

**Healthier Choice Symbol  
Frequently Asked Questions  
(June 2020)**

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# General Questions for HCS Programme

## Benefits of joining HCS Programme

### **1. *How will I benefit from joining the HCS programme?***

Consumers are increasingly health conscious and are looking out for healthier options. In an Omnibus survey conducted in 2008, 80% of consumers are aware of the Healthier Choice symbol and use it to guide their purchases. As part of demand generation efforts for HCS products, HPB engages major retailers/supermarkets in our Eat, Drink, Shop Healthy (EDSH) Challenge. Under this challenge, consumers can earn rewards from purchasing Healthier Choice items via the Healthy365 app.

### **2. *What about the healthier choice symbols by other countries? Don't they benefit the consumers just as much?***

Symbols found on the packaging of foods that indicate approval from a foreign health programme may spark the interest of consumers and even lead them to expect a certain health standard from these symbols. However, we need to remember that local consumers are not educated about these symbols and do not know the rationale behind them.

By educating the public on the Healthier Choice Symbol, the local consumers will understand the rationale behind it and have confidence in choosing products with the Symbol.

### **3. *Some of my products already carry the overseas health logo. Why should I still need to apply for the Healthier Choice Symbol?***

The nutritional standards of overseas health logos are different from those of the Singapore's Healthier Choice Symbol. The standards of our symbol were established to suit the diet of the local population. After the intensive publicity to educate the public on the Healthier Choice Symbol, consumers in Singapore are more aware of our Healthier Choice Symbol than of overseas logos.

## Applying for HCS

### **1. I want to apply for Healthier Choice Symbol**

There are Healthier Choice Symbol for packaged products sold in retail like supermarkets, restaurants etc and non-packaged products sold in dining establishments like restaurants, food kiosk etc.

If your product is packaged, here are the following steps to apply for HCS:

- i. Register for [CorpPass](#) and set up HCS Online e-Service at [CorpPass](#)
- ii. Have the nutrient analysis report and packaging artwork ready and submit your application online
- iii. An online Licence Agreement (LA) to allow company to use the HCS on the approved product will be created once the packaging artwork is approved. Your company's Authorised Representative will be required to accept the LA. Once the LA is accepted, you will then be able to print the packaging artwork.

Please refer to this [link](#) for the detailed steps to the application process.

If your product is non-packaged and sold in F&B settings, please contact [HPB\\_HDP@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HDP@hpb.gov.sg).

### **2. How much does it cost to apply for Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS)?**

At the moment, there is no application cost for Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) application. However, company would need to pay for the cost of nutrient analysis at an accredited laboratory and the cost of designing the package artwork.

### **3. Are there any grants available for Healthier Choice Symbol?**

HPB has grants available for healthier oil, wholegrain noodles and rice, desserts, sauces, and certain categories of sweetened drinks.

For detailed information, please refer to the links below.

[Healthier Ingredient Development Scheme](#)

[Healthier Ingredient Promotion Scheme](#)

**4. How long will it take to get my HCS application approved?**

The HCS application process will take from 1 – 3 months, depending on factors like time taken for artwork amendments from companies.

**5. What do we need to submit for product artwork approval? Colour proofs are too expensive to send in. Can we send in the Final Artwork for approval?**

A digital product packaging final artwork in colour is acceptable. The exact duplicate of the design as well as the colours allocated for the actual printouts of the packaging are to be submitted for approval before mass production. You are advised that packaging should not be mass printed before approval because should there be any changes required, sticker labels may be required to be pasted over the packaging and the packaging of these products will have to be reprinted.

**6. Can we have a more specific set of standards for the permitted artwork for packaging and advertising? Can we be informed of the dos and don'ts for our packaging and advertising artwork?**

You may refer to HPB's A Handbook on Nutrition Labelling (Singapore) for more information. We also have a checklist for product packaging artwork and advertising materials artwork to help companies on what are the things to look out for. These resources are available [here](#).

Please note that approval is required before printing and using the materials. HPB reserves the right to take legal action should any materials found to be carrying the logo without approval.

**7. I want to sell ham in school. Does it mean that as long as I meet the HCS guidelines I can sell my products in school canteens?**

Food sold in the school canteens may have requirements that are more stringent. Some products would have to meet additional requirements on top of meeting HCS guidelines before they can be sold in school. E.g. No nitrate in ham.

For more information, please visit the Healthy Meals in Schools Programme website at this [link](#).

# FAQ for Application Submission

## Eligibility for HCS Application

### **1. *Is my product eligible for HCS?***

Food products may carry the HCS if they meet nutritional standards set by HPB. Evaluation will be based on the nutritional values; particularly fat, saturated fat, sodium, dietary fibre etc, as well as the contribution of that product towards a balanced diet. The suitability of the product for HCS is also evaluated, including product eligibility, product nature, product positioning and marketing of the product. The Healthier Choice Symbol Programme is a voluntary scheme administered by the Health Promotion Board, and the Board reserves the right to evaluate product suitability and eligibility for the Programme for the benefit of public health.

You may refer to the HCS Nutrient Guidelines available [here](#) for details on categories of products accepted under the HCS programme.

If you have further queries regarding your product classification, please drop an email to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information:

- i. ingredient listing
- ii. marketing direction
- iii. clear image of product packaging and product content

HCS admin team will try to get back to you within 3 working days. For cases where we need more time to discuss internally for your product classification, we seek your understanding if HCS admin team takes a longer time to respond. HCS admin team will inform you if more time is needed.

### **2. *Does the product have to meet all the criteria to carry HCS?***

The product has to meet all the nutrient guidelines under the category it is classified under as stated in the latest HCS Nutrient guidelines available [here](#).

### **3. *I have a shop that sells ice cream. Can I apply for HCS?***

The HCS Programme is for pre-packaged products only. For non-packaged goods in F&B settings, please contact [HPB\\_HDP@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HDP@hpb.gov.sg).

**4. *I sell food in an F&B, but I want to sell my food as a convenience meal/ in the supermarkets, can I apply for HCS?***

If you have packaged food to be sold as a convenience meal in the supermarket or retail store, you can apply for HCS under the HCS category: Convenience Meals.

**5. *Can fresh and frozen meat and poultry apply for the Healthier Choice Symbol? Different cooking methods will change the nutritional composition.***

Yes, cooking methods of meat and poultry would alter the actual fat content of meat consumed. However, there are different cuts of meat which carry different amount of fat. The Healthier Choice Symbol helps consumers identify the lean meat cuts.

## Submission of New HCS Application / Re-application /New Package Size/Revised Artwork

### **1. Which category is my product under?**

Please drop an email to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information:

- i. ingredient listing
- ii. marketing direction
- iii. clear image of product packaging and product content

HCS admin team will try to get back to you within 3 working days. For cases where we need more time to discuss internally for your product classification, we seek your understanding if HCS admin team takes a longer time to respond. HCS admin team will inform you if more time is needed.

### **2. Can I clarify for the criteria for certain sub-category?**

You may refer to the HCS Nutrient Guidelines available [here](#) for full details on the nutrient criteria for the particular sub-category.

If you have further queries regarding the nutrient guidelines, please drop an email to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information and the HCS admin team will get back to you within 3 working days:

- i. ingredient listing
- ii. marketing direction
- iii. clear image of product packaging and product content

For cases where we need more time to discuss internally for your product classification, we seek your understanding if HCS admin team takes a longer time to respond. HCS admin team will inform you if more time is needed.

### **3. Can products with the same recipe but in different form be under the same application?**

Products of the same food composition but different physical shapes can be considered as a single product. However, this will only apply to products marketed under the same brand name and product name. Identical products but marketed under different brand and product names will be treated as separate products.



**4. *If I manufacture my own brand of product but we OEM, if it is the same formulate, is it a new artwork or a new application?***

If the consumer-facing brand is different, there must be an application for each brand even if the formulation is the same. The company who engage the OEM would need to apply for HCS so as to be able to have the licence to use the logo on the product.

**5. *Do I need to reapply if there is a change in my product formulation?***

Yes, if there is a change in product formulation, please re-apply and select the application type as 'Reformulation'. Please indicate the existing HCS application number that you are reapplying for.

You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed instructions.

**6. *I have a new package size for my product. Do I need to submit a new application?***

There is no need to submit a new application. Go to the application number of this application and submit the new package size at the Packaging Artwork tab in the [HCS online](#) system.

You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed instructions.

**7. *I want to change the design of my product artwork. Do I need to submit a new application?***

There is no need to submit a new application. Go to the application number of this application and follow the steps below at the Packaging Artwork tab in the [HCS online](#) system to submit the revised artwork:

- i. Select the package size of the artwork that you want to change
- ii. Under Actions, select 'revise' and upload the new packaging artwork
- iii. Press 'Submit; and your package status should change to 'Revise'
- iv. You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed instructions.

**8. *How do I know if I have successfully submitted my HCS application?***

Please check if the Status in your HCS application stage is reflected as 'New'. If it is, the HCS admin team will get back to you regarding your application within 3 working days. If it is not, please press submit and check the status has been updated to 'New'.

**9. *I want to claim for Vitamin X. What are the criteria? Can I clarify what does the criteria meant?***

You may refer to the Nutrient Claims section of HPB's A Handbook on Nutrition Labelling on detailed information for nutrient claims at [this link](#).

**10. *How do I calculate wholegrain percentage for my product?***

You may first refer to the [Wholegrain Council](#) to determine the wholegrain ingredients in your product. After determining the wholegrain ingredients, you may refer to the calculation examples provided in the HCS Nutrient Guidelines for calculation of wholegrain percentage. Do note that the calculation of wholegrain percentage is based on final product weight.

**11. *I have referred to the Wholegrain council website and the calculation examples provided in the HCS Nutrient Guidelines, but I still faced difficulties in the calculation of percentage of wholegrains. Who can I contact for help?***

You can contact HCS admin for assistance at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg).

The HCS admin team will get back to you regarding your queries within 3 working days.

**12. *If a product exceeds the guideline for saturated fat but contains a high level of monounsaturated fat, can it still be approved?***

No, it will not be approved because there is currently no scientific evidence showing that monounsaturated fat can reduce the harmful effects of saturated fat.

**13. *Can I use HCS on my product poster or TV advertisements? My product has not been approved yet.***

The product must be approved and listed first before you can put HCS on product poster or TV advertisements.

You may refer to the User Manual – Advertising Materials available [here](#) for detailed steps on how to submit advertising materials for approval.

**14. *Must my snack/crisps/chips/ice cream be individually packaged?***

You may choose to individually package your snack/crisps/chips/ice cream. Crisps/chips may carry the less than 100 calories tagline if it contains no more than 100 calories per servings and each serving individually packaged. Ice creams may carry the less than 200 calories if it contains no more than 200 calories per serving and each serving individually packaged. For the full HCS guidelines for snacks please refer to the [HCS nutrient guidelines](#).

## After Approval of HCS Application

### **1. Why are my products not in the website list?**

Approved HCS products will be included in the website list if it has been listed. You may list your products under 'HCS Product Listing' tab after approval.

You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed steps on how to list your product.

### **2. Why are my products not in the school beverage list?**

The school beverage list will only include approved and listed beverages that do not contain any artificial sweeteners, or sugar alcohols.

To include your approved product in this list, please ensure that you have listed your product under 'HCS Product Listing' tab after approval.

You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed steps on how to list your product.

### **3. My product has discontinued. May I know who do I inform?**

You may update your product status at the application page.

If the whole application has been discontinued, you may close the application by selecting the 'Close Application' button.

If only a specific package size has been discontinued, please proceed to the 'Packaging Artwork' tab of the application to discontinue the product package size.

You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed steps on how to close your application or discontinue your product package size.

# FAQ for Nutrient Analysis / Laboratory Report

## **1. What nutrients do I need to test for?**

To test for the nutrients:

- i. Determine the categories your product is under using [this link](#) for the HCS guidelines
- ii. Determine the nutrients relevant for the application. All nutrient criteria have to be met.
- iii. You may choose to first test for the nutrient relevant for HCS application e.g. the criteria for Asian drinks like bottled/can green tea is total sugar, thus to test for total sugar for green tea to determine if it meets the guidelines before proceeding to test for the rest of the 10 core nutrients. The nutrients to be submitted in the nutrient analysis report are Energy, Protein, Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Cholesterol, Carbohydrate, Total Sugar, Dietary Fibre, Sodium.
- iv. However, if the nutrient(s) is naturally not present in the product e.g. Protein in Canola Oil, then there is no need to submit an accredited lab report to support it.
- v. If you are making any nutrient claims like High in Vitamin C, please also test for the relevant nutrients and declare on the NIP

## **2. What are the acceptable nutrient testing methods?**

We accept laboratory reports using AOAC (Association of Official Analytical Chemists) methods or equivalent from accredited laboratory under the Singapore Accreditation Council-Singapore Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (SAC-SINGLAS).

## **3. How much does it cost to do the nutrient analysis?**

Different laboratories charge differently for nutrient analysis. Please check directly with the individual laboratory.

## **4. Can you recommend me an accredited laboratory?**

You may go to [SAC website](#) for the list of accredited laboratories. Please may refer to the guide [here](#) for detailed instructions.

**5. What is the information required on the laboratory reports?**

Each product report shall include the following information:

- i. Name of food product;
- ii. Analysis of declared nutrients;
- iii. Method of analysis
- iv. Name and address of laboratory or company which conducted the analysis; and
- v. Contact name and telephone number of the representative from the Food Company.
- vi. All information in English, or with English Translation

**6. Can I submit overseas laboratory report?**

We accept overseas laboratory reports from overseas accredited laboratories in food testing as listed by Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC).

You may refer to Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC) list of overseas accredited laboratories - SAC Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) Partners at [this link](#)

**7. I have a laboratory report dated 6 months ago, can I submit this laboratory report for HCS application?**

For new applications, company is to submit a recent laboratory report.

**8. Do I need to submit laboratory reports for all the nutrients in the nutrition information panel?**

The laboratory report must include the core nutrients as well as additional nutrients relevant to your product category. You may first submit laboratory report for nutrients that are relevant for the HCS approval. If the product is able to meet the HCS guidelines, you may then submit laboratory report for the remaining core nutrients.

If you have made any nutrient claims on your packaging e.g. Enriched with Vitamin C, High in Calcium, please submit laboratory reports for these nutrients as well.

**9. If my product is plant-based, do I need to submit laboratory analysis report for Cholesterol?**

No, you don't need to as they are naturally not present in your product.

**10. My product is fresh fruits and/or fresh vegetables. Do I need to send for laboratory testing/nutrient testing?**

It is not compulsory to send for laboratory testing/nutrient testing for fresh fruits or fresh vegetables. We accept nutrient values from an established food composition book/database.

**11. Can I submit indirect analysis report instead of laboratory analysis reports?**

Currently, for HCS applications, we only accept laboratory reports from accredited laboratory using AOAC (Association of Official Analytical Chemists) methods or equivalent.

**12. I want to send my product to test for the Glycemic Index value. Does the lab have to be an Accredited laboratory?**

We accept laboratory reports that use ISO 26642:2010 for GI testing.

Some of the laboratories using ISO method of GI testing:

- Temasek Polytechnic Glycemic Index Research Unit
- Tuv Sud PSB Pte Ltd
- Nanyang Polytechnic

**13. I have 50 varieties for my product. Do I need to send for laboratory testing for all? Is there any grant available?**

Please contact the HCS admin team at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) for assistance.

## FAQ for HCS Symbol, Usage and Taglines

### **1. How many HCS can my packaging carry?**

A packaging can carry up to 2 HCS with identical taglines.

### **2. Where to download the HCS?**

You may download the HCS Logo upon log in to the [HCS Online](#) system. Under the 'Resources' tab, select HCS Logo Gallery. After choosing the relevant category and sub-category, the eligible HCS logos for your product category will appear for you to download.

### **3. Where can we find the HCS in higher resolution?**

You may download the HCS Logo upon log in to the [HCS Online](#) system. Under the 'Resources' tab, select HCS Logo Gallery. After choosing the relevant category and sub-category, the eligible HCS logos for your product category will appear for you to download.

### **4. Can I use the Healthier Choice Symbol with other similar symbols from overseas?**

The Healthier Choice Symbol may be used with symbols from other similar overseas programmes. However, it is the food company's responsibility to ensure the legal use of overseas symbols on the products in different countries.

### **5. Can I use the Healthier Choice Symbol in overseas countries?**

Please check with the regulatory government bodies in the individual countries in order to use the Healthier Choice Symbol overseas.

### **6. Can I use sticker for HCS and NIP for my packaging?**

If the company is sharing the product packaging with overseas countries, you may print stickers for the HCS and NIP. However, printing of stickers is at your own cost. Please send the artwork of the sticker with the packaging artwork indicating the location of sticker for our approval by submitting it to [HCS Online](#). Please indicate the reason during submission.

For other reasons to use stickers for HCS and NIP, please send an email to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) to request for usage of stickers for HCS and NIP.

**7. Due to the space constraints, can the HCS be smaller than the standard size?**

Please seek approval to use HCS smaller than the standard size by emailing [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information:

- i. Application number
- ii. Package size
- iii. Artwork of product packaging
- iv. Size of total surface area of product
- v. Size of the proposed HCS
- vi. Reason for using non-standard size

**8. Due to budget constraints, can I use black and white for HCS?**

Please seek approval by emailing to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information for black and white usage for HCS:

- i. Application number
- ii. Product name and package size
- iii. Reason for using black and white

**9. I want to apply for the “Lower in Sugar” tagline. How do I go about it?**

The HCS taglines are specified for each product category. To carry the HCS taglines, the product must meet all criteria in the category the product is classified under before determining the taglines available for usage.

Please refer to [this link](#) for the detailed steps to the HCS application process.

**10. My company is running a promotion where we will be bundling 2 to 3 different products in a multi-pack, but the products have different taglines. What should I do?**

Please drop an email to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information:

- i. Product Application number of all products
- ii. Clear image of multi-pack product packaging with the proposed HCS and location of HCS



**11. Can I don't put the statement "25% lower in"? It takes up space in the artwork.**

To comply with national nutrient claim guidelines, comparative claims e.g. HCS Lower in Sugar, must carry a statement on the label describing the comparison.

Example of the statement, "25% lower in sugar as compared to regular [range or name of food category]" or any other statement bearing similar meaning.

e.g. "25% lower in sugar as compared to regular Asian drink"

**12. Can I put 60% lower in sugar instead of 25% lower in sugar?**

Companies are encouraged to use the standard comparative statement.

You may drop an email to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information:

- i. Product Application number
- ii. Laboratory reports to justify the comparative claims at 60% or other percentage higher than 25%
- iii. Please refer to the definition of reference food in HPB's A Handbook on Nutrition Labelling (Singapore) and inform the HCS admin the reference food you are using.

## FAQ for Nutrition Information Panel (NIP)

### **1. What nutrients do I need to include in the Nutrition Information panel?**

For HCS products, you would need to include the 10 core nutrients in the Nutrition information panel. The core nutrients are Energy, Protein, Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Cholesterol, Carbohydrates, Total Sugar, Dietary Fibre, and Sodium.

If you have made any nutrient claims on your packaging e.g. Enriched with Vitamin C, High in Calcium, please include the nutrients relevant to the claims in as well.

### **2. How many decimal places do I need to put for the NIP?**

Values for Energy, Cholesterol and Sodium are to be rounded off to the nearest whole number. Remaining nutrient values are to be rounded off to the nearest one decimal place.

You may refer to HPB's A Handbook on Nutrition Labelling (Singapore) at [this link](#).

### **3. What kind of format for the Nutrition Information Panel is 'acceptable' to the Health Promotion Board for use in the Healthier Choice Label Programme?**

The Nutrition Information Panel format recommended by the Health Promotion Board must be used when products carry the Healthier Choice Symbol. The Health Promotion Board's public education efforts include teaching consumers to read the nutrition information based on the Singapore format. Please refer to the Nutrition Information Panel section in HPB's A Handbook on Nutrition Labelling (Singapore) for the requirements.

You may download the Handbook at [this link](#).

### **4. Can I use the USA Nutrition panel/nutrition table/nutrients table/NIP format on the packaging?**

Does the USA/overseas nutrient panel carry the following basic information?

- i. The 10 core nutrients (Energy, Protein, Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Cholesterol, Carbohydrate, Total Sugar, Dietary Fibre, Sodium)
- ii. Nutrients declared in per serving and per 100g/100ml
- iii. Servings per package and Serving size in metric and household measurements

Yes – Please refer to question 4a

No – Please refer to question 4b

My NIP format is not able to include the 3 requirements – Please refer to question 4c

**4a. Can I use the USA Nutrition panel/nutrition table/nutrients table/NIP format on the packaging if it carries the 3 requirements?**

If your NIP includes the 3 requirements, you may use it. However, when you submit the application, please inform us the reason for using the USA nutrition table format in the comment feature.

For more information on the nutrient table/NIP, you may visit [this link](#).

**4b. Can I use the USA Nutrition panel/nutrition table/nutrients table/NIP format on the packaging if it does not carry the 3 requirements?**

If your NIP does not include the 3 requirements, please include the information.

For more information on the nutrient table/NIP, you may visit [this link](#).

**4c. Can I use the USA Nutrition panel/nutrition table/nutrients table/NIP format on the packaging if the format is not able to include the 3 requirements?**

If your NIP format is not able to include the 3 requirements, you may print stickers at your own cost and stick stickers on the packaging. Please upload the artwork of the sticker together with the packaging artwork indicating the location of sticker at HCS online for our approval. Please indicate this in the comment feature.

For more information on the nutrient table/NIP, you may visit [this link](#).

**5. Due to space constraints and these nutrients are 0 value, can I don't list them in the NIP?**

You can list these nutrients in text form "Not a significant source of "nutrient name" **below the nutrient table** if they fulfil the following:

- i. Nutrient value is 0 or insignificant
- ii. Nutrient is not Energy, Carbohydrate, Protein and Total Fat

**6. Due to space constraints, can I don't declare the per 100ml as prepared in the NIP for my soymilk powder product?**

You may declare nutrients in 2 columns (Per Serving and Per 100ml as prepared) instead of 3 columns if there are space constraints.

For any other variations, please email [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) for assistance.

## FAQ for Applications Affected by HCS Guidelines Revision

**1. I noted the grace period for revised sauces guidelines. Can I request for an extension of the grace period to clear my existing stocks?**

Please seek approval for an extension by sending the following information to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg)

- i. Application number
- ii. Product name, package size
- iii. Reasons for the request for extension
- iv. Estimated period the existing stocks will be cleared
- v. Amount of existing stocks left

**2. Why are there so many guidelines revision? My company can't catch up. Are there any grants available?**

HPB has grants available for healthier oil, wholegrain noodles and rice, desserts, sauces, and certain categories of sweetened drinks.

For detailed information, please refer to the links below.

[Healthier Ingredient Development Scheme](#)

[Healthier Ingredient Promotion Scheme](#)

## FAQ for HCS Audit Check

- 1. I want to feedback on this product that should not carry the HCS. Who should I send the feedback to?**

You may email us at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the relevant information.

- 2. I received your email regarding non-compliance of my product. Can I submit my own laboratory report for appeal?**

Please email us at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg).

- 3. I received your email regarding non-compliance of my product. Can I request for more time to cover the symbol?**

Please email us at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the following information:

- i. Application number
- ii. Product name, package size
- iii. Reasons for the request for extension
- iv. Estimated period the existing stocks will be cleared
- v. Amount of existing stocks left

## FAQ for Licence Agreement

### **1. How long is this Licence Agreement for?**

The Licence Agreement does not need to be renewed. However to maintain validity of the Licence Agreement, the company would be required to conduct a yearly product review via [HCS Online](#) to update the company's HCS product list and to declare that the company's products still meet the HCS nutrient guidelines and there is no change in the content of the products.

For companies which fail to complete the Product Review process within the stipulated time period, the LA will be terminated, and the company will lose its rights to carry the HCS on its products.

There will also be more frequent audit checks and products found to be non-compliant might lose the eligibility to carry the HCS.

### **2. Why are there missing products in the Licence Agreement?**

The Licence Agreement will only show the list of products which has the 'Approved' package status. If there are missing products in the company's Licence Agreement, please contact us at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) with the relevant screenshots and information.

### **3. Why was my company's Licence Agreement terminated?**

The Licence Agreement between the company and HPB could have been terminated due to the following reasons:

- a) Company did not complete Product Review by deadline
- b) Company did not accept Licence Agreement/Supplemental Agreement by deadline
- c) Company no longer have any approved application in the Licence Agreement (e.g. all products have been discontinued during Product Review, rejected due to revised HCS guidelines or failed HCS audit checks)

For further clarifications, you may contact HCS Admin at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg)

# FAQ for Product Review

## 1. What is Product Review?

It is a yearly exercise where companies will review their HCS product(s) listed in the Licence Agreement with Health Promotion Board and determine if they wish to keep the HCS or discontinue HCS on the product(s). They will also need to declare that:

- a) there has been no change in the contents of the Product (i.e. no change in product formulation).
- b) the Product comply with the Healthier Choice Symbol Nutrient Guidelines.

Once product review is submitted, the package status of the product(s) you have selected to discontinue will be changed to *Discontinued* in the system.

## 2. Who needs to do Product Review?

Only companies with valid licence agreement and at least one approved application are required to do product review.

If your company is not required to do product review you will see this in Manage Product Review:



## 3. Which company staff can complete the product review?

Both Authorised Representative and Staff for HCS can complete the product review.

## 4. When is the Product Review?

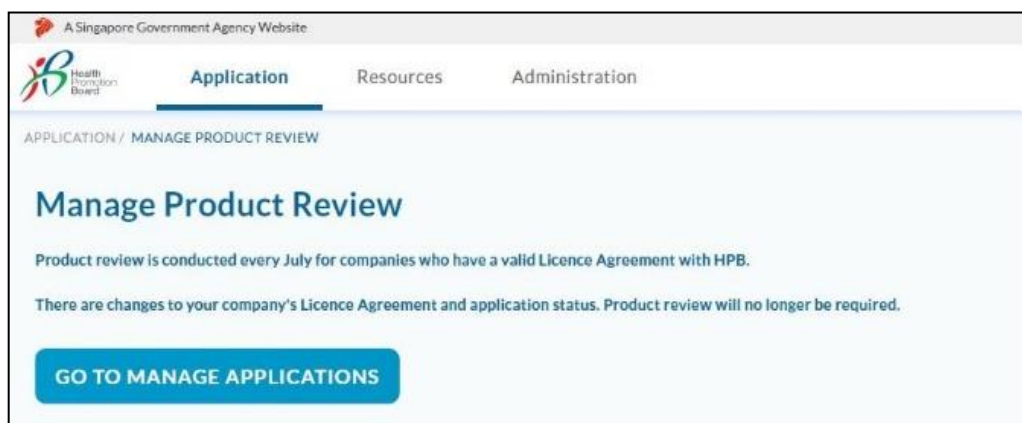
Product Review Exercise occurs yearly, starting from 1 Jul.

- The regular Product Review period is from 1 Jul – 31 Aug.
- The Suspension/Appeal period is from 1 Sep – 31 Oct.
  - This is for companies which did not complete the Product Review during the regular period. This is a second chance to complete the Product Review before the Licence Agreement is terminated on 1 Nov due to Product Review not being completed.

**5. How will I know when Product Review begins?**

On 17 Jun, you will receive the pre-season email notification that Product Review exercise is starting soon. On 1 Jul, you will be notified by email that Product Review exercise has started.

**6. The company was selected for product review. But something changed, the product review Selection page is no longer accessible and instead the following screen is shown in Manage Product Review. What does it mean and why?**



This screen occurs because the application or package status has changed (e.g. to rejected/discontinued/closed due to various reasons), resulting in a total of zero approved applications under the company's Licence Agreement. Therefore, the License Agreement is terminated, and company no longer needs to do product review.

**7. Why do only certain applications show on the Product Review Module?**

Only approved application(s) will be populated in the HCS list for product review. Approved application(s) includes revised artwork (packaging already approved but resubmitted for approval due to change in artwork (e.g. design)).

**8. a) Why does rejected package/application(s) appear in the HCS populated list for product review?**

The application/package status on the Selection page is live, so the status of approved application/package(s) may change during product review exercise. Thus, you may see rejected/discontinued/closed application or package status in the HCS list for product review.

**b) Should I select the application/package(s) with rejected/discontinued/closed status for discontinuation?**

You do not need to select application/package(s) with rejected/discontinued/closed status for discontinuation as it is already rejected/discontinued/closed. But if you do select them to be discontinued, note that the status will not change but you are able to select the reason for discontinuation.



**9. I did not complete product review by 31 Aug.**

**a) What are the repercussions?**

The company's HCS programme account will be suspended. During suspension, company will not be able to create, submit HCS application(s) or amend application(s). Company is also unable to use any HCS modules, including HCS Application, Product Review and Advertising Materials modules.

**b) What should I do next?**

Company can write to [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) to appeal to have a second chance to complete the Product Review.

- The Product Review module will then be open for company to complete the Product Review by **31 Oct**.
- However, until Product Review is completed, company will remain unable to submit any new applications, amendments or advertising materials.

**10. I did not complete product review by 31 Aug, and I did not appeal / I appealed but did not complete product review by 31 Oct.**

**a) What are the repercussions?**

On 1 Nov, the following will occur:

- Company's approved application(s) will all be rejected, and the License Agreement will be terminated. Company HCS programme status will change from *Active* to *Enrolled*.
- HCS programme account will no longer be suspended, and the company will regain access to HCS modules and can submit HCS application(s). Essentially, the company will have to restart the application process to keep HCS on their product(s).

**b) What should I do next?**

If company wishes to continue participating in the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) Programme, please submit new application(s) for your product(s) via HCS Online to obtain approval and a valid License Agreement.

This is because upon termination of the Licence Agreement, it is an infringement of Trade Mark if company continues to use the HCS logo on their product packaging(s) and any form of advertising material(s). HPB reserves the right to take legal action against companies which use the HCS logo on their product packaging(s) and any form of advertising material(s) without a valid Licence Agreement and approval.

Audit checks will be conducted. If the non-compliant product(s) is/are still found to be carrying HCS in the market during our follow-up checks, HPB intends to list these products on the HCS website and/or other forms of media to ensure programme integrity is maintained and consumers are not being misled.

# Questions for HCS Online System

## Onboarding

### 1. **What is CorpPass?**

CorpPass is a corporate digital identity for businesses and other entities (such as non-profit organisations and associations) to transact with Government agencies online. Owned by the Ministry of Finance and managed by Government Technology Agency (GovTech), CorpPass gives you greater control, security and efficiency for your corporate online transactions with the Government.

HCS Online requires a CorpPass account to be accessed. For more information on CorpPass, you may visit CorpPass's website [here](#)

### 2. **How do I register for CorpPass?**

Please select a representative from your company as CorpPass Administrator and register your company on [CorpPass](#). The role of a CorpPass Administrator is to manage the company's CorpPass account, including management of company's users, adding e-services and assigning roles in CorpPass. You may refer to available [CorpPass User Guides](#) for more information on how to register for CorpPass.

The company's CorpPass admin has to add HCS Online e-Service and assign roles to Users in CorpPass. Upon successful set up of company's CorpPass account and HCS Online e-Service Access, the company may proceed to log in to [HCS Online](#) to start submitting product application.

### 3. **I cannot log in to HCS online. There is an error message: 'You have not enrolled in HCS Programme. Please contact your company's Authorised Representative.'**

You will need to do some trouble shooting.

1) Has your company's CorpPass Administrator set up the HCS Online e-service and assigned roles in [CorpPass](#)?

You may refer to the step-by step User Guides for CorpPass HCS Online e-Service available [here](#) on how to do so.

2) Is your company's Authorised Representative the first person to log in?

Upon successful set up of company's CorpPass account and HCS Online e-Service Access, please inform the Authorised Representative to log in to [HCS Online](#) to enrol in the HCS programme.

If you are facing issues, please report the IT issue with screenshot of error message at this [link](#)

**4. Who is my company's Authorised Representative?**

Your company's Authorised Representative is determined by your company's management. Please contact your company's CorpPass Administrator to check the user roles assigned.

**5. How do I assign roles in CorpPass?**

There are two roles: 'Staff for HCS' and 'Authorised Representative' for HCS Online e-service. You may refer to the step-by step User Manual - Onboarding available [here](#) on how to assign roles in CorpPass.

**6. How do I manage HCS user accounts?**

Management of user accounts is done via [CorpPass](#). Please contact your company's CorpPass Administrator to manage the company's users. You may refer to available [CorpPass User Guides](#) for more information on how to register for CorpPass.

**7. How do I edit organisation details?**

The company's Authorised Representative can update the company profile and details, including company name, address and website.

You may refer to the User Manual – Onboarding available [here](#) for detailed instructions.

**8. How do I update my contact details (e.g. email address)?**

After logging into HCS Online, you may update your personal user profile. If you are updating your email address, you will need to re-verify your email.

You may refer to the User Manual – Onboarding available [here](#) for detailed instructions.

## Product Information / Nutrient Values / Packaging Artwork tab

### **1. *Can I check on the status of my HCS applications?***

You may refer to the application and package status reflected on the 'Manage Applications' page to determine the status of the HCS application. Alternatively, you may leave a comment using the commenting box at your application or email [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) to check on the status of your application.

### **2. *I am not sure what to amend for my artwork.***

To see HPB comments for your artwork, you need to download the artwork file, please follow the steps below:

1. Proceed to <Tab 3 - Packaging Artwork>
2. Click on the 'little grey triangle' next to the SINGLE/BULK.
3. Under 'HPB Comments' section, hover your cursor over the file, a 'blue arrow down' button will appear.
4. Click the 'blue arrow down' button to download the artwork file with HPB comments.
5. Once you open the file in Adobe Reader, you should be able to see yellow bubble chats, containing HPB comments on areas that require your amendment.

You may leave a comment using the commenting box at your application for further queries.

### **3. *I did not see anything / I do not understand the comments / I would like to seek clarifications.***

You may leave a comment using the commenting box at your application if you do not see any comments/would like to seek clarifications on your artwork.

## HCS Product Listing tab

### **1. What is next after my products are awarded with HCS?**

After approval of your product and when your product starts to carry the HCS logo in the market, you may proceed to list your products under 'HCS Product Listing' tab.

You may refer to the User Manual – Application Submission available [here](#) for detailed steps on how to list your product.

Listing your HCS products will entail:

- Products (Brand name, product name, package size) will be published on [HCS Webpage](#)
- Beverages (Brand name, product name, package size) & its product shot will be added to School Beverage List published on [HPB HMSP website](#) if it does not contain any sweeteners and/or sugar alcohols.
- All listed products sold in major supermarkets will be included in HPB's [Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#)

### **2. What is the HCS Product Listing for?**

The HCS Product Listing is for companies to list their approved HCS product(s) when the product(s) carrying HCS logo are available in the market.

This is for the following reasons:

- a) Consumers will have the most updated list of available HCS products in the market to refer to.
- b) HCS beverages, if it does not contain any sugar alcohols and/or intense sweeteners, will be added to the School Beverage List. School canteen vendors refer to this School Beverage List to know which HCS drinks can be sold in school.
- c) Barcodes for all listed product(s) will be used for HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign so that consumers can obtain Health Points when they purchased these products in major supermarkets. You may refer to this link for more information on [HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#).

### **3. Why do I need to list my company's approved HCS products?**

This is so that your company's approved HCS product(s) will be in the List of HCS Products in HPB's [HCS Webpage](#) and [HealthHub](#). Consumers will be able to refer to this list for their grocery shopping or company events.

School canteen vendors will also know which HCS drinks can be sold in school via the School Beverage List on HPB's [HMSP website](#).

Consumers will be able to obtain Health Points for [HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#) when they purchase your company's approved HCS products.

**4. What happens after I list the approved HCS products?**

Every month, we will generate a list of approved and listed HCS products from the HCS Product Listing tab and published it on HPB's [HCS Webpage](#) and [HealthHub](#).

We will also generate a list of approved and listed HCS drinks that do not contain sugar alcohols and/or intense sweeteners and published it on HPB's [HMSP website](#).

Barcodes for all listed product(s) will be generated and used for [HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#).

**5. My company has not decided when to start printing product packaging with HCS logo and sell the approved HCS products in the market. Can I list the approved HCS products with a placeholder date?**

Please list the product(s) only if you know the date the products carrying the HCS logo are going to be in the market or if the product(s) with HCS logo are already available in the market.

Consumers who might be referring to the List of HCS Products for grocery shopping or for a company event would not be able to find your product(s) in the market or they might find your product(s) with no HCS logo.

**6. What would happen if I did not list the approved HCS product(s) carrying HCS in the market?**

Consumers will not know your company's approved HCS product(s) as it is not in the List of HCS Products in HPB's [HCS Webpage](#) and [HealthHub](#).

Consumers will not be able to obtain Health Points for [HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#), when they purchase your company's approved HCS product(s) at major supermarkets.

**7. What would happen if I did not list my beverage product(s) and it does not contain sugar alcohol and intense sweetener?**

Your product(s) will not be published in the [School Beverage List](#). The school canteen vendors will not know that your beverage product(s) can be sold in schools.

**8. What would happen if I list my beverage product(s) that does not contain sugar alcohols/sweeteners, without a product shot?**

For products without a product shot during the Product Review in September 2019, a blank placeholder was being used for the product shot. Thus, the school canteen vendor will see a blank image in the School Beverage List for your product(s). Please update the product shot in the HCS Product Listing tab.

**9. Why is HPB collecting information like location of sales, price, barcodes, product shots and etc. in the HCS Product Listing tab. Do I need to key in all the information, and will this be shared publicly?**

Besides using the information collected for the List of HCS Products, School Beverage List and Health Points for [HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#), we are collecting the information for research purposes.

All the information is mandatory in the HCS Product Listing tab. Only Brand Name, Product Name, Package Size and/or product shot will be shared publicly. Barcodes are used for [HPB's Eat Drink Shop Healthy Campaign](#).

Please contact us at [HPB\\_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:HPB_HCSadmin@hpb.gov.sg) if you need help in filling in the information.



## Error Messages

- 1. I cannot log in to HCS online. There is an error message.**

Please report the IT issue with screenshot of error message at this [link](#)