in the industry.

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### **MFS Companion**

An esteemed fishmonger who has demonstrated outstanding lifetime achievements in the fish trade.



## WHAT IS AN MFS MASTER FISHMONGER?

This booklet has been developed for individuals seeking to gain recognition as an MFS Master Fishmonger.

Achievement of the MFS Master Fishmonger accolade is significant, reserved for only the finest of fishmongers. It demonstrates your broad and balanced experiences within the industry, it celebrates your successes as a steward of the sea, and commends your continued commitment to the trade. It is an award that comes with great prestige and honour, as well as responsibility.

From sea to plate, MFS Master Fishmongers demonstrate excellence in, and dedication to, their field of work within the seafood industry. As a purveyor of the finest quality seafood, your practical skills have no boundaries and you do business with integrity, standing by your principles of exemplary customer service.

You are a committed leader, forming partnerships with those who share your vision for a sustainable industry. Over the years you have built strong relationships to ensure the highest quality standards and have helped to influence and improve practices across the supply chain.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Having taken your first steps towards attainment of the MFS Master Fishmonger accolade, this guide will walk you through the processes involved in obtaining recognition. You will need to read it carefully and work through each process meticulously.

The guide sets out clearly:

- The application and assessment process
- Guidance notes on how to apply
- Criteria that list the skills, experience and behaviour of an MFS Master Fishmonger



## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

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### **1 Registration**

Take the quick quiz to find out which MFS tier applies to you and register online at [www.masterfishmonger.co.uk](http://www.masterfishmonger.co.uk).

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### **2 Download and read the Candidate Guide**

Familiarise yourself with the details of the application process and the Criteria for the MFS Master Fishmonger tier.

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### **3 Self-Assessment Form and Portfolio**

Use the Guide to help you complete the Self-Assessment Form, as well as assemble the supporting documentation required for your Portfolio.

Care should be taken to complete each answer fully and gather the materials needed to demonstrate how you meet the Criteria. When you are ready, you should submit your documentation to the Standard for evaluation.

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### **4 Review of your Application**

Upon submission of your documents you will be assigned a certified MFS Master Fishmonger (hereinafter referred to as an Assessor), who will review your

application. Your Assessor may request further documentation at this stage, if they feel that the requirements of the Criteria have not yet been demonstrated.

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### **5 Professional Discussion and Practical Observation**

Once your Assessor feels you are ready, a Professional Discussion and Practical Observation will be arranged at your place of work. During the Practical Observation, you will be asked to demonstrate a series of practical skills. You will need to achieve a pass rate in both the Professional Discussion and the Practical Observation in order to receive the MFS Master Fishmonger accolade.

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### **6 After Your Assessment**

Based on the evidence provided, your Assessor will make a recommendation to the MFS Master Panel about your award. You must receive the support of three certified MFS Master Fishmongers to receive the accolade. If the Panel feel that further work is required before you meet the standards of the accolade, then you will be advised on what steps need to be taken.



## **PRE-REQUISITE STANDARDS**

As part of the registration process, you will need to declare that you meet the pre-requisite standards of the MFS Master Fishmonger Criteria, as follows:

- 1 Actively employed as a fishmonger
- 2 At least 10 years' industry experience
- 3 Managerial experience in the fish trade

References and/or Business Registration certificate(s) will need to be provided and should specify the length of time you have worked at or owned that establishment. Referees should be in a position where they can endorse your suitability as a potential candidate for the Standard.

## **MASTER FISHMONGER CRITERIA STATEMENTS**

You will need to demonstrate how you fulfil the Criteria of an MFS Master Fishmonger, composed of eight categories. Each Criteria is a statement of what you must prove to justify receipt of the Standard.

If the supporting evidence options listed are not applicable to you, then you must consider how you can demonstrate that you fulfil the requirements of that Criteria or take responsibility to build upon your knowledge and understanding of these processes. You need to submit at least one piece of evidence for each Criteria statement.



## Fishmonger Skills

1 You have an extensive understanding of the processes involved in the supply chain in a retail or catering environment.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

1a a qualification covering processing and manufacturing of fish and shellfish products with certificate(s)

1b at least 10 years' experience selecting and purchasing fish and shellfish for a commercial business from docks and markets with references/supporting evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

1c experience in a range of fish and shellfish related occupations with references / supporting evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

1d at least eight years' experience managing the processing and manufacturing of seafood products with references/supporting evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

1e your company has won prizes and awards for its seafood products, which can be attributed to your work. Please provide supporting evidence and a letter explaining your experiences

1f evidence that your company is approved by the British Retail Consortium

1g you own a fishmonger retail business. Please provide a supporting letter with the details of your business, including where you source your seafood from and what products you stock

Other:

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2 You understand the procedures involved in assessing the quality of fish and shellfish products in a retail or catering fishmonger environment and can explain the product integrity risks associated with specific species.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

- 2a an advanced qualification in HACCP or quality assessment for seafood, Level 3 (or above with certificate(s))
- 2b experienced in implementing Quality Index Monitoring and/ or TORRY in a retail or catering fishmonger environment with records, a letter describing your experience with QIM/TORRY or other supporting evidence
- 2c at least eight years' experience managing quality in a retail or catering fishmonger outlet with employment references detailing your responsibilities and/or a letter explaining your experiences
- 2d evidence of having trained seafood quality assessment courses
- 2e you own a fishmonger retail business and can provide a supporting letter with the details of your business, including any customer reviews of your products

Other:

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3 You have a broad knowledge about seafood products and have extensive experience in preparing and presenting a wide range of fish and shellfish products for the retail and catering trade.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

- 3a extensive (10 years +) experience preparing seafood for sale, using both primary and secondary processing methods with written employment references detailing your responsibilities and/or a letter explaining your experiences
- 3b qualification(s) covering the preparation and presentation of fish and shellfish for the retail or catering trade, Level 3 (or equivalent) with certificate(s)
- 3c qualification(s) covering seafood product knowledge, nutrition and / or professional cooking, Level 3 (or equivalent) with certificate(s)
- 3d placed or won awards in fish and shellfish preparation and/or seafood culinary competitions with certificates
- 3e at least eight seven years' experience managing the production of primary and secondary seafood products with references or a letter explaining your experiences

3f at least five years' experience in a culinary position within a restaurant or catering environment, with employment references or a letter explaining your experiences

3g you own a fishmonger retail business and can provide a letter with the details of your business, including what products you sell and prepare in-house

Other:

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4 You have a broad knowledge and understanding of the history and development of fisheries and aquaculture, harvesting methods and associated environmental impacts, seasonality and supply and general status of fish stocks.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

4a a qualification covering the principles of fishing and aquaculture, Level 3 (or equivalent) with certificates

4b evidence of having trained and created learning resources covering the principles and practices in the fisheries and aquaculture industry with evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

4c evidence of having worked in commercial fisheries and/or aquaculture operations, with references and/or a letter explaining your experiences

4d evidence of having attended conferences or trade shows relating to fisheries and/or aquaculture with evidence

4e you own a fishmonger retail business and can demonstrate that you support responsible and sustainably-sourced seafood

Other:

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## Training and Development

5 You take a vested interest in the recruitment of individuals for the fishmonger trade and are skilled at coaching and training new and experienced employees.

Supporting evidence options

(please circle):

5a a qualification covering the theory and principles of management or training in a food operation with certificate(s)

5b evidence of having closely mentored / trained at least three fishmongers new to the trade for a period of no less than a year and can provide training records or other supporting evidence

5c experience of training a group of apprentice fishmongers in a college or private sector training company with evidence

5d evidence of having contributed to training manuals and associated resources for a fishmonger retail or catering environment

5e evidence that trained employees have received prizes and awards relating to the fish trade

5f evidence of encouraging learning and development in a retail or catering environment with specific references

5g evidence of hiring and mentoring two fishmonger apprenticeships

5h you own a fishmonger business, and have trained a number of fishmongers over the years with the details of the training you have conducted

Other:

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## Business

- 6 You are skilled at managing people, and can control pricing, costs, profits and cash flow in a retail or catering fishmonger environment

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

- 6a a qualification in management, finance, or business which covers commercial pricing, profit and cash management, Level 3 (or equivalent) with certificate(s)
- 6b evidence of having managed a retail or catering fishmonger outlet for at least five years with employment references and/or a letter explaining your experiences
- 6c evidence of having implemented strategies to diversify business revenue streams and / or implementation of promotional and marketing resources, with financial projections and sales reports
- 6d you own a fishmonger business and are therefore responsible for the accounts and marketing. Please provide a letter with the details of your business.

Other:

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## Food Hygiene and Safety

- 7 You know and understand food safety and hygiene regulations, as well as HACCP processes, and can apply these in a retail or catering fishmonger environment.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

- 7a a food safety and hygiene qualification, Level 3 (or equivalent) with certificate(s)
- 7b a food safety and food hygiene qualification at level 2 (or equivalent) and a HACCP qualification by a non-ministerial government provider, Level 2 (or equivalent) with certificate(s)
- 7c a food hygiene rating level 5 by the Food Standards Agency for your business or place or work with certificate(s) or picture of your FHR level 5 sticker

Other:

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## **Integrity and Attitude**

8 You are a good ambassador for the fishmonger trade, and display integrity and attitude towards the fishmonger trade to merit the designation of 'Master Fishmonger'.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

8a evidence of participating in and / or hosting fishmonger events for the community with a letter/evidence

8b references from senior industry colleagues and community members

8c participation in industry events such as competitions and shows with certificates

8d evidence of supporting activities designed to engage young and/ or disadvantaged people with the industry

8e evidence of educating and promoting seafood consumption locally or to the wider public

8f evidence of media exposure promoting industry awareness and promotion of seafood consumption

8g evidence of using accreditation and certification programmes for fisheries and aquaculture

8h evidence of buying products locally and direct from fisheries and relaying specific product knowledge (i.e. 'storied fish') to customers.

8i placed in the British Fish Craft Championships with certificates



## HOW TO COMPLETE THE SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

Candidates will need to demonstrate how they fulfil the Criteria of an MFS Master Fishmonger, composed of eight categories. Each Criteria is a statement of what you must prove to justify receipt of the Standard.

For each Criteria:

- 1 Read the Criteria, think about your own experiences and how you meet the requirement. Examples of supporting evidence have been provided as a guide. At a minimum, you should be able to submit at least one piece of evidence for each Criteria.
- 2 List your experiences in the spaces provided, select the examples which you think best showcase your expertise.
- 3 Gather any evidence, then submit your form and registration fee.

## EXAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER

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**Question:**

### **Fishmonger Skills**

- 1 You have an extensive understanding of the processes involved in the supply chain, and have knowledge and experience of processing and manufacturing seafood products in a retail or catering environment.

Supporting evidence options  
(please circle):

1a a qualification covering processing and manufacturing of fish and shellfish products and can provide certificate(s)

1b at least 10 years' experience selecting and purchasing fish and shellfish for a commercial business with references/ supporting evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

1c experience in a range of fish and shellfish related occupations with references / supporting evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

1d at least eight years' experience managing the processing and manufacturing of seafood products with references/supporting evidence and/or a letter explaining your experiences

1e my company have won prizes and awards for its seafood products, and this can be attributed to my work. Please provide supporting evidence and a letter explaining your experiences

1f my company is approved by the British Retail Consortium. Please provide a letter detailing your business or other supporting evidence

1g you own a fishmonger retail business. Please provide a supporting letter with the details of your business, including where you source your seafood from and what products you stock

Other:

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## Answer

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Fishmonger X has worked in the fishmonger industry for 10 years, five years of which he has been the manager. He has also worked as a commercial fisher for four years, but does not have any professional fishmonger training. As Fishmonger X fulfils Criteria 1a and 1c, they could submit the following documents:

- Reference(s) or other relevant correspondence from a previous employer which confirms that person's previous employment as a commercial fisher
- Job description / contract / relevant correspondence for current and previous positions held in the fisheries and aquaculture industry with their responsibilities outlined



## HOW TO COLLECT AND PRESENT EVIDENCE

You will need to submit a Portfolio which supports your Self-Assessment form and endorses your solid and well-rounded experiences within the trade. Failure to produce sufficient documentation may significantly delay your progress, and might result in you having to resubmit your application.

As a general structure, the evidence provided should fall into one of the following broad categories:

- qualifications or parts of qualifications relevant to each Criteria
- jobs you have held a position of authority from which you can provide references
- significant on-the-job experiences and responsibilities
- work experience or placement periods outside of your normal job role
- site visits or work experience events when you have gained a new view of an aspect of the industry
- competitions or other industry events in which you have participated and possibly won awards
- membership of trade associations in which you have held an official office
- any other form of public recognition of your skills.

In areas where you do have sufficient evidence to meet the standard, you will need to:

- decide whether the gaps relate mainly to knowledge or to experience
- identify the steps you can take to fill those evidence gaps.

You may present your evidence using a variety of mediums and sources including photographic material, online reviews, customer letters, or personal testimonials from a trainee, colleague or manager. References should provide positive feedback and be relevant to a specific Criteria. Whenever a qualification is being used as proof of achievement a clear copy of the original certificate should be presented as evidence. Please do not submit original copies. If you are submitting a hard copy of your documents, a contents page should be provided and all evidence should be clearly linked to the Criteria number to which it refers.

All documents submitted will be treated as confidential and will only be disclosed to MFS personnel and elected independent assessor(s).



## **YOUR ASSESSOR'S ROLE**

Upon submission of your Self-Assessment form and Portfolio, you will be allocated an MFS Assessor. Your Assessor will have already received the accolade of MFS Master Fishmonger and forms part of the MFS Master Panel. They have been appointed by The Fishmongers' Company to oversee your assessment.

Your Assessor has three responsibilities:

- provide advice and support
- assess objectively based on the Criteria
- manage the assessment process

Your Assessor will evaluate your performance against the Criteria requirements to make a realistic assessment against the nationally-recognised standard. If your Assessor feels that there are any gaps in your application, they will address these by providing you with specific detail(s) on what you need to submit. Please remain open-minded about any constructive criticism, remembering that your Assessor needs to maintain the status of the award by assessing you objectively and that it is ultimately your responsibility to provide them with the evidence and proof they need to pass you.

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATION**

When you are ready to progress to the next stage, your Assessor will provide you with the information needed to pass your Professional Discussion and Practical Observation. It will be their role to ensure you understand the tasks required.

Your Assessor will discuss with you:

- What to expect during the Professional Discussion and Practical Observation
- The areas of your workplace or aspects of your work that they would like to see during their visit

If you have any questions or concerns about the Professional Discussion or Practical Observation, please make these known to your Assessor prior to your assessment day.







## THE PRACTICAL OBSERVATION

The Practical Observation will cover a broad range of advanced practical skills based on fulfilment of the MFS Master Fishmonger Criteria. You will need to demonstrate during the observation that you have excellent skills and a working knowledge and understanding of all the following:

- strict food safety and HACCP elements
- advanced fish filleting styles and techniques for an extensive range of flat and round species
- shellfish preparation for a wide range of species
- consistent yield accuracy and attainment at speed
- portion cutting to exact customer specification
- advanced seafood quality assessment
- management in a seafood operation
- training and development of staff members

The assessment should last no more than 3 hours. You will need to achieve a grade of at least 70 % to pass.

## AFTER YOUR ASSESSMENT

After your assessment day, you will be issued with a summary report detailing your grade. If the Assessor feels that you have some way to go to meet the requirements, then they will provide you with direct support and advice on actions that need further improvement. Please take note of these concerns and reservations, and ask for clarification if you are unclear about what is required of you.

If you have suitably impressed your Assessor with the strength of your case, the Assessor will take your application to the MFS Master Panel, who will make the final decision on your application. The Panel are within their rights to request further evidence on how you fulfil the Criteria.

Successful candidates will be notified of their certificate and issued with a unique MFS certification number. MFS Master Fishmongers will be recorded in the official Fishmongers' Company Master Fishmonger Standard Register and will be presented with the certificate at an annual ceremony held at the Fishmongers' Hall in London.



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## Useful Contacts

### **General Programme Enquiries**

The Master Fishmonger Standard  
The Fishmongers' Company  
Fishmongers' Hall  
London Bridge  
London EC4R 9EL

[www.masterfishmonger.co.uk](http://www.masterfishmonger.co.uk)  
[MFS@FishHall.org.uk](mailto:MFS@FishHall.org.uk)  
020 7626 3531

### **MFS Preparation Course and Examination Enquiries**

Seafood School at Billingsgate  
Office 30, Billingsgate Market  
Trafalgar Way  
London  
United Kingdom  
E14 5ST

[www.seafoodtraining.org](http://www.seafoodtraining.org)  
[admin@seafoodtraining.org](mailto:admin@seafoodtraining.org)  
020 7517 3548



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**SEAFISH**



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