

**Applicants Guide To The
Seed Grader's Accreditation Program
In the United States**

**Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch
Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture**

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**SOP 1202-01
Date: Effective 12/19/2007**

GUIDE TO THE SEED GRADER'S PROGRAM

Part I GENERAL INFORMATION

1. PURPOSE OF GUIDE

To provide general information for seed grader accreditation in the United States.

1.1. This program is administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

1.2. This is a voluntary program which allows individuals who meet the requirements to grade seed with a Canada pedigreed grade name in the United States for marketing in Canada.

1.3. Requirements for seed grader accreditation include:

- The applicant must be employed by a seed testing laboratory accredited under the U.S. Accredited Seed Laboratory Program or by the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA).
- The applicant must be a Registered Seed Technologist (RST), or a Certified Seed Analyst (CSA) for purity and germination,
- The applicant must pass the required examinations.

1.4. Steps required:

- Submit an application to the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch requesting accreditation as a grader
- Pay fees for training (if undertaken) and for testing
- Participate in optional training workshop (if desired)
- Complete necessary examinations with a passing grade

1.5. More specific information regarding grader responsibilities is available in the Guideline for Seed Grader Accreditation in the United States. This document is available on the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch web site through the Seed Grader Program link. (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/seed.htm>).

1.6. Please note that analysis reports of seed to be assigned a grade must originate with a laboratory officially recognized by CFIA. This will include the laboratory passing an examination demonstrating their understanding of the Canadian Methods & Procedures for Testing Seeds.

2. DEFINITION OF SEED GRADER

2.1. GD GRADER

A seed grader accredited to review the analytical information on reports of analysis from accredited seed laboratories recognized by CFIA and assign a Canada pedigreed grade name to all crop kinds set out in one or more of the following groups of Grade Tables I to VI, and/or Grade Table VII, and/or Grade Tables VIII-X, and/or Grade Tables XI-XII, and/or Grade Tables XIII-XV and/or Grade Tables XVI-XX of Schedule I.

2.2. Other Seed Grader Types

CFIA has additional grader classifications but the GD Grader classification is the most appropriate for application in the United States.

3. GD GRADER ACCREDITATION

The applicant will be evaluated on their ability to:

- a) Review reports of analysis and assign a Canada pedigreed grade name to any of the crop kinds set out in one or more of the groups as requested by the applicant.
- b) To answer questions on their knowledge of the Guideline for Seed Grader Accreditation in the United States and Canadian reference documents including Seeds Regulations, Grade Tables of Schedule I and the Weed Seeds Order as they apply to assigning a Canada pedigreed grade name.
- c) To demonstrate a general knowledge of the principles and practices of grading for the marketing of seed in Canada.

4. SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation shall be granted based on groups of Grade Tables in Schedule I.

Group 1 – Grade Tables I-VI

Group 2 – Grade Table VII

Group 3 – Grade Tables VIII-X

Group 4 – Grade Tables XI-XII

Group 5 – Grade Tables XIII-XV

Group 6 – Grade Tables XVI-XX

Please note accreditation shall not be granted by crop kind or kinds.

The applicant may choose any group or combinations of groups in which to be accredited.

5. ANNUAL RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

By January 1 of the year for which accreditation is to be renewed, an annual renewal fee is payable to USDA.

PART II SEED GRADER TRAINING

1. Optional training workshops for applicants will be available as necessary and feasible.
2. While participation in training workshops is voluntary, it is recommended.
3. The fee for a training workshop depends on the number of participants, and other relevant factors such as location.

PART III SEED GRADER EXAMINATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE SEED GRADER EXAMINATION

The purpose of the examination is to objectively measure that an applicant has achieved the level of skill and knowledge necessary to assign the appropriate Canada pedigreed grade name to seed for marketing in Canada.

2. APPLICATION FOR THE SEED GRADER EXAMINATION

Interested parties must:

- apply to the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch
- submit the testing fee

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

All examinations are **OPEN BOOK**.

There are two types of examinations: practical and written theory. The practical examination may consist of one or more components, as indicated below:

Documentation review and grading exercises for the group(s) of Grade Tables requested by the candidate, i.e., Grade Tables I-VI, VII, VIII-X, XI-XII, XIII-XV and/or XVI to XX). The composition of this examination will be dependent on the scope of accreditation sought.

The written theory examination consists of determining whether the applicant possesses knowledge of the principles and practices of grading seed for marketing in Canada.

The candidate should be familiar with the Canadian Seeds Regulations, Grade Tables, and Weed Seeds Order, Guideline for Seed Grader Accreditation in the United States, and Instructions for Assignment of a Canada Pedigreed Grade Name to Seed for Marketing in Canada.

The Seeds Regulations and Grade Tables can be found at the following website:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowFullDoc/cr/C.R.C.-c.1400//en>

The Weed Seeds Order can be found at the following website:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showtdm/cr/SOR-2005-220//?showtoc=&instrumentnumber=SOR-2005-220>

The Guideline for Seed Grader Accreditation in the United States and Instructions for Assignment of a Canada Pedigreed Grade Name to Seed for Marketing in Canada can be found at the following website under the Seed Grader Program link:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/seed.htm>).

The time required for the practical examination will depend on the scope of the accreditation sought.

All parts of the seed grader examinations must be returned. No copies are to be made in whole or in part.

4. THE EXAMINATION LOCATION

All candidates will be required to take the examinations at a USDA designated location while supervised by USDA or USDA designated personnel. The location, date, and time will be determined and announced on the SRTB web site and the AOSA/SCST websites at least thirty days prior to the examination being given.

5. EXAMINATION MARKING

- Participants must achieve a passing score on the written theory examination and on components of the practical examination for which accreditation is sought. Failure to pass one or more components of the practical exam will not preclude accreditation being granted for those components successfully passed.
- Accreditation will not be granted until all parts of the examination are returned and graded.
- Examinations/components require a passing grade of 80%.
- Applicants will be notified within thirty days of the exam date as to whether they passed or failed a particular exam or component.
- If a participant desires to be retested, a request must be submitted to the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch within 12 months of the date of the examination.

- All examination papers and application correspondence will be kept in a confidential file.
- Successful applicants will be issued a certificate of recognition .

6. PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

The objectives are to determine if the candidate can:

- a. read a seed grading report and relate this to the grade standards in the Grade Tables,
- b. review the report of analysis and verify if the required information is present,
- c. interpret a report of analysis and relate this to the grade standards,
- d. interpret the Grade Tables to correctly assign a Canada pedigreed grade name.

7. WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The objective of the written examination is to assess the applicant's knowledge of the principles and practices of grading pedigreed seed for marketing in Canada.

It is recommended that the candidate be familiar with the Guideline for Seed Grader Accreditation in the United States and appropriate Canadian reference documents including the Seeds Regulations, the Grade Tables, and the Weed Seeds Order. This does not mean memorizing these documents but rather being aware of the contents of each such that you can identify the document which contains the answer and retrieve the answer to a question with a minimum of searching.

- The questions are not necessarily grouped together according to subject.
- Questions are a combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answers or true/false.
- The examination is open book and answers can be found in, or determined by, the reference documents provided.

Hints for writing the examination:

- A long answer is rarely required.
- Read each question carefully.
- There are no trick questions. If the meaning of a question is unclear, do not hesitate to ask for clarification.
- Consider the value of the question when preparing your answer. A one point question should not require several sentences.

