FITTskills Program Overview

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INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared for organizations interested in forming a partnership with FITT in delivering a leading international trade training and certification program to individuals aspiring to gain skills, knowledge and recognition in this exciting global business environment— the FITTskills Program.

FITT

The Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) is a national, not-for-profit organization committed to building the proficiency (knowledge, skills and abilities) of people businesses and organizations to access global markets, reduce and/or manage risks of integrative trade and enable profitable competition.

FITT's body of knowledge is the world's most trustworthy source of current, industry-validated information available on how to buy, sell, manufacture, finance and source products, raw materials or services anywhere in the world.

FITT is a respected, industry-driven world authority on global trade that provides reliable and timely, industry-vetted knowledge and practical resources to advance the practice of international business. The unique activities undertaken by FITT in support of international trade include:

- Identification and promotion of essential international trade knowledge and insights about competency gaps that most commonly impede the success of business, and competency-related promotion
- Development, delivery and promotion of international trade training other enabling knowledge, skill and ability-building products and services
- Responding to specific industries/trade sectors/disciplines to build the proficiencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) required to become more competitive in international trade
- Development of proficiency standards for successful international trade, a certification system for trade practitioners and accreditation for academic providers which meet these standards

FITTSKILLS PROGRAM

To become effective players in the international economy, organizations need to adapt to new realities and adopt a global outlook. Statistics show that increased involvement in international trade will contribute to economic development and job creation. In addition, today's knowledge intensive economies demand more flexible, multi-skilled business professionals and managers on site and in the boardroom. Meeting these skills requirements is possible through the FITTskills Program.

What is the FITTskills Program?

The FITTskills program is a turnkey series of international business courses that enable training and educational institutions to enhance the content, prestige, value and effectiveness of their international trade training offerings.

The FITTskills Program consists of eight courses, of approximately 45 hours each, that can be delivered as a series, individually or incorporated into an existing business program of study. When incorporating FITTskills into an existing business program of study, learners can gain access to both the institutional credential and FITT certification. FITTskills assessments which lead to FITT Certification are provided for each of the eight courses.

Together the eight courses meet the standards of excellence in the field of international trade and address essential topics within the context of global trade. The courses are designed and developed by international trade practitioners who are experts in their field.

In 1993, FITT delivered its first FITTskills courses – today we are proud to be offering the 6th Edition of the FITTskills textbooks in paper base or eBook formats.

An alliance with FITT allows your learners to gain a competitive advantage and a step ahead towards FITT certification and professional certification, making your program of greater value.

Target Audience

The FITTskills program is designed for:

- business professionals interested in improving their expertise in international trade;
- individuals who are new to exporting or importing and wish to further explore global market opportunities; and
- organizations seeking a strategic competitive advantage by training their staff with highly practical international trade skills.

FITTskills Curriculum

Focused on a truly international audience, the FITTskills curriculum covers the most relevant trade topics with practical information, examples and instructor support materials designed with the learner in mind.

The eight FITTskills courses include:

- Global Business Environment
- International Marketing
- International Trade Finance
- Global Supply Chain Management
- International Market Entry Strategies
- International Trade Research
- Legal Aspects of International Trade
- International Trade Management

A full description of each FITTskills course and their learning objectives can be found in Appendix A.

FITTskills courses can be taken individually, and in any sequence, though it is recommended that learners complete *Global Business Environment* first, and finish with *International Trade Management*.

Assessments

Certification Assessments – The content of each of the eight FITTskills courses are evaluated through the successful completion of an assessment. Five of the FITTskills courses include an open-book multiple choice exam. Three of the FITTskills courses include either a multiple choice exam or a

project based on a set of provided requirements (at the deliverer's discretion).

The courses which offer a choice between exams and projects are:

- International Marketing—international marketing plan
- International Trade Research—international research plan
- International Trade Management—international business plan

Transcripts

Course results are communicated electronically, after completion of each assessment. An official FITTskills transcript is provided to learners upon successful completion of four courses and eight courses.

FITT Credentials

FITT Credentials include 3 levels of recognition and qualifications: FITT Certificate; FITT Diploma; and the FITT Certified International Trade Professional (CITP) designation.

FITT Certificate

Conferred upon individuals who have successfully completed any four FITTskills courses and assessments, or who have received course exemptions for up to three FITTskills courses and successfully completed one FITTskills assessment.

FITT Diploma

Conferred upon individuals who have successfully completed all eight FITTskills courses and assessments, who have received course exemptions for up to six FITTskills courses and successfully completed two FITTskills assessments, or who have received eight course exemptions and successfully passed the CITP Professional Exam.

CITP Designation (Certified International Trade Professional)

Granted to individuals who have completed their FITTskills Diploma, achieved their practical work experience requirements, have endorsed the CITP Standards of Ethical Conduct, and have committed to ongoing professional development in the discipline of international business. The CITP holder has demonstrated that they have achieved the core competencies relevant to international business through skills and knowledge acquisition and work experience of a minimum of 1 year.

More than a credential the CITP is a professional qualification designed to demonstrate the complex skills and knowledge required for those involved in international business. The CITP promotes the advancement of international business professionals who assume a variety of roles and functions within organizations that are working on a global scale.

DELIVERY OF THE FITTSKILLS PROGRAM

Methods of Delivery

Delivery of the FITTskills program is determined by the institution based on their audience, program type and availability of institution resources. Some ideas for delivery include:

- Full-time or Continuing Education delivery – approximately 45 hours per FITTskills course
- FITTskills incorporated into a full-time business program – approximately 45 hours per FITTskills course
- Compressed learning for the business professional (e.g.: learner receives textbook in advance as pre-reading material followed by 2 days of instructor led learning. Exam taken within 30 days of course end date).

In addition to the above, the FITTskills program is available online.

Recommended Instructor Requirements

It is the responsibility of the educational partner to recruit and hire instructors. FITTskills course instructors should be knowledgeable in current international trade industry practices and have a thorough knowledge of the subject area they are instructing. With a high level of professionalism, instructors must present the material, answer learner questions, stimulate discussion, provide feedback, and supplement learning materials with personal experiences and examples.

It is recommended that instructors be:

- practitioners of international trade, recognized for professionalism in their field and knowledgeable in regional resources;
- experienced in learning instruction and methodologies;
- innovative in their approach to the teaching environment and demonstrate enthusiasm towards motivating and leading learners through the materials;
- prepared to commit to the FITTskills initiative and work to develop a professional, high-quality, practical course;
- able to participate in the exchange of information during the course, with the learners, coordinators and FITT; and,
- CITPs preferred.

Program Materials

For Learners

A textbook has been developed for each FITTskills course and is available to all learners in paper base or eBook formats.

The textbook contains the latest global business competencies and international trade trends. With chapter overviews, chapter summaries and exercises as well as current references and resources, learners will find the textbooks are great references to complement their learning.

For Instructors

An Instructor Website is available for all instructors associated with a FITT Educational Partner. The Instructor Website includes: case studies with discussion questions and answers; textbook exercise answers; key discussion points and PowerPoint overheads that complement each textbook chapter.

We can be reached at:

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APPENDIX A: FITTSKILLS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Global Business Environment

The course content for this topic covers the context in which international trade takes place and the opportunities and challenges it represents for business. In addition, you will find a complete discussion on ethical issues businesses face today. Topics such as a code of conduct for international trade professionals, human rights, ethical practices, diversity in the workplace and the environment, will be of particular interest. Cultural aspects of international business and the importance of e-commerce for facilitating international trade are also addressed in this course content.

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

- understand the current and future global business environment, from global and national perspectives;
- recognize the new competencies required in the 21st century business environment and understand what it will take to master them; and
- initiate a framework for a strategic plan to incorporate key elements of the international business process, including market research, market entry, financing, legal aspects, logistics, documentation and transportation.

International Marketing

The course content covers such topics as the development of marketing plans to achieve business targets and, the implementation and coordination of international marketing activities for products and services. Learners will be exposed to the principles of marketing functions and the distinctions between domestic and international marketing. They will also discuss such activities as adapting and/or developing products and services for the foreign market and the sales and marketing activities to be most successful in the target markets.

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

- identify the main principles of marketing;
- describe international marketing;
- explain how to use market intelligence, promotional strategies, and e-marketing for global success;
- recognize the influence of cultural, political, legal, and regulatory considerations on the international market environment;
- explain why companies would adapt their product/service for the international market;
- identify how to use marketing, pricing, and personal selling strategies to achieve international marketing goals; and
- prepare the international marketing plan.

International Trade Finance

This course addresses financial methods and tools used to conduct international business transactions successfully. Risks such as commercial and country are discusses as are risk-mitigating techniques, their use and legal implications. Learners will acquire a broad overview of the nature and scope of trade finance—in particular, the 'Four Pillars' of trade finance, i.e., payment facilitation, risk management, financing and provision of information related to a transaction. The impact of technology on trade finance and the importance of export credit agencies and international financial institutions in international trade are other topics of interest within this course content.

At the end of this course learners will be able to

- acquire a broad overview of the nature and scope of trade finance, particularly the "Four Pillars" of trade finance—payment facilitation, risk management, financing and the provision of information related to a transaction;
- understand the impact of technology on trade finance;
- understand the major products and services related to trade finance, including the role and requirement of each party to a transaction;
- appreciate the importance of export credit agencies and international financial institutions in international trade; and
- understand the importance of adequate planning relative to the financial aspects of international trade.

Global Supply Chain Management

The course content provides insight into global supply chain activities including production and inventory management processes and regulatory and security requirements. Other topics within the course material are: the key elements of a logistics plan and how it impacts the business plan, the advantages and disadvantages of various transport modes, the roles and value of outside service providers in a supply chain strategy, order processing, inventory management and other points of interest.

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

- identify the stages of a global supply chain;
- develop a well-planned supply chain management strategy to enhance a company's competitiveness;
- define the standard trade terminology used in international transactions;
- identify the main types of documentation used in international trade transactions;
- manage production, inventory, delivery, and returns efficiently to meet international demands and to reduce a company's risk; and
- select methods to enhance supply chain performance and efficiency.

International Market Entry Strategies

This course will cover a comprehensive assessment of international market entry options for the export of products or services and optimal market entry strategies. The learner will be able to assess barriers to market entry, differentiate between market entry strategies, recommend potential international partners through consultations and analysis of strengths and weaknesses and negotiate partnership agreements.

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

- perform basic corporate strategic needs assessments;
- identify and evaluate market entry and distribution options commonly used in international trade and investment activities;
- identify and evaluate appropriate partner(s) and type(s) of partnership(s), for any given international venture; and
- identify the factors involved in setting up and managing international partnership(s).

International Trade Research

The course content addresses the importance of well-planned and efficient research for guiding and promoting company activities. The learner will be able to develop research objectives that are compatible with corporate business objectives and select suitable methods of acquiring data. The course also presents material that will expose the learner to methods for analyzing and presenting researched data effectively and, consequently, be able to identify and evaluate international trade opportunities.

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

- describe the importance of well-planned and efficient research for guiding and promoting company activities;
- develop research objectives that are compatible with corporate business objectives;
- select suitable methods of acquiring data;
- analyze and present researched data effectively; and
- based on research information, identify and evaluate international trade opportunities.

Legal Aspects of International Trade

This course presents the basic legal principles of carrying on international business. It covers the legal implications of international business activities, discusses the legal aspects related to intellectual property, competition and antitrust laws, public trade law and issues related to e-commerce in international business. Most of the material in this course is presented with an international scope and does not solely approach the issues from a Canadian perspective.

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

- list the important clauses that should be included in international trade agreements;
- explain the significance of international treaties and conventions;
- explain the significance of "choice of law" and "jurisdiction" in international contracts;
- identify the basic provisions of the WTO and NAFTA;

- propose ways to limit product defects liability in international markets;
- list the reasons why intellectual property, trademarks, inventions, etc. need to be protected in the global market;
- explain the significance of competition laws and anti-trust laws;
- identify the basic rights and obligations of buyers and sellers by international sale of goods laws; and
- indicate the various legal issues that arise when engaging in electronic commerce and pro-active measures that entrepreneurs can take to minimize their legal risks.

International Trade Management

The material presented in this course content provides the learner with the ability to develop an international business plan thus ensuring a comprehension of the scope and breadth and integration of international trade practices. Factors that ensure profitable entry into the import and export business and how corporate resources can be mobilized to capture qualified international business opportunities are discussed.

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

- design and implement the structures of an export/import department for a company;
- determine the competitive advantages of a company in the global market and the relevance of pursuing partnerships, alliances or other expansion strategies;
- prepare an international business plan.