



## Healthy Workplace, Healthy You: Preparing workforce for a safe, healthy and sustainable food system through the Eat Right Campus

Apart from your own home, which place do you eat most frequently on a daily basis? If you think about it, it is likely to be your office, college or an institution that you visit regularly. In today's fast-paced environment, a large number of working professionals and students are spending the majority of their time at the workplace or college campus. The long working hours, classes or client meetings and short deadlines are only increasing the time spent at these places with little time left for eating healthy or exercising. Hospitals and call centers have workers who spend entire days and even nights working, often at the cost of their health. When we are at work, we are not always mindful of what we eat or drink, often resorting to unhealthy food, drinking excessive tea or coffee or even skipping meals altogether.

*Shri Arun Singhal, CEO, FSSAI*

In addition to this, safe and healthy options are often not available at most workplaces, leaving no choice but to rely upon what is available to satisfy one's hunger. Hence, there is a need to ensure that the food we eat at campuses is safe and healthy, given that diet related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart diseases are rising at an alarming rate.

To address these concerns and support campuses for ensuring availability of safe, healthy and sustainable diets for their employees, students, patients, inmates, etc., the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has introduced a nation-wide programme called the 'Eat Right Campus' (ERC). This initiative has been launched with two objectives, one is to create an environment of safe and healthy food habits for people in various campuses through compliance to a set of well-defined parameters; and continuously reiterating the message of "mindful eating habits" through awareness activities within the campus premises for continuous behavioural change.

Under this initiative, benchmarks have been created on four different parameters based on which campuses are evaluated and certified as 'Eat Right Campus'. These parameters include **food safety** measures, steps to ensure provision of **healthy** and **environmentally sustainable food** and **building awareness** among individuals in the campus to make the right food choices.

### Steps Involved in Certification of Campus



### Why it is useful for a food service establishment within the campus premises?

A detailed checklist has been created based on the above four parameters, outlining the best practices to be followed by the food handlers within the campuses. This goes beyond the mandatory requirement of licensing and registration of food service providers within the campuses. The certification is a powerful tool that ensures that food cooked/ handled/ served and stored in the campuses is safe and hygienic. Further, it ensures that food vendors comply with food safety and hygiene standards as per Schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006. Additionally, the third party audit/ hygiene rating audit of the campus kitchen provides a sense of recognition to the campus, thereby reducing the chances of frequent inspection visits by the food safety department in that area.

### Benefits to Campuses

Eat Right Campus recognizes the efforts of a campus towards ensuring the health of its people, adds prestige and brand value to its name and inspire others to adopt similar best



practices. In particular, it provides a unique opportunity to workplaces to showcase their efforts around employee health and wellbeing. This serves as a key incentive to attract new talent and top performers, thereby boosting high quality recruitment and employee performance. Investing in the health and wellbeing of employees also reduces absenteeism and healthcare costs and ultimately serves to build the reputation of the organization. Many workplaces strive to acquire a high rank in global workplace related ratings/indices. The ERC certification similarly aims to create a sense of competition among campuses across the country towards raising the standards of food safety, nutrition and food sustainability.

With as many as 1346 certified campuses now, this initiative is targeting varied sectors like government organisations, private workplaces, colleges/ universities, tea estates, etc. Recently, a wide range of Government

bodies like Anganwadi Centres, Police stations, Jails, Legislative Assembly, Delhi, etc. are covered under the ambit of Eat Right Campus initiative. As this initiative grows to include all campuses in the country, it will contribute to the productivity and economic growth of the country while also safeguarding people's health.

FSSAI is following a holistic approach by engaging with various institutions of national importance, government colleges, universities, IITs, IIMs, hospitals, and Central government ministries, to enrol them into the programme. Additionally, the Food Authority is working with various industry associations to enrol their member companies under this programme. Similarly, food service establishments like hotels (with a separate staff canteen/ kitchen) are being sensitized to join this initiative and contribute to the productivity and economic growth of our country while also safeguarding people's health.