

ORGANIC CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.

EMPLOYEE MANUAL



OCIA INTERNATIONAL INC.

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EMPLOYEE MANUAL	1
INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Welcome to the Organic Crop Improvement Association International (OCIA)	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
1.2 History of OCIA International	4
EMPLOYMENT POLICIES	5
2.1 Equal Employment Opportunity	5
2.2 Anti-Harassment Policy	5
2.3 Medical Examinations	7
2.4 Employment of Relatives	7
2.5 Personnel Records and Updates	7
2.6 Immigration Law Compliance	8
2.7 Employment Applicants	8
2.8 OCIA Bylaw and Policy Compliance	8
COMPENSATION POLICIES	8
3.1 Classifications of Employment	8
3.2 Work Hours	8
3.3 Recording Work Hours	8
3.4 Pay Schedule	9
3.5 Overtime Pay Procedures	9
3.6 Performance Evaluations and Wage Reviews	9
3.7 Severance Pay	9
3.8 Pay Corrections	9
3.9 Pay Deductions and Setoffs	9
3.10 Employee Expense Reimbursement	9
TIME-OFF BENEFITS	10
4.1 Vacations	10
4.2 Holidays	9
4.3 Sick Days	11
4.4 Bereavement Leave	12
4.5 Jury Duty and Witness Duty Leave	12
4.6 Medical Leaves of Absence	12
4.7 Personal Leave of Absence	13
4.8 Military Leaves of Absence	13
4.9 Emergency Closings	13
4.10 Time Off to Vote	13
GROUP HEALTH AND RELATED BENEFITS	13
5.1 Employee Benefit Programs	13
5.2 Insurance Coverage	14
EMPLOYEE CONDUCT	14
6.1 Personal Appearance	14
6.2 Use of Phone and Mail Systems	14
6.3 Smoking	14
6.4 Safety and Housekeeping	15
6.5 Attendance and Punctuality	15
6.6 No Solicitation	15

6.7	Confidential Information	15
6.8	Outside Employment.....	15
6.9	Employee Conduct.....	16
6.10	Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy	16
6.11	Resignation and Termination	16
6.12	Employee Complaints	17
6.13	Return of Property	17
6.14	Use of Equipment.....	17
6.15	Social Media Policy - Purpose and Scope	17
6.16	Use of Company-Sponsored Vehicle	20
OCIA COMPUTERS AND INTERNET ACCESS		20
7.1	Use of OCIA Technology and Resources	20
7.2	Ownership and Access of Electronic Mail and Computer Files.....	20
7.3	Confidentiality of Electronic Communications.....	20
7.4	Message Tone for Electronic Mail	21
7.5	Email Integrity	21
7.6	Internet Usage Policy	21
7.7	Prohibited Internet Activities	22
7.8	Internet and Network Security	22
RECRUITMENT.....		22
8.1	Purpose and Commitment	22
8.2	Roles and Responsibilities.....	22
8.3	Sources of Recruitment.....	22
8.4	Online Recruitment.....	22
SELECTION.....		22
9.1	General Statement.....	22
9.2	Selection Practices.....	22
TRAINING		22
10.1	Purpose.....	23
10.2	Roles and Responsibilities	24
10.3	Training Program	24
PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND COMPENSATION SCHEDULES		24
11.1	Purpose.....	24
11.2	Oversight.....	24
11.3	Evaluation Methodology.....	25
11.4	Ongoing Feedback	25
11.5	Annual Review and Goal Setting.....	25
11.6	Recognition and Bonus Awards.....	26
11.7	Starting Salaries and Pay Adjustments.....	26
11.8	Performance Improvement and Probation.....	26
11.9	Misconduct and Disciplinary Action	26
JOB DESCRIPTIONS.....		26
12.1	General Statement.....	26
12.2	Current Positions:.....	27
EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and AGREEMENT		37

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome to OCIA International

Welcome to OCIA International! We are pleased to have you as part of our team.

OCIA is a member-owned, non-profit organic certification organization with global outreach. Our organic mission is to support sustainable agriculture through certification standards, education and farmer empowerment. This manual outlines your rights and responsibilities as a member of the OCIA staff and is designed to help you succeed in your role.

We encourage open communication and collaboration across all levels of the organization. If you have questions about any policy or procedure, please speak with your supervisor or the Executive Director.

1.2 History of OCIA International

In the depression years of the dustbowl, farmers met informally to share their mutual farming experience. Having no farming technical support, they formed the first “crop improvement” associations. The principles were simple: farmers are the experts on their lands and by having regular meetings to share their experiences with techniques and trials, they could acquire knowledge from each other.

In the mid-seventies, the idea of organic agriculture began circulating within a group of pioneers. A certain parallel was noted between the technological situation of the nineteen-twenties and the challenge of the new organic “movement”. Work started on the idea of an “organic” crop improvement association, which was envisioned as farmers working together to facilitate the development and the transfer of technical expertise.

In the early eighties, certification guidelines were formulated which eventually formed the basis of OCIA’s certification program. After a few years, a small number of farm groups (chapters) formed independently and assumed the leadership of a combined crop improvement/certification program.

In the fall of 1985, in Albany, New York, a diverse group of farmers met and structured the concept of a “farmer owned, and farmer controlled” association. During those early years, OCIA became well rooted in many farming communities in Canada and the United States.

OCIA expanded beyond North America in 1988 when a group of Peruvian farmers joined the organization, attracted by the concepts of farmer-to-farmer networking and crop improvement. That same year OCIA International was incorporated as a Non-Profit Organization in the state of Pennsylvania, USA. OCIA continued expanding throughout Latin America and around the world. In January 1997, OCIA moved the International Office from Bellefontaine, Ohio to Lincoln, Nebraska.

From an association of four chapters in 1986, which certified less than one hundred and twenty farms, OCIA now consists of farmers all over the world, as well as handlers and processors.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

2.1 Equal Employment Opportunity

OCIA International is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to creating a workplace free from discrimination and to making employment decisions based on merit, qualifications, and business needs.

Employment-related decisions will not be influenced or affected by individual's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for supporting and upholding these principles in all employment practices, including hiring, promotions, compensation and training.

2.2 Anti- Harassment Policy

OCIA prohibits all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and other conduct that creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written or physical conduct of sexual nature when:

- Submission is made a condition of employment
- It is used as a basis for employment decisions
- It interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating or offensive working atmosphere

All employees are expected to uphold a professional work environment. Anyone who experiences or witness harassment should report it promptly to their supervisor, the employee representative, or the Executive Director (or designee). Reports will be treated with discretion and responded to appropriately. Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2.3 Medical Examinations

OCIA may require a job-related medical examination after an offer of employment before beginning work, or during employment if necessary to determine fitness for duty or to comply with applicable law.

2.4 Employment of Relatives

OCIA permits the employment of qualified relatives, provided does not create a conflict of interest or impact workplace performance or morale. The Executive Director (or designee) has the sole discretion to approve such arrangements.

2.5 Personnel Records and Updates

OCIA maintains personnel files that include employment, performance, and benefits-related information. Employees have the right to review and request copies of their own records during business hours.

Employees must promptly notify OCIA changes to:

- Address or phone number
- Legal name

- Marital status
- Tax withholding exemptions
- Dependent or health insurance status

2.6 Immigration Law Compliance

OCIA hires only individuals authorized to work in the country where they are employed. In the U.S., all employees must complete, Form I-9 and provide valid documentation before starting work.

2.7 Employment Applicants

OCIA relies on accurate information provided in applications, resumes, and interviews. Falsifications or significant omissions may result in withdrawal of job offer or termination of employment.

2.8 OCIA Bylaw and Policy Compliance

All employees are expected to be familiar with and comply with all OCIA Bylaws and official policies. The current documents are available at ocia.org.

COMPENSATION POLICIES

3.1 Classifications of Employment

Employees are classified for compensation, overtime, and benefits eligibility as follows:

- Full-time Regular:** Scheduled to work 40 hours per week on a continuous basis
- Part-time Regular:** Scheduled to work at least 15 but fewer than 40 hours per week on a continuous basis
- Temporary:** Hired for short-term assignment. May work full or part-time and are not eligible for benefits
- Non-Exempt:** Eligible for overtime pay under applicable wage and hour laws
- Exempt:** Not eligible for overtime pay. Typically includes executive, administrative and professional roles as defined by law

3.2 Work Hours

The standard work schedule is 8 hours per day, Monday through Friday. However, work hours may vary based on operational needs. Supervisors will communicate individual schedules.

Staffing needs and operational requirements may require adjustments to starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total number of hours scheduled per day or week.

3.3 Recording Work Hours

All employees are responsible for accurately recording their time.

- **Non-Exempt Employees:** Must record start/end times, meal breaks, and any time away from work. Overtime must be pre-approved by a supervisor
- **Exempt Employees:** Must track all leave time and ensure weekly hours total at least 40. Leave must be approved in advance

Tampering with time records or falsifying entries may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

It is the employee's responsibility to sign their time record to certify the accuracy of all time reported. All-time records must be submitted to the Executive Director.

3.4 Pay Schedule

Employees are paid biweekly on alternating Fridays. The pay period runs from Sunday through the following Saturday. Direct Deposit is the required method of payment.

OCIA does not provide wage advances.

3.5 Overtime Pay

- **Non-Exempt Employees:** Receive 1.5 times their regular hourly rate for approved hours worked over 40 in a workweek
 - Paid time off does not count as hours worked for overtime calculations
 - Overtime is limited to 8 hours per week unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director
- **Exempt Employees:** Do not receive overtime pay but may be granted **flextime** within the same pay period for additional work hours, subject to approval

3.6 Performance Evaluations and Wage Reviews

Employees may receive performance evaluations periodically. Wage increases are not guaranteed and are determined at OCIA's sole discretion based on performance, budgetary considerations, and other relevant business factors.

See Section 11 for detailed performance review procedures.

3.7 Severance Pay

At the Executive Director discretion, severance pay of up to two weeks' pay may be granted to full-time employees who are not terminated for cause.

3.8 Pay Corrections

If you believe your paycheck is incorrect, report the issue to the Director of Finance or Executive Director immediately. Verified underpayments will be corrected in the next scheduled paycheck or sooner if the discrepancy is significant.

3.9 Pay Deductions and Setoffs

OCIA deducts applicable federal, state, and local taxes, as well as legally required or authorized amounts (e.g., Social Security, garnishments). If you have questions about any deduction, contact the Executive Director or Director of Finance.

3.10 Employee Expense Reimbursement

Employees must obtain prior approval before incurring business-related expenses. Submit itemized receipts and an expense report promptly after incurring reimbursable costs.

Reimbursable Expenses May Include:

- Meals \$40/day per diem **or**
 - Actual meal cost reimbursement (subject to approval by the Executive Director)
- Transportation (e.g., rental cars, taxis, mileage at the IRS rate)
- Approved promotional or business expenses

Non-Reimbursable Expenses Include:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal entertainment, books, or newspapers

TIME-OFF BENEFITS

4.1 Vacations

Eligibility:

- Regular full-time and part-time employees (working 15+ hours/week) are eligible

Accrual & Use:

- Vacation is accrued each pay period based on years of service and employment status
- A maximum of **25 days** may be carried into the following year. Any balance above 25 days as of December 31 is forfeited
- Vacation must be requested in advance and approved by the Executive Director or designee

Payout on Termination:

- Unused, accrued vacation will be paid out upon separation from employment

Accrual Rates:

VACATION BENEFITS	
RATE OF ACCRUAL TABLE -NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES - Hire date prior to 01/01/25	
Length of Service	Rate of Accrual
0 Months - 2 Years	4.615 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 2 Years - 6 Years	6.154 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 6 Years	7.692 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
VACATION BENEFITS	
RATE OF ACCRUAL TABLE -NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES - Hire date following 01/01/25-	
Length of Service	Rate of Accrual
0 Months - 2 Years	3.08 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 2 Years - 6 Years	4.615 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 6 Years	6.154 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period

Vacation Benefits will be awarded to *part-time employees* as a percentage of the “rate of accrual” per two-week pay period shown in the table above. Part-time employees’ vacation benefits shall be computed according to hours per pay period as follows:

- 0-30 hours - no vacation
- 31-59 hours - 50% vacation
- 60-70 hours - 75% vacation
- 71-80 hours - 100% vacation

Vacation Benefits will be awarded to *exempt eligible employees* according to the following schedule:

VACATION BENEFITS	
RATE OF ACCRUAL TABLE - EXEMPT EMPLOYEES - Hire date prior to 01/01/2025	
Length of Service	Rate of Accrual
0 Months - 2 Years	6.154 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 2 Years - 6 Years	7.692 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 6 Years	9.231 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
VACATION BENEFITS	
RATE OF ACCRUAL TABLE - EXEMPT EMPLOYEES -Hire date following 01/01/25	
Length of Service	Rate of Accrual
0 Months - 2 Years	4.615 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 2 Years - 6 Years	6.154 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period
Over 6 Years	7.692 Hours Per Two-Week Pay Period

Part-Time Employees:

Vacation is prorated based on biweekly hours worked:

- 0-30 hours: No vacation
- 31-59 hours: 50% of full-time accrual
- 60-70 hours: 75% of full-time accrual
- 71-80 hours: 100% of full-time accrual

4.2 Holidays

Eligible Full-Time U.S. – Based Employees Receive Paid Holidays:

- New Year's Day (Jan 1)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (3rd Monday in Jan)
- Arbor Day (last Friday in April)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (1st Monday in Sept)
- Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday in Nov)
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (Dec 24)
- Christmas Day (Dec 25)
- Employee's Birthday
- Two floating holidays (with supervisor approval)

Additional Notes:

- Holidays falling on weekends are observed on adjacent weekdays
- If a holiday occurs during approved leave, the employee receives holiday pay instead of using leave time
- Part-time employees receive 4 hours of holiday pay at their regular rate

4.3 Sick Days

Eligibility:

- Regular full-time employees
- Employees in other countries accrue according to applicable law

Accrual:

- Begins after 3 months of employment
- Accrued at 3.077 hours per pay period (10 days per year)
- Maximum accrual is 240 hours. Further accrual pauses until the balance drops below this cap

Use:

- May be used for personal illness, injury, or for the illness of a family member
- Sick leave is not to be used as vacation
- Employees must notify supervisor prior to scheduled work time, if possible
- A doctor's note is required for absences longer than 3 consecutive days or at the supervisor's discretion
- Improper use of sick leave may result in disciplinary action or termination

Payout:

- Unused sick leave is not paid upon resignation, termination, or retirement.

4.4 Bereavement Leave

Employee requiring bereavement leave must notify their supervisor as soon as possible.

Eligibility:

- Regular Full-time Employees
- Up to 3 days of paid leave are provided for the death of an immediate family member

Immediate family includes:

- Spouse, parent, child, sibling, spouse's parent or child, child's spouse, grandparents, grandchildren, or legal guardian

Additional time may be requested using vacation, subject to supervisor approval.

4.5 Jury Duty and Witness Duty Leave

OCIA provides up to **10 paid days** every **2 years** for jury duty or if subpoenaed as a witness. Eligible to Regular Full-Time Employees

- Employees must provide documentation (e.g., summons)
- Must report to work when court duties allow
- Jury duty pay from the court may be retained by the employee
- Extended leave beyond 10 days requires Executive Director approval

Job-related testimony: If subpoenaed as a witness in a work-related matter, the employee will receive full paid leave.

4.6 Medical Leaves of Absence

Eligible employees may take unpaid medical leave for up to 60 working days per year for temporary medical disability (including pregnancy and recovery). Eligible to Regular Full-time Employees

- A doctor's note is required specifying the start, duration, and return date
- May use accrued sick or vacation leave before the unpaid leave begins
- One extension (up to 60 additional days) may be considered with written request

Benefits:

- OCIA covers insurance premiums for the first 30 working days
- After 30 days, the employee pays the full premium cost
- Accrual of benefits (vacation, sick time) pauses during leave

Return to Work:

- Physician clearance is required to return
- Efforts will be made to reinstate the employee to the same or a comparable position

Employees who sustain a work-related injury will be eligible for a medical leave of absence for the period of disability in accordance with all applicable laws covering occupational disability.

4.7 Personal Leave of Absence

After one year of employment, employees may request unpaid personal leave of up to 3 months every 2 years. Eligible for Regular Full-time Employees:

- Leave must be approved by the Executive Director
- May use accrued vacation before unpaid leave with Executive Director approval
- Insurance coverage continues through the month the leave begins, after which the employee pays the full cost
- Benefit accruals pause during leave
- As OCIA employees are employed at will, returning to employment following leave of absence is not guaranteed

Employees who do not return as scheduled will be considered to have resigned.

4.8 Military Leaves of Absence

Military leave is provided in accordance with applicable U.S. federal and state laws. Employees must submit a copy of orders as soon as possible. Leave is unpaid, and reemployment rights will follow applicable laws.

4.9 Emergency Closings

In the event of an emergency (e.g., weather, natural disaster):

- If the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cancels day classes due to weather, the OCIA Lincoln office will also close
- In the event UNL is not in session, the Executive Director will determine whether the OCIA Lincoln office will close
- If K–12 schools close but UNL remains open, staff may delay arrival by up to 2 hours to arrange childcare
- Employees with full-time remote status are expected to continue working as scheduled if the Lincoln office is closed due inclement weather

Pay During Closures:

- Full-time employees will be paid when OCIA authorizes the closure
- If closure is not authorized, time off is unpaid unless vacation leave is used

4.10 Time Off to Vote

Employees are encouraged to vote outside work hours. If necessary due to hardship (e.g., long travel), paid time off may be requested in advance.

GROUP HEALTH AND RELATED BENEFITS

5.1 Employee Benefit Programs

OCIA provides group health and related benefits to eligible employees. This section provides a summary, but official details are outlined in the insurance carriers' master contracts and plan documents. In the event of any conflict between this manual and the master documents, the master documents will govern.

Important Notes:

- OCIA reserves the right to modify or terminate benefits at any time
- Employees may be required to contribute to premium costs

5.2 Insurance Coverage

Eligibility:

Regular full-time employees who meet eligibility criteria defined by the insurance provider.

Coverage Includes:

- **Medical and Dental Insurance:**
Provided to all eligible full-time employees. Coverage for dependents (spouse and/or children) is available at the employee's expense
- **Life Insurance:**
Provided to all eligible full-time employees

Enrollment & Changes:

- Employees must enroll within the designated enrollment period (typically within 30 days of hire or qualifying event)
- Changes to coverage due to life events (e.g., marriage, birth of a child) must be reported promptly and within the timeframe required by the insurer

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

6.1 Personal Appearance

Employees are expected to maintain a professional, clean, and appropriate appearance that reflects positively on OCIA and is suitable for their work environment.

- Clothing should not be excessively revealing or contain offensive language or graphics
- When meeting with members or representing OCIA publicly, employees should dress in professional or business-casual attire
- Supervisors may request an employee to leave and return in appropriate attire; this time will be unpaid

6.2 Use of Phone and Mail Systems

- Personal phone use should be minimal and not interfere with work
- Long-distance personal calls, personal use of postage or office supplies are not permitted
- Emergency calls are permitted at any time

Professionalism is expected in all phone communications, including clear messaging and respectful tone.

6.3 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all OCIA facilities and worksites. This policy applies to employees, visitors, and contractors.

6.4 Safety and Housekeeping

OCIA is committed to a safe and healthy work environment.

- Employees must follow all safety procedures and report hazards or injuries immediately
- Personal work areas should be kept clean and organized
- Personal items are allowed in moderation but are brought at the employee's own risk

6.5 Attendance and Punctuality

Regular, punctual attendance is essential.

- Notify the Executive Director as early as possible if you are going to be absent or late
- Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or failure to notify may result in disciplinary action, including termination

6.6 No Solicitation and Distribution

- Soliciting or distributing materials is not allowed during work hours or in work areas
- Break and meal periods may be used for non-disruptive solicitation
- Non-employees are not permitted to solicit or distribute materials on OCIA premises
- Materials may be displayed in designated areas only with prior approval from the Executive Director or their designee

6.7 Confidential Information

Employees must protect confidential OCIA information, including but not limited to:

- Trade secrets
- Member or client data
- Internal policies or financial information
- Terminated or departing employees are prohibited from disclosing any information deemed confidential by OCIA International

Disclosure of confidential information without authorization may result in disciplinary action, including termination. This obligation continues after employment ends.

Employees must sign:

- A confidentiality agreement
- A conflict-of-interest declaration
- A non-compete agreement (where applicable)
- For Mexican program staff: the required **Código de Ética y Conducta** agreement

6.8 Outside Employment

Employees may hold outside jobs if:

- OCIA remains their primary employment obligation
- Outside employment must not interfere with an employee's ability to fulfill their current job responsibilities and meet performance expectations
- The outside job does not conflict with OCIA's interests
- There is no use of OCIA resources or confidential information

If you are unsure whether outside work presents a conflict, consult your supervisor or the Executive Director.

6.9 Employee Standards of Conduct

Employees are expected to always maintain professional behavior. The following are examples of conduct that may lead to disciplinary action or termination:

- Falsifying records or documents
- Theft or misuse of company property
- Reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Absenteeism or repeated tardiness without notice
- Insubordination
- Harassment, threats, or violence
- Misuse of company resources
- Disclosure of confidential or proprietary information
- Failure to maintain satisfactory job performance or working relationships
- Performance of illegal acts during working hours
- Possession of weapons on company property, as well as threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing or interfering with fellow employees is strictly prohibited
- Any conduct resulting in repeated warnings and reprimands, and habitual violation of safety or general regulations
- Inappropriate, damaging, or disrespectful behavior at OCIA-sponsored events is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action or termination

This list is not exhaustive. OCIA reserves the right to take disciplinary action for any behavior it deems inappropriate or damaging to the organization.

All employees are expected to meet acceptable performance levels and to maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with coworkers and supervisors. The Association reserves the right to terminate any employee at any time, with or without cause.

6.10 Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

OCIA maintains a drug- and alcohol-free workplace.

Prohibited conduct includes:

- Use, possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty
- Working while impaired by any substance, legal or illegal
- Employees who refuse to undergo testing for illegal or unauthorized drugs or alcohol when requested by OCIA while on duty may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination

Violations may result in immediate termination and possible legal action.

6.11 Resignation and Termination

- Employees may resign at any time. A minimum of two weeks' written notice is requested
- OCIA may terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice
 - The Executive Director only has the right to terminate
- Prior to termination, OCIA may issue verbal/written warnings, probation, or suspension at its discretion

Repeated violations or serious misconduct may result in immediate termination without progressive discipline.

6.12 Employee Complaints

OCIA encourages employees to resolve concerns through open communication.

Complaint process:

1. Attempt to resolve the issue directly with the individual involved
2. If unresolved, notify your immediate supervisor
3. If still unresolved, escalate to the next level of management
4. If the complaint involves unfair or undignified treatment, submit a signed written complaint to the Executive Director detailing:
 - The policy or concern
 - Supporting evidence
 - Requested resolution

If internal steps are exhausted and the issue involves human rights or staff treatment policies, employees may request mediation by submitting a written request to the President of the Board of Directors.

6.13 Return of Property

Employees must return all OCIA property before their final day of work, including but not limited to:

- Keys
- Credit cards
- Equipment
- All OCIA property

6.14 Use of Equipment

Employees must use OCIA equipment responsibly and safely.

- Report any damage or malfunction immediately
- Improper use (careless, negligent, destructive) may lead to disciplinary action, including termination

6.15 Social Media Policy – Purpose and Scope

OCIA recognizes that many of its employees, members, inspectors, board and committee members, and volunteers (“Participants”) engage in social networking and other forms of online communication. Platforms such as blogs, forums, and social media serve as valuable tools for sharing information, fostering innovation, and supporting public engagement.

While these platforms offer positive opportunities, they also pose certain risks—including threats to privacy, reputational damage, and potential legal liability. Participants must remain mindful of their responsibilities to OCIA and its **Mission Statement**, and exercise sound judgment when engaging online.

This policy serves two primary purposes:

- To protect the privacy, confidentiality, and integrity of OCIA’s employees, customers, and affiliated individuals by establishing clear expectations for Participant conduct online
- To empower Participants to use social media responsibly and confidently, by clarifying what is appropriate and acceptable when interacting in digital spaces in connection with their role at or relationship with OCIA.

If you have any questions about this policy or about what constitutes acceptable use of social media, please contact the Executive Director of OCIA.

Social Media and OCIA’s Other Policies

Social media activity—whether conducted during or outside of work hours—that affects an employee’s performance, the performance of others, or OCIA’s business interests is subject to this policy and may be monitored regularly.

All OCIA communication-related policies and procedures outlined in the OCIA Employee Handbook and other governing documents, apply equally to social media platforms. These include but are not limited to, LinkedIn, X (formally Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, online forums, blogs, and similar platforms. All Participants are expected to understand and comply with OCIA’s foundational documents, including:

- Bylaws
- Policy Governance Manual
- Operations Manual
- Employee Handbook
- Related OCIA policies and procedures

OCIA’s Equal Employment Opportunity and anti-harassment policies apply to all social media activity. Content that is discriminatory, harassing, or offensive based on any legally protected status—such as race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, citizenship, genetic information, or veteran status. Additionally, threatening, intimidating, or bullying behavior – whether direct or indirect – is strictly prohibited.

Violations of this policy, or of any other OCIA policies or applicable laws, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Non-employee Participants (e.g., contractors, board members, chapter representatives) will be evaluated under the appropriate policies and expectations governing their role with OCIA.

This policy is not intended to interfere with or restrict legally protected rights such as discussing wages, working conditions, or expressing opinions related to employment. Each situation will be reviewed individually, with consideration of applicable laws and OCIA commitment to fairness and due process.

Authorization to Speak on Behalf of OCIA

Only individuals who have received express authorization may speak on behalf of OCIA. Participants who are not authorization must represent - or imply they are represent - the organization in any official capacity. They may not create, manage or contribute to any social media accounts in OCIA's name or branding.

To protect OCIA's reputation and brand integrity, all public communications made on behalf of the organization must be reviewed and approved by the designated Social Media Director. Unauthorized creation of OCIA-affiliated social media accounts, or posting content without approval, is strictly prohibited.

Participants who reference their relationship with OCIA while posting in a personal capacity – such as sharing professional experiences or participating in industry – related discussions must:

- Clearly identify themselves by name and role (e.g., Certification Specialist at OCIA")
- Include a disclaimer that their views are personal and do not represent the views of OCIA.

Example:

"I am not authorized to speak on behalf of OCIA. The opinions expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of OCIA."

Confidentiality and Business Relationships

Due to the nature of OCIA's work, Participants may have access to sensitive, proprietary, confidential information. All Participants are required to safeguard this information and must not disclose, confidentiality of trade secrets and other private business information to unauthorized individuals – either publicly or privately.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information on systems, technology, and products
- Strategic plans, internal processes, and financial data
- Information regarding clients, vendors, and partner and affiliates

Participants must refrain from posting content that violates copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property laws. Any unauthorized use, distribution, or reproduction of proprietary content is strictly prohibited.

Additionally, Participants should exercise caution when engaging with OCIA's clients, vendors, or partners on social media platforms. "Friending," following, or directly messaging business contacts may blur professional boundaries and should be approached with discretion. Business-related communications must not occur over social media if doing so would violate OCIA policies, confidentiality agreements, or applicable laws.

Responsibility for Social Media Activity

Participants are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media platforms. While these forums may feel informal or private, posts are public and can carry serious consequences.

Examples of potential liabilities include:

- Making defamation or false statements
- Invasion of privacy or sharing of confidential information
- Engaging in discriminatory or harassing behavior related to legally protected characteristics
- Infringing on copyright, trademark or other intellectual property infringement

Participants should exercise caution when interacting with customers, former clients, or business partners online. Blurring the lines between personal and professional can create confusion, raise ethical concerns, and potentially expose both the individual and OCIA to reputational or legal risk.

Examples of Policy Violations

The following examples illustrate—but do not fully encompass—actions that violate OCIA's Social Media Policy:

- Making discriminatory, harassing or offensive remarks about a coworker based on race, religion, gender, or other protected characteristic.
- Sending repeated, unwanted romantic messages to a coworker via social media
- Publicly criticizing an employee or colleague online after they submit a complaint under OCIA's Anti-Harassment policy
- Threatening a coworker or colleague with physical harm in a social media post or message
- Sharing OCIA-related information in group or private group without proper authorization or without including a clear disclaimer that the views expressed are personal
- Disclosing confidential business updates (e.g., upcoming service expansions) before they are publicly announced
- Financial performance figures or internal metrics that are not public
- Using work hours to access personal social media or engage in unrelated online games playing games while on duty for OCIA
- Promoting a competitor's services, products, or offerings on a personal account in a way that may conflict with OCIA's interest

Participants are encouraged to use sound judgment and maintain a professional standard of conduct when engaging in social media platforms. If you are ever uncertain about whether a post or comment might violate OCIA's policies, please seek guidance from the Executive Director or appropriate supervisor before posting.

6.16 Use of Company-Sponsored Vehicle

Employees authorized to drive OCIA vehicles must:

- Hold a valid driver's license
- Employee is responsible for all violations ticketed
- Report accidents promptly
- No employees or unauthorized individuals shall ride in the company vehicle, unless prior approved by the Executive Director.

OCIA COMPUTERS AND INTERNET ACCESS

7.1 Use of OCIA Technology Resources

OCIA provides computers, networks, and internet access for business purposes. Employees are expected to use these resources responsibly and in accordance with OCIA policies.

Acceptable Use:

- Business-related communication, research, and administrative functions
- Brief and occasional personal use during breaks or personal time, if it does not interfere with work or incur costs

Unacceptable Use Includes (but is not limited to):

- Accessing or distributing offensive, pornographic, discriminatory, or threatening content
- Using OCIA systems for personal business, online games, or political campaigns unrelated to OCIA
- Unauthorized access to systems or files
- Installing unapproved software or disabling security features
- Sending chain emails or spam
- Representing yourself as someone else or misrepresenting OCIA

Misuse may result in disciplinary action, including termination, and possibly legal action.

7.2 Ownership and Access of Electronic Mail and Computer Files

All data, email, and files stored or transmitted on OCIA systems are the property of OCIA. OCIA reserves the right to:

- Monitor system and internet usage
- Review email and stored files
- Comply with lawful requests from authorities

Employees should not expect privacy when using OCIA computers, email, or internet access.

7.3 Confidentiality of Electronic Communications

All OCIA confidentiality and data protection policies apply to digital communications, including email, messaging platforms and document sharing.

Before sending email or documents, consider whether the content would be appropriate to post on a public bulletin board. If not, it may not be suitable for electronic transmission. Exercise discretion and ensure that sensitive or confidential information is shared only with authorized recipients using secure channels.

7.4 Message Tone for Electronic Mail

Employees are expected to maintain a respectful and professional tone in all electronic communications. Avoid:

- Profanity
- Discriminatory language
- Harassment or retaliation

Emails should always reflect OCIA'S standards of professionalism.

7.5 Email Integrity

Employees must not:

- Alter the content of email messages from others
- Forward altered messages
- Attach unauthorized content to another's message

Tampering with email may result in disciplinary action.

7.6 Internet Usage Policy

Use of the internet should support OCIA's mission and business goals.

Permitted Uses:

- Research and communication related to job duties
- Professional development

Limited Personal Use:

Permitted only during non-working time (e.g., breaks) and must not interfere with job performance.

Employees are responsible for any legal or contractual violations related to software licensing, copyright, or data breaches.

This policy does not supersede any state/provincial or federal laws or OCIA policies regarding confidentiality, information dissemination, or standards of conduct.

All OCIA policies and procedures apply to employees' conduct on the Internet, especially, but not exclusively, relating to intellectual property, confidentiality, OCIA information dissemination, standards of conduct, misuse of OCIA resources, anti-harassment, and information and data security.

Violation of these policies and/or state/provincial and federal laws can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination and criminal prosecution.

7.7 Prohibited Internet Activities

OCIA's network must not be used to:

- Access or distribute offensive, discriminatory, or illegal material
- Intentionally damage, disable, or impair systems
- Distribute viruses, worms, or other malicious code
- Violate any local, state, federal, or international laws

Violations may result in termination and possible legal consequences.

7.8 Internet and Network Security

OCIA takes network security seriously. Employees must not:

- Attempt to bypass security measures
- Share passwords or access credentials
- Store sensitive data outside approved systems

Security measures are in place to protect OCIA's systems and information. Violations may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

OCIA owns the rights to all data and files in any information system used in OCIA. Internet use is not confidential and no rights to privacy exist. OCIA reserves the right to monitor Internet/Intranet usage, both as it occurs and in the form of account histories and their content.

RECRUITMENT

8.1 Purpose and Commitment

OCIA International is committed to recruiting highly qualified, mission-aligned individuals who support our vision of sustainable agriculture and global organic certification. Our recruitment practices reflect our values of diversity, equity, and fairness.

8.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Director is responsible for:

- Overseeing all recruitment efforts
- Developing and implementing recruitment strategies
- Ensuring compliance with equal opportunity and employment laws
- Management team may assist in identifying position requirements and participate in interviews or the selection process, as appropriate

8.3 Sources of Recruit

To reach a broad and diverse pool of candidates, OCIA may recruit from:

- Universities and colleges with relevant programs (e.g., agriculture, business, sustainability)
- Technical and vocational institutions
- Community-based organizations
- Professional networks
- Employment agencies with relevant expertise
- Internal referrals

8.4 Online Recruitment

OCIA actively uses internet-based recruiting tools to attract top talent regardless of geographic location. This includes:

- Job posting platforms (e.g., Indeed, LinkedIn)
- OCIA's official website
- Industry-specific job boards
- Social media platforms, when appropriate

Digital recruitment strategies are used to ensure transparency, accessibility, and outreach to a diverse applicant pool.

SELECTION

9.1 General Statement

OCIA International is committed to a transparent, equitable, and merit-based hiring process. Selection decisions are guided by the organization's mission, values, and commitment to equal opportunity.

The goal is to hire individuals whose skills, experience, and goals align with the position and the strategic direction of OCIA.

9.2 Selection Practices

- All hiring decisions are based on qualifications, relevant experience, job performance potential, and organizational fit
- OCIA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other status protected by applicable law
- Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities upon request

Responsibilities:

- The **Executive Director** oversees and approves final hiring decisions
- The use of external recruitment or placement agencies may be approved if determined appropriate by the Executive Director

TRAINING

10.1 Purpose

OCIA International is committed to equipping employees with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their roles effectively and to grow professionally within the organization. Training ensures alignment with OCIA standards, policies, and regulatory compliance.

10.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing staff training, including:

- Initial orientation and onboarding
- Approval of ongoing and external training programs

Department managers are responsible for:

- Providing department-specific instruction
- Ensuring employees understand and apply relevant procedures

The Quality System Administrator informs staff of changes to forms, procedures, or work instructions that affect their duties. Employees are responsible for reviewing updates and incorporating them into daily work.

The Executive Director is responsible for providing initial training for new employees. Ongoing department specific training will be with the appropriate department.

10.3 Training Program

Initial Training:

- New employees will receive onboarding and role-specific instruction as part of their orientation
- Training records will be maintained in the employee's personnel file

Ongoing Training:

- Employees are expected to stay up to date with revisions to documents, forms, and procedures relevant to their roles
- Employees will be notified electronically when updates occur and are responsible for reviewing the changes and integrating them into their daily work

External Training:

- External training opportunities may be considered if relevant to an employee's role
- Approval from the Executive Director is required before attending any outside training or professional development event

Effectiveness Evaluation:

- Department managers or directors are responsible for evaluating the usefulness and effectiveness of training materials and sessions
- Training outcomes may be assessed as part of the employee's performance review

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND COMPENSATION SCHEDULES

11.1 Purpose

Performance evaluations provide employees with constructive feedback, identify professional development needs, and promote alignment with OCIA's goals. Evaluations also inform decisions about compensation, training, and role adjustments.

Evaluations are conducted annually, or as needed. Quality audits from OCIA's internal auditor may be conducted of the certification specialist annually.

All employees are considered **at-will**, meaning either the employee or OCIA may end the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice. A two-week written notice of resignation from the employee is preferred.

11.2 Oversight

The Executive Director is responsible for conducting or overseeing all employee performance evaluations.

11.3 Evaluation Methodology

Performance is assessed based on key job components and role-specific objectives. Scoring is structured as follows:

- **4 – Surpasses all objectives**
- **3 – Meets all objectives**
- **2 – Sometimes meets objectives**
- **1 – Rarely meets objectives**

Each component will be weighted to reflect its importance. Example, if given a weight of 30, a specific component would be multiplied times 30 and divided by 100, so given a score of 3 on an objective; you would take $3 * .30$ to get a weighted score of .9. A weighted average is calculated, with 4.0 being the highest possible score.

11.4 Ongoing Feedback

- Supervisors are encouraged to provide continuous, informal feedback throughout the year
- Performance expectations and goals may be adjusted during the year based on mutual agreement
- For Certification Specialist staff, adherence to file review procedures and the timeliness of follow-up actions after audits are also monitored and factored into evaluations

11.5 Annual Review and Goal Setting

At the end of the calendar year:

- The Executive Director meets with each employee to review performance
- Job components and objectives are scored, and results are documented
- New goals and expectations for the upcoming year are established
- Recognition may be given for outstanding performance within available budget, although a merit increase is not guaranteed

Note: This does not affect cost-of-living pay adjustments, which are considered separately although not guaranteed.

11.6 Recognition and Bonus Awards

Bonuses for exceptional performance may be granted at the discretion of the Board of Directors, in coordination with the Executive Director, and are subject to the organization's financial condition at year-end.

11.7 Starting Salaries and Pay Adjustments

Initial compensation is based on market competitiveness, budget, qualifications, and experience. The Executive Director sets starting salaries within budget constraints.

Salary increases are considered during the annual evaluation process but are not guaranteed.

11.8 Performance Improvement and Probation

Employees whose performance falls below expectations may be placed on probationary status with specific improvement goals and a defined review period. Failure to improve may result in disciplinary action or termination. An employee shall not receive probationary pay for more than three months without further review.

All new employees are subject to probationary pay for the first three (3) months of employment. Probationary pay is defined as 10% below the base pay for that position.

11.9 Misconduct and Disciplinary Action

Performance evaluations may also document any violations of conduct or policies. Repeated infractions, misconduct, or unaddressed performance deficiencies may result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

12.1 General Statement

Job descriptions define the primary duties, responsibilities, and expectations for each position at OCIA International. They support fair hiring practices, guide employee performance, and help ensure alignment between staff roles and organizational needs. The Executive Director is responsible for developing and maintaining all job descriptions.

Job descriptions are reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect changes in responsibilities, reporting structures, or organizational priorities.

Employees will be notified of any significant changes to their job description

12.2 Current Positions:

Title: Executive Director

Reports to: OCIA International Board of Directors

Position Summary:

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive of OCIA International and is responsible for implementing the vision, mission, and strategic goals established by the Board of Directors. Acting as the primary link between the Board and staff, the Executive Director leads the organization's certification programs, staff operations, stakeholder relations, and quality assurance initiatives. This role is accountable for ensuring compliance with international accreditation standards and for advancing OCIA's reputation and service delivery within the organic certification sector.

Key Responsibilities:

- Implements the Board's Ends and Executive Limitations policies using any reasonable interpretation
- Serves as the sole official connection between the Board of Directors and staff
- Leads strategic planning efforts in collaboration with the Board
- Develops and administers an annual operational budget in coordination with the Board
- Establishes and oversees internal policies, procedures, and organizational systems aligned with OCIA's mission and goals

Certification Program Oversight

- Bears ultimate responsibility for OCIA's international organic certification system
- Leads the development and continuous improvement of certification procedures and systems
- Oversees compliance with ISO, NOP, COR, LPO, and any other accreditation requirements
- Supervises all staff
- Conducts regular Management Team Meetings

Staff Leadership and Internal Coordination

- Provides oversight and direction for all staff functions and departmental operations
- Delegates authority to staff to achieve operational and strategic goals
- Coordinates training and capacity-building efforts for the OCIA Staff
- Facilitates communication and collaboration across all departments to solve problems and improve member services

Stakeholder and Constituent Relations

- Acts as a liaison with chapters, operators, government agencies, interest groups, and other constituents
- Ensures that service expectations of operators and stakeholders are met or exceeded
- Handles and resolves informal and formal complaints from members, staff, and third parties
- Coordinates the Election Committee for the Annual General Membership Meeting (AGMM)

Public Representation and External Relations

- Ensures representation at trade shows, industry events, and public forums
- Serves as the primary representative to accreditors and ensures the organization meets all applicable requirements
- Monitors industry trends, regulatory changes, and government policy issues relevant to OCIA's mission

Operational Monitoring and Reporting

- Monitors progress toward certification goals and evaluates system efficiencies
- Tracks file status reports and certification metrics to ensure timely performance
- Monitors Chapter Yearly Memorandums of Understanding and ensures alignment with OCIA policies and procedures

Minimum Qualifications:

- As determined by the OCIA International Board of Directors
 - 4-Year Business Degree or related field
-

Title: Director of Finance

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The Director of Finance is responsible for managing and maintaining the financial operations of OCIA International, Inc., OCIA Research & Education, Inc., and any related entities. This role ensures accurate financial reporting, compliance with accounting standards, and effective budget planning. The Director of Finance also oversees payroll and benefit administration, manages financial records and contracts, and supports leadership with strategic financial insight and operational decision-making.

Key Responsibilities:

Financial Management and Accounting

- Maintain complete and accurate financial records for OCIA International, OCIA Research & Education, and affiliated entities
- Ensure all financial activities are conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
- Perform all accounting data entry, including payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable functions
- Prepare and distribute monthly financial statements, including budget-to-actual comparisons

Payroll and Compliance

- Prepare bi-weekly payroll data for processing by external payroll service (e.g., ADP or equivalent)
- Ensure timely and accurate filing and payment of all payroll taxes and employment-related obligations through the external payroll provider
- Maintain all required payroll and personnel records in accordance with legal standards

Budgeting and Reporting

- Lead the preparation of the annual organizational budget
- Support the Executive Director and Board Treasurer by providing financial analysis and reports as needed
- Assist with the development and revision of the organization's fee structures

Vendor and Contract Management

- Review all invoices for accuracy and validity before payment
- Ensure timely payment of all bills to avoid late fees or penalties
- Maintain organized records of current contracts with vendors, independent contractors, regional offices, and affiliated entities

Benefits and Employee Support

- Coordinate with retirement and insurance providers to ensure timely and accurate enrollment of eligible employees
- Notify providers of employee changes (e.g., new hires, terminations) in a timely manner
- Communicate with benefit providers regarding any issues or updates

Legal and Organizational Compliance

- Maintain legal documents for all entities, including Articles of Incorporation, IRS determination letters, and annual tax filings
- Maintain records of current insurance policies, benefit contracts, and organizational compliance materials

Liaison and Communication

- Communicate regularly with the Board Treasurer and provide necessary reports and updates
- Work closely with the Executive Director to ensure financial alignment with strategic goals

Other Duties

- Perform other related duties as assigned by the Executive Director

Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or a related field and/or work experience
- Demonstrated experience in nonprofit or small business accounting is preferred
- Familiarity with payroll systems and benefits administration
- Strong understanding of GAAP and financial reporting
- Excellent organizational and communication skills

Title: Director of Accreditation and Inspector Services/Quality System Administrator/Board Liaison

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

This role oversees OCIA International's accreditation programs, quality system administration, and inspector services to ensure continuous compliance with regulatory requirements and best practices. The Director acts as the primary liaison with accreditors and is responsible for maintaining accreditation standards, managing inspector-related functions, and supporting OCIA's internal quality systems. Additionally, the role provides administrative support and facilitation for Board communication and documentation.

Key Responsibilities:**Accreditation Management**

- Maintain all OCIA International accreditations and ensure ongoing compliance (e.g., ISO, LPO, COR, NOP)
- Prepare and submit periodic reports to accreditation bodies
- Provide the required information to the General Manager of Peru for the Annual Report to SENASA, in accordance with the Operation Manual and SENASA requirements.
- Respond to accreditor inquiries regarding certification processes or staff
- Complete applications for new accreditations or expanded scopes as directed by the Executive Director
- Provide regular updates and recommendations to the Executive Director and Management Team regarding accreditation status, compliance issues, and policy impacts
- Investigates and tracks complaints and recommends resolutions
- Ensures internal audits are completed annually

Quality System Administration

- Maintain and ensure the accuracy of all documents in the OCIA Quality System
- Periodically evaluate Quality System documents for effectiveness and compliance with accreditation standards, report findings to the Management Team
- Participate in internal and accreditation audits and submit related reports
- Notify staff of updates or changes to documents for training purposes

Inspector Services Management

- Maintain inspector files, including assignment tracking, document review, and approvals
- Oversee updates and communications with inspectors regarding revised forms, procedures, and training
- Approve or renew inspector work agreements and oversee inspector approval documentation
- Coordinate verification and unannounced inspections in accordance with accreditation requirements
- Assign inspectors and ensure appropriate matching with operator needs, utilizing OCIA software tools
- Manage seal abuse complaints, appeals, and oversight of unannounced inspections

Training and Oversight

- Ensure training for the Certification Specialist is ongoing and completed in coordination with the Executive Director
- Coordinate annual residue testing and unannounced inspections as required by accreditors

Liaison and Communication

- Represent OCIA to external accrediting bodies and regulatory agencies
- Prepare, scan, and send reports and documentation to agencies and governments as needed
- Serve as moderator for the OCIA Board Google Group and provide administrative backup for meeting minutes as needed

Other Duties

- Perform additional tasks or responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director

Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent post-secondary education and/or work experience
- Experience in compliance, certification, or regulatory administration
- Background in agriculture, environment, or livestock-related fields is preferred
- Strong organizational, analytical, and communication skills
- Experience with quality systems and familiarity with accreditation standards is strongly preferred

Title: **General Manager OCIA Peru/Legal Representative**

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The General Manager/Legal Representative of Peru is responsible for maintaining the legal entity in Peru, acting as the main point of contact with Peruvian authorities, ensuring the continued operating of the legal entity in Peru.

Key Responsibilities:

Legal Entity

- Primary administrative supervisor for OCIA International Peru.
- Manage the legal entity representing the OCIA International Regional Office in Peru (“OCIA International Peru S.A.C.”).
- Responsible for implementing the Association's policies, subject to the control and direction of the OCIA Executive Director.
- Ensure the legal entity will comply with all laws and regulations of Peru
- Act as OCIA's legal representative in Peru.

Accreditation

- Updates the database to track the certification process in the SICPO system.
- Handles and resolves complaints and appeals from operators, staff, and third parties.
- Works with the Accreditation Director to respond to SENASA.
- Writes and sends responses to SENASA's requests and submits them through the SENASA document processing office. • Participate in regular meetings convened by the Certification Specialists and SENASA.
- Manage all deadlines described in Article 23 of the Certification Body's Obligations, as outlined in Supreme Decree No. 002-2020-MINAGRI, in a timely manner.
- Create and submit the Annual Residue Monitoring Plan for Organic Products to SENASA.
- Obtain documents for the annual report to SENASA in accordance with the Operating Manual and SENASA requirements. Compile the information and send it to SENASA.
- Date, sign, and stamp the Transaction Receipt to send to the operators and the TC department.

Customer Service:

- Acts as a liaison between operators and inspectors
- Assists in the assignment of inspectors as needed
- Reports all potential inspector issues to the designated Inspector Program representative.
- Addresses questions and provides information regarding the certification process to current and prospective operators.
- Assists in tracking fee payments.
- Performs a variety of tasks, including answering the phone, responding to emails, and providing customer service to operators.
- Works with all departments to help troubleshoot problems and communicates potential solutions to operators.
- Scans all information from operator files upon receipt, according to scanning guidelines.

Other Duties:

- Perform additional tasks or responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director

Minimum Qualifications:

- 2- or 4-year post-secondary degree or equivalent relevant experience
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Strong organizational and project management abilities

- Background or interest in agriculture or organic industry
-

Title: **Marketing Coordinator**

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The Marketing Coordinator is responsible for developing and implementing public relations, marketing, and communication strategies that enhance OCIA International's image and promote its services. This role supports outreach efforts, handles media inquiries, oversees event coordination, and collaborates with internal departments to ensure consistent messaging and excellent customer service.

Key Responsibilities:

Marketing & Public Relations

- Develop and execute public relations, communication, and marketing strategies to promote OCIA's programs and services
- Create and distribute promotional materials to members, prospective customers, and the broader organic community
- Answer general information inquiries from media outlets, members, the organic industry, and the general public
- Monitor trends in the organic industry and activities of competitors to inform marketing strategies
- Assist in developing strategies to increase awareness, grow membership, and support business objectives

Event Coordination & External Engagement

- Coordinate OCIA's participation in trade shows and other industry events; travel is required
- Serve as the special events coordinator for OCIA's Annual General Membership Meeting (AGMM)
- Act as liaison to the External Advocacy Committee, maintaining agendas, distributing materials, and supporting committee activities
- Support and participate in the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) as needed

Communications & Content Management

- Manage prospective customer inquiries, maintain follow-ups, and track business development leads
- Assist staff with internal and external communication projects
- Compile, edit, and distribute OCIA's biannual *Communicator* newsletter
- Serve as copy editor for OCIA's website and collaborate with relevant staff to keep content accurate and up to date

Collaboration & Customer Service

- Work collaboratively with internal departments to support customer service and organizational communication goals
- Ensure clear, consistent messaging and branding across all public-facing materials

Other Duties

- Perform additional tasks or responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director

Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in marketing, communications, journalism, or public relations
 - Relevant work experience in marketing, communications, or public relations
 - Excellent oral and written communication skills
 - Strong organizational and project management abilities
 - Background or interest in agriculture or organic industry preferred
-

Title: **Training Services Coordinator/Latin America Inspector Services Coordinator**

Reports to: Executive Director/Director of Accreditation and Inspector Services/Quality System Administrator/Board Liaison

Position Summary:

The Training Services Coordinator / Latin America Inspector Services Coordinator is responsible for developing and delivering training programs that support OCIA's certification system, and inspector network. The role also oversees inspector services specific to Latin America, ensuring alignment with accreditation requirements and organizational policies. This dual-role position plays a key part in maintaining inspector quality, consistency in certification practices, and the ongoing professional development of OCIA's personnel.

Key Responsibilities:**Training Services**

- Develop, coordinate, and deliver training programs for OCIA certification programs, inspectors
- Identify training needs and assign trainers as appropriate for specific programs or audiences
- Develop training materials and ensure consistency with OCIA's certification standards and policies
- Collaborate with the Executive Director and internal teams to ensure training content supports organizational goals and compliance requirements

Inspector Services – Latin America

- Maintain files for Latin American (LA) inspectors; send, track, and review inspector materials
- Coordinate with Regional Certification Coordinators and Certification Specialists regarding LA inspector assignments and documentation
- Update LA inspectors on revised forms, policies, and certification procedures
- Prepare documentation for inspector approval and reapproval
- Ensure accurate documentation of performance evaluations and inspector status
- Manage the annual renewal process for LA inspectors; send renewal materials, authorize inspections upon payment, and follow up as needed
- Field questions and calls from LA inspectors and provide timely support

Operational Support

- Conduct or assign verification and unannounced inspections for OCIA International as required
- Assist with complaints or quality audit findings in coordination with the Inspector Services Manager
- Sign OCIA Inspector Work Agreements on behalf of OCIA International
- Maintain and update the inspector database
- Serve as liaison to relevant committees as assigned
- Perform duties of a Certification Specialist, managing an individual caseload per the Certification Specialist job description

Other Duties

- Perform other responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director or Director of Accreditation and Inspector Services

Minimum Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience
- Successful completion of IOIA Inspector Training or equivalent certification
- Experience in training program development or curriculum design
- Strong organizational and communication skills
- Bilingual fluency in Spanish and English strongly preferred
- Experience working within Latin American agricultural or certification systems is an asset

Title: **TC/COI Coordinator**

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The TC/COI Coordinator is responsible for managing and issuing Transaction Certificates (TCs), NOPICs, Exports and Certificates of Inspection (COIs) in a timely, accurate, and compliant manner. This role supports international trade documentation for certified organic products and requires strong attention to detail, efficient data handling, and effective communication with operators, staff, and regulatory stakeholders.

Key Responsibilities:

- Supervise and coordinate all functions of the Transaction Certificate (TC) department
- Review and enter data from Transaction Certificate Authorization (TCA) forms daily
- Issue and distribute Transaction Certificates (TCs) to operators within 48 hours of complete submission
- Issue and distribute export documentation to operators within 48 hours of receiving completed submissions
- Submit COI traceability and inventory documentation to the Latin American Communication Representative for review
- Issue and distribute Certificates of Inspection (COIs) within 48 hours of approval confirmation that inventory verification is complete
- Respond to inquiries from customers, members, and staff regarding TCs and COIs, both verbally and in writing
- Maintain accreditation-related logs as required, in coordination with the Director of Accreditation

- Perform other duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Strong customer service and oral communication skills
- Proven ability to manage multiple tasks efficiently and accurately in a fast-paced environment
- Attention to detail and consistency in following established procedures

Title: **Certification Specialist**
AKA Certification Committee Coordinator (LPO)

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The Certification Specialist is responsible for reviewing organic certification applications, evaluating compliance with all applicable standards, and relevant governmental regulations, making informed certification decisions. The position requires attention to detail, clear documentation, regulatory knowledge, and effective communication with applicants, inspectors, and internal teams.

In the LPO designation, additional experience in organic agriculture is required to meet specific national program needs.

Key Responsibilities:

- Review certification files to assess compliance with all compliance regulations, OCIA Standards, and applicable governmental regulations (e.g., NOP, COR, LPO)
- Make certification decisions and complete certification decision checklists, documenting the rationale and any conditions, requirements, or recommendations
- Manage follow-up deadlines to ensure timely communication and resolution of outstanding certification issues
- Conduct pre-inspection reviews to assess file completeness and screen out clearly non-certifiable operations for CS ratification
- Write and send correspondence related to certification decisions, including letters for dialogue, deferral, noncompliance, or other actions
- Evaluate inspector performance and participate in inspector approval assessments
- Address complex or ambiguous certification scenarios through team discussions and consensus-building
- Provide input on the interpretation and revision of OCIA Standards
- Participate in regular Certification Specialist team meetings
- Respond to inquiries from applicants, members, and inspectors regarding standards, materials, and certification requirements
- Maintain accurate records in the certification database throughout the process
- Deliver exceptional customer service to operators and internal stakeholders
- Provide required information to the General Manager of Peru for the Annual Report to SENASA, in accordance with the Operation Manual and SENASA requirements.
- Other duties as assigned

Minimum Qualifications:

Education and/or Experience:

- 2- or 4-year post-secondary degree in Agriculture, Environmental Science, Plant Science, Soil Science, or a related field, **and/or**
- A minimum of 2 years of demonstrated experience in agriculture, environment, livestock, crop production, or other related fieldwork (may include IOIA training, apprenticeships, or internships in organic systems)

Additional Requirement for LPO Role:

- A minimum of **three years' experience** in organic agriculture or organic handling
- Additional qualifications and category-specific requirements may be referenced in the OCIA **Certification Category Approval Policy**

Title: **Regional Coordinator**

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The Regional Coordinator serves as a key point of contact between OCIA operators, inspectors, and Certification Specialists. This position supports the certification process by managing communication, ensuring timely document handling, maintaining data accuracy, and providing exceptional customer service to certified operations and prospective clients.

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as liaison between operators and inspectors, including assigning inspectors as needed and reporting any inspector concerns to the designated Inspector Program representative
- Act as liaison between operators and Certification Specialists (CS), forwarding documents for review and managing follow-up communications
- Respond to inquiries from current and prospective operators regarding the certification process
- Distribute application materials, renewal notices, and other certification documents to operators
- Conduct application file completeness reviews and follow up with operators to obtain any missing information
- Ensure certification letters and certificates are generated and delivered in a timely manner
- Communicate Certification Specialist outcomes to members
- Assist in following up on outstanding fee payments
- Update the certification database consistently to track operator progress and file status
- Handle import authorization licenses and related documentation
- Provide phone, email, and mail-based customer service to operators
- Collaborate with all departments to resolve operator-related issues and develop effective solutions
- Scan operator documents promptly upon receipt, following established scanning protocols
- Perform other duties as assigned

Minimum Qualifications:

- 2- or 4-year post-secondary degree or equivalent professional experience
 - Minimum of one (1) year experience in customer service or administrative support
 - Fluency in English is required; fluency in Spanish and/or French (written and spoken) is highly desirable
-

Title: Latin American Communication Representative/COI Assistant

Reports to: Executive Director

Position Summary:

The Latin American Communication Representative supports the export certification process by verifying traceability and inventory documentation for EU and Swiss Certificates of Inspection (COIs). This role ensures timely and accurate communication with operators and coordinates with the TC/COI Administrator to facilitate export compliance. The representative may also serve as a backup for the TC/COI Administrator and support related administrative functions.

Key Responsibilities:

- Receive and review documentation related to EU/Swiss COI inventory verification from the TC Administrator
- Assess submitted COI documentation and notify operators of any missing or incomplete materials
- Verify operator inventory and traceability for EU/Swiss exports and confirm authorization for TC/COI issuance within 48 hours of initial submission
- Serve as trained backup to the TC/COI Administrator, assisting as needed to ensure continuity of service
- Perform other duties as assigned

Minimum Qualifications:

- 2- or 4-year post-secondary degree or equivalent relevant experience
 - At least one (1) year of experience in customer service or document review
 - Fluency in English and Spanish, both written and spoken, is required
-

Title: Inspector

Reports to: Director of Accreditation and Inspector Services and/or Inspection Services for Latin America

Position Summary:

The inspector conducts assigned organic inspections according to OCIA policies and instruction.

Key Responsibilities:

- Objectively evaluate and verify the applicable requirements of an organic standard in a system or product through on-site inspection.
- Includes the review the organic plan, relevant documents, and assess the risk to organic integrity.

Minimum Qualifications:

- 2- or 4-year post-secondary degree or equivalent relevant experience
- At least one (1) year of experience in customer service
- Fluency in written and spoken English and/or Spanish

<p style="text-align: center;">OCIA INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and AGREEMENT</p>

All employees are required to sign the Acknowledgment and Agreement form indicating they have received, read, and understood the contents of the OCIA Employee Manual.

By signing, the employee affirms:

- They have received a copy of the Employee Manual
- They understand it is their responsibility to read and comply with the policies and procedures outlined
- They understand that OCIA reserves the right to amend, revoke, or add to the policies at its discretion
- They acknowledge that the Manual is not a contract and does not create a guarantee of continued employment
- They understand that employment with OCIA is at-will, meaning either the employee or the organization may terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice

Acknowledgment Form

(To be signed and returned to the Executive Director)

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the OCIA Employee Manual. I understand that it is my responsibility to read the manual and comply with all organizational policies and procedures.

I understand that the contents of the manual may be modified at any time, with or without notice, and that the updated policies will be communicated to employees accordingly.

I understand that my employment is at-will and that nothing in this manual constitutes a contract or guarantee of continued employment.

I acknowledge that I have read and signed:

- (a) The OCIA International Confidentiality Agreement and
- (b) The OCIA International Annual Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- (c) Code of Conduct (LPO only)

OCIA Employee Name

OCIA Executive Director

OCIA Employee Signature

OCIA Executive Director Signature

Date

Date