

# WSET<sup>®</sup> Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits



SPECIFICATION



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Issue 14, 2014  
Issue 14.1, 2017 (updated with minor amendments)

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COVER PICTURES

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Bottom: The Dalmore Distillery

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# Introduction

This specification contains necessary information for both candidates and Approved Programme Providers (APPs) about the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits.

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of the learning outcome and elements of the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits. These should be used by APPs to prepare programmes of learning, and by candidates to plan their studies, because the examination is specifically set to test them.

The specification also provides a list of recommended tasting samples, guidance concerning the examination (including syllabus weighting and sample examination questions) and the examination regulations.

# The Wine & Spirit Education Trust's Qualifications

## WSET® Awards

WSET® Awards is the qualifications division of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, which provides quality-assured qualifications that help people to know more about alcoholic beverages and to develop their tasting skills. This is done by:

- liaising with the drinks industry to set suitable specifications
- approving programme providers to offer our qualifications
- setting examinations
- issuing certificates to successful candidates.

The development and awarding of WSET® regulated qualifications is the sole responsibility of WSET® Awards, the Awarding Body of The Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

The UK Government has established a regulatory authority, the **Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)**, which regulates Awarding organisations that offer qualifications. Some WSET qualifications are listed below.

### Full Title: WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines

Ofqual number 600/1504/4

**Description:** This qualification provides a basic introduction to the main styles of wines available to front-line staff involved in the service or sale of wine. The qualification aims to provide the basic product knowledge and skills in the storage and service of wines required to prepare a person for their first job in wine hospitality or retail.

### Full Title: WSET® Level 1 Award in Wine Service

**Description:** This qualification builds on the knowledge and skills taught in the Level 1 Award in Wines, and shows how these can be used in a restaurant workplace. It is ideal for anyone who needs to gain basic skills in wine service, including those wishing to make their first steps into a career as a sommelier.

### Full Title: WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits

Ofqual number 600/1501/9

**Description:** This qualification provides a basic introduction to the main categories of spirits available to front-line staff involved in the service or sale of spirits. The qualification aims to provide basic product knowledge to prepare a person for a role in hospitality or the spirits industry.

### Full Title: WSET® Level 2 Award in Spirits

Ofqual number 600/1507/X

**Description:** This qualification offers a greater breadth and depth of knowledge in the specific area of spirits and liqueurs than that offered by the broader-based Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits. This qualification offers focused coverage of all product categories in the field of spirits, and end-use of the identified products together with the theory of tasting technique.

### Full Title: WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits

Ofqual number 600/1508/1

**Description:** This qualification offers broad coverage of all product categories in the field of alcoholic drinks, together with the theory of tasting technique. It is suitable for those with little previous experience.

### Full Title: WSET® Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits

**Description:** This is a specialist qualification where detailed knowledge is combined with commercial factors and a thorough system for the professional evaluation of wines and spirits. The Diploma is recommended by the Institute of Masters of Wine for candidates wishing to pursue membership.



### **BS EN ISO 9001: 2008**

WSET® Awards operates a Quality Management System that complies with the requirements of BS EN ISO 9001:2008 for the management of awards for qualifications and examinations in the product knowledge and tasting competence of alcoholic beverages.

### **How to Prepare for a WSET® Qualification**

WSET® qualifications can only be offered by organisations approved by WSET® Awards, known as Approved Programme Providers (APPs), and candidates wishing to study for a WSET® qualification must enrol with an APP. The candidate's relationship is with their APP and the APP is responsible for the delivery of the course and administering the examination, which is set by WSET® Awards.

Group study with an APP is the best way of learning how to taste, but some APPs also prepare candidates for our examinations by distance learning.

A list of Approved Programme Providers (APPs) is published on the WSET website [www.WSETglobal.com](http://www.WSETglobal.com). Please contact the APP directly to find out about their programmes.

If you are interested in becoming an APP please contact the APP Administration Team, [appadmin@wset.co.uk](mailto:appadmin@wset.co.uk).

### **Diversity and Equality Policy**

WSET® Awards fully supports the principle of diversity and equality and is responsible for ensuring that all candidates for its qualifications are treated fairly and on an equal basis. A copy of our diversity and equality policy can be obtained from the APP Administration Team, [appadmin@wset.co.uk](mailto:appadmin@wset.co.uk).

### **Customer Service Statement**

The quality and scope of service that customers can expect from WSET® Awards is published in our Customer Service Statement. A copy can be obtained from the APP Administration Team, [appadmin@wset.co.uk](mailto:appadmin@wset.co.uk).

In the unlikely event of any dissatisfaction with the service received, please contact the registered APP in the first instance. If the issue is not resolved please contact the APP Administration Team, [appadmin@wset.co.uk](mailto:appadmin@wset.co.uk).

### **Scholarship Scheme**

Scholarships are awarded for each academic year, which runs from 1 August to 31 July. Candidates who achieve outstanding marks in their examinations may be eligible for a scholarship. The scholarships are managed by WSET® Awards, and eligible candidates will be contacted by WSET® Awards after the end of each academic year once all the results for qualifying examinations have been collated.

There are many scholarships on offer; please go to the scholarships page on the WSET website for more details, [wsetglobal.com/about-us/awards-bursaries](http://wsetglobal.com/about-us/awards-bursaries).

Please note that these scholarships do not take the form of financial grants to fund studies, but are in recognition of examination performance.

# Introduction to WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits

## Qualification Aims

The WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits is intended for those who have little or no previous knowledge of the broad range of wines and spirits. It is suitable wherever a sound but simple level of product knowledge is required to underpin job skills and competencies for example, in the customer service and sales functions of the hospitality, retailing and wholesaling industries. It is also useful for those who have a general interest in the subject.

Successful candidates will be able to interpret the labels of the major wines and spirits of the world and give basic guidance on appropriate selection and service, as well as understand the principles of wine tasting and evaluation.

## Qualification Structure

In order to meet the qualification aims there is one learning outcome.

## Learning Outcome

Identify the key influences on wine types and styles; identify and describe the characteristics of identified still, sparkling and fortified wines; state how to store, select and serve still, sparkling and fortified wines; identify the key methods of production for international spirits and describe the styles of identified spirits.

**Element 1:** Demonstrate a basic understanding of the factors that influence wine style.

**Element 2:** Describe the characteristics of the principal grape varieties used in still wine production and the style and quality of wines produced from these grapes in the key wine producing countries and regions of the world.

**Element 3:** Describe the style and quality of both still wines made from regionally important grape varieties and other regionally important named wines made in the key wine producing countries of the world.

**Element 4:** Outline the methods used in the production of sparkling wines and describe the style of these wines produced in the key wine producing countries of the world.

**Element 5:** Outline the methods used in the production of sweet and fortified wines and describe the style of these wines produced in the key wine producing countries of the world.

**Element 6:** Outline the key principles and methods used in the production of the principal categories of international spirits and describe the styles of the spirits produced.

**Element 7:** Demonstrate an understanding of the process and principles involved in the storage, selection and service of wine.

## Enrolment

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits. Candidates who are under the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held will not be allowed to sample any alcoholic beverage as part of their course, but this is not a barrier to successfully completing the qualification. Similarly, candidates who choose not to taste alcohol for health, religious or other reasons will not find this a barrier to successfully completing the qualification.

## Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

TQT is an estimate of the total amount of time, measured in hours that a learner would reasonably need to be able to show the level of achievement necessary for the award of a qualification, it is made up of GLH and private study time. GLH include all tutor supervised learning and supervised assessments.

The TQT for the Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits is 28 hours, made up of 17 GLH (including the 1 hour examination) and 11 hours private study.

## Recommended Progression Routes

The WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits, or an equivalent level of experience, is recommended for entry to the WSET® Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits programme.

# Elements of the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits

## ELEMENT 1

*Demonstrate a basic understanding of the factors that influence wine style.*

### Assessment Criteria

1. Define the conditions needed for the vine to produce healthy grapes.
2. Describe the impact of the growing environment on the grapes.
3. Outline the vineyard activities undertaken to produce healthy grapes.
4. Outline the winemaking processes used for identified wine types and describe their effect on wine style.
5. Outline the maturation processes used for identified wine types and describe their effect on wine style.

### Ranges

Range 1: Conditions	
Conditions	Warmth, sunlight, nutrients, water

  

Range 2: Growing environment	
Climate	Hot, moderate, cool
Weather	Vintage variation
Soils and slopes	Drainage, nutrients, water, aspect

  

Range 3: Vineyard activities	
Vineyard activities	Pruning, yields, pests and diseases, harvest

  

Range 4: Winemaking	
Processes	Crushing, pressing, fermentation, types of vessels, temperatures
Styles	Red, rosé, white

  

Range 5: Maturation	
Maturation	Types of vessels, effect of oxygen



**ELEMENT 2**

*Describe the characteristics of the principal grape varieties used in still wine production and the style and quality of wines produced from these grapes in the key wine producing countries and regions of the world.*

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Describe the characteristics of the principal grape varieties.
2. Describe the effect of climate and, where relevant, winery influences on the style and quality of still wine produced from the principal grape varieties.
3. Identify key wine producing countries and regions of the world for the production of still wine produced from the principal grape varieties. Describe the styles and qualities of these wines using the WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®.
4. Define the meaning of regionally important and other labelling terms that are commonly used to indicate the style and quality of still wines produced from the principal grape varieties.

**Ranges**

<b>Range 1: Principal grape varieties</b>		
<b>White</b>	Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling	
<b>Black</b>	Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah/Shiraz, Grenache/Garnacha	
<b>Range 2: Climatic and winery influences</b>		
<b>Climate</b>	Hot, moderate, cool	
<b>Winery (where relevant)</b>	Malolactic fermentation, lees, oak, maturation	
<b>Range 3: Most important countries and regions</b>		
<b>CHARDONNAY</b>		
<b>Premium</b>	<b>France</b> <b>USA</b> <b>Argentina</b> <b>Chile</b> <b>Australia</b> <b>New Zealand</b> <b>South Africa</b>	Burgundy: Bourgogne, Chablis, Puligny-Montrachet, Meursault, Mâcon, Pouilly-Fuissé <b>California:</b> Sonoma, Carneros Mendoza Casablanca Valley Yarra Valley, Adelaide Hills, Margaret River Marlborough Walker Bay
<b>Bulk/inexpensive</b>	Pays d'Oc, Southern Italy, California, Argentina, Central Valley (Chile), South Eastern Australia, Western Cape	
<b>Blends</b>	Chardonnay + Semillon, Chardonnay + local varieties	
<b>SAUVIGNON BLANC</b>		
<b>Premium</b>	<b>France</b> <b>USA</b> <b>Chile</b> <b>New Zealand</b> <b>South Africa</b>	<b>Loire:</b> Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé <b>Bordeaux:</b> Bordeaux Blanc <b>California:</b> Napa Valley Casablanca Valley Marlborough Elgin, Constantia
<b>Bulk/inexpensive</b>	Pays d'Oc, Val de Loire, California, Central Valley (Chile)	
<b>Blends</b>	Sauvignon + Semillon	

continued opposite

<b>RIESLING</b>		
Premium	France Germany Austria Australia	Alsace Mosel, Rheingau, Pfalz Clare Valley, Eden Valley
Bulk/inexpensive	Germany	
<b>PINOT NOIR</b>		
Premium	France Germany USA Chile Australia New Zealand South Africa	<b>Burgundy:</b> Bourgogne, Gevrey-Chambertin, Nuits-Saint-Georges, Beaune, Pommard Pfalz, Baden <b>California:</b> Sonoma, Carneros, Santa Barbara County <b>Oregon</b> Casablanca Valley Yarra Valley, Mornington Peninsula Marlborough, Central Otago Walker Bay
Bulk/inexpensive	Chile	
<b>CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND MERLOT</b>		
Premium	France USA Argentina Chile Australia New Zealand South Africa	<b>Bordeaux:</b> Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Pauillac, Margaux, Graves, Pessac-Léognan, Saint-Émilion, Pomerol, Bordeaux <b>California:</b> Napa Valley, Oakville, Rutherford, Alexander Valley Mendoza Maipo Valley, Colchagua Valley, Cachapoal Valley Margaret River, Coonawarra Hawke's Bay Stellenbosch
Bulk/inexpensive	Pays d'Oc, California, Central Valley (Chile), Mendoza, South Eastern Australia, Western Cape, Northern Italy	
Blends	Cabernet + Merlot, Cabernet + Shiraz	
<b>SYRAH/SHIRAZ AND GRENACHE/GARNACHA</b>		
Premium	France Spain Australia	<b>Northern Rhône:</b> Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage, Côte-Rôtie <b>Southern Rhône:</b> Côtes du Rhône, Côtes du Rhône Villages (+name), Châteauneuf-du-Pape <b>Languedoc-Roussillon:</b> Minervois Rioja, Navarra, Priorat Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Hunter Valley
Bulk/inexpensive	South Eastern Australia, Côtes du Rhône, Languedoc, Pays d'Oc, Spain	
Blends	Grenache + Shiraz, Shiraz + Cabernet, Grenache + local varieites, Shiraz/Syrah + local varieties	

#### Range 4: Common labelling terms indicating style or quality

France	Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC), IGP, Vin de Pays (VdP) <b>General:</b> Rouge, rosé, blanc, sec, demi-sec, moelleux, doux <b>Burgundy:</b> Premier Cru, Grand Cru <b>Bordeaux:</b> Supérieur, Grand Vin, Cru Bourgeois, Grand Cru Classé <b>Alsace:</b> Grand Cru
Germany	Qualitätswein, Prädikatswein, Trocken, Halbtrocken, Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese
Spain	DOCa, DO, Vino de la Tierra, tinto, rosado, blanco, seco, Joven, Crianza, Reserva, Gran Reserva
USA	Fumé Blanc
General	cuvée, oaked/unoaked, barrel/barrique-fermented/aged, organic, unfinned/unfiltered, vieilles vignes/old vines, vintage, alcohol content

**ELEMENT 3**

*Describe the style and quality of both still wines made from regionally important grape varieties and other regionally important named wines made in the key wine producing countries of the world.*

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Identify the regionally important grape varieties used in the key wine producing countries of the world and describe the style and quality of the still wines made from these grapes.
2. Identify the regionally important named wines in the key wine producing countries of the world and describe the style and quality of these wines using the WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®.
3. Define the meaning of regionally important and other labelling terms that are commonly used to indicate the quality and style of regionally important still wines.

**Ranges**

<b>Ranges 1 &amp; 2: Regionally important grape varieties and named wines</b>	
<b>FRANCE</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>White:</b> Chenin Blanc, Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer, Viognier <b>Black:</b> Gamay
<b>Named wines</b>	<b>Loire:</b> Muscadet, Vouvray <b>Alsace</b> <b>Beaujolais:</b> Beaujolais, Beaujolais Villages, Fleurie
<b>ITALY</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>White:</b> Pinot Grigio, Trebbiano, Verdicchio <b>Black:</b> Nebbiolo, Barbera, Sangiovese, Montepulciano, Primitivo, Aglianico
<b>Named wines</b>	<b>Piemonte:</b> Barolo, Barbaresco, Gavi <b>Veneto:</b> Valpolicella, Soave <b>Tuscany:</b> Chianti, Brunello di Montalcino
<b>SPAIN</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>White:</b> Albariño <b>Black:</b> Tempranillo
<b>Named wines</b>	Rías Baixas, Rioja, Ribera del Duero, Catalunya
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	
<b>Named Wine</b>	Douro
<b>USA</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>Black:</b> Zinfandel
<b>ARGENTINA</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>White:</b> Torrontés <b>Black:</b> Malbec
<b>Named wines</b>	Cafayate, Mendoza
<b>CHILE</b>	
<b>Grape variety</b>	<b>Black:</b> Carmenère
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>White:</b> Semillon
<b>Named Wine</b>	Hunter Valley
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	
<b>Grape varieties</b>	<b>White:</b> Chenin Blanc <b>Black:</b> Pinotage

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**Range 3: Common labelling terms indicating style or quality**


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<b>France</b>	Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC), IGP, Vin de Pays (VdP) <b>General:</b> Rouge, rosé, blanc, sec, demi-sec, moelleux, doux <b>Beaujolais:</b> Nouveau <b>Loire:</b> Sur Lie <b>Alsace:</b> Grand Cru
<b>Italy</b>	DOCG, DOC, IGT, rosato, rosso, bianco, secco, Classico, Riserva, Amarone
<b>Spain</b>	DOCa, DO, Vino de la Tierra, tinto, rosado, blanco, seco, Joven, Crianza, Reserva, Gran Reserva
<b>USA</b>	Fumé Blanc
<b>General</b>	cuvée, oaked/unoaked, barrel/barrique-fermented/aged, organic unfined/unfiltered, vieilles vignes/old vines, vintage, alcohol content

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**ELEMENT 4**

*Outline the methods used in the production of sparkling wines and describe the style of these wines produced in the key wine producing countries of the world.*

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Outline the important methods of production used to produce sparkling wines.
2. Identify the most important countries and regions for the production of sparkling wines and, where relevant, the grape varieties used. Describe the style of these wines using the WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®.
3. Define the meaning of regionally important and other labelling terms that are commonly used to indicate the style and quality of sparkling wines.

**Ranges****Range 1: Methods of production**

<b>Methods</b>	Bottle fermentation method (traditional, transfer), tank method (dry, sweet)
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**Range 2: Most important countries, regions and grape varieties****COUNTRIES AND REGIONS**

France	Champagne, Crémant, Saumur
Germany	Sekt
Italy	Asti, Prosecco
Spain	Cava
South Africa	
California	
Australia	
New Zealand	

**GRAPE VARIETIES**

<b>Grapes</b>	Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Muscat/Moscato
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**Range 3: Common labelling terms indicating style or quality**

<b>General</b>	Brut, Vintage/Non-Vintage, Traditional Method/Méthode Traditionelle/ Bottle-Fermented, Méthode Cap Classique
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**ELEMENT 5**

*Outline the methods used in the production of sweet and fortified wines and describe the style of these wines produced in the key wine producing countries of the world.*

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Outline the important methods of production used to produce sweet and fortified wines.
2. Identify the most important countries and regions for the production of sweet and fortified wines and where relevant, the grape varieties used. Describe the style of these wines using the WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®.
3. Define the meaning of regionally important and other labelling terms that are commonly used to indicate the style and quality of sweet and fortified wines.

**Ranges****Range 1: Methods of production****SWEET WINES**

**Methods** Filter yeast, addition of unfermented grape juice/concentrate, dried grapes noble rot, frozen grapes

**FORTIFIED WINES**

**Sherry** Fortification after fermentation, ageing

**Port, VdNs** Fortification to interrupt fermentation, ageing

**Range 2: Most important countries, regions and grape varieties****COUNTRIES AND REGIONS**

**France** Sauternes, Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise

**Germany**

**Italy**

**Spain** Sherry

**Portugal** Port

**Hungary** Tokaj

**GRAPE VARIETIES**

**Grapes** Sémillon, Muscat, Riesling

**Range 3: Common labelling terms indicating style or quality**

**Germany** Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein

**Italy** Recioto

**Spain** Sherry (Fino, Amontillado, Oloroso, PX, Cream)

**Portugal** Port (Ruby, LBV, Vintage, Tawny)

**General** botrytis/noble rot

**ELEMENT 6**

*Outline the key principles and methods used in the production of the principal categories of international spirits and describe the styles of the spirits produced.*

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Outline the principles and methods used in the production of spirits.
2. Outline the methods of production used for the principal categories of international spirits and describe the styles of the spirits produced.
3. Define the meaning of regionally important and other labelling terms that are commonly used to indicate the quality and style of international spirits.

**Ranges**

<b>Range 1: Principles and methods</b>		
<b>Principles of distillation</b>		Heating an alcoholic liquid, evaporating (difference in boiling point of ethanol and water), condensing
<b>Types of still</b>		Pot still (batch distillation), column still (continuous distillation)
<b>Post distillation</b>		Maturation, colouring, filtering, reduced to bottling strength
<b>Range 2: The principal categories of international spirits</b>		
<b>BRANDY</b>	<b>Raw material</b>	Grapes
	<b>Production</b>	Fermentation, distillation, oak maturation
<b>WHISK(E)Y</b>	<b>Raw material</b>	Grains (barley, rye, corn)
	<b>Production</b>	Conversion, fermentation, distillation, oak maturation
<b>RUM</b>	<b>Raw material</b>	Sugar cane (molasses)
	<b>Production</b>	Fermentation, distillation, oak maturation (optional)
<b>TEQUILA</b>	<b>Raw material</b>	Agave
	<b>Production</b>	Conversion, fermentation, distillation, oak maturation (optional)
<b>VODKA</b>	<b>Raw material</b>	Any
	<b>Production</b>	Fermentation, distillation, charcoal filtration (optional)
<b>FLAVOURED VODKA/GIN/LIQUEURS</b>	<b>Ingredients</b>	Neutral or characterful spirit, botanicals, essences, colourings, sugar
	<b>Methods of flavouring</b>	Maceration, re-distillation, essences
<b>Range 3: Common labelling terms indicating style or quality</b>		
<b>Vodka</b>		(Flavourings)
<b>Gin</b>		Distilled, London Dry
<b>Brandy</b>		Cognac, Armagnac, VS, VSOP, XO, Napoléon
<b>Whisk(e)y</b>		Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Blended Scotch Whisky Irish Bourbon, Tennessee
<b>Rum</b>		White, golden, dark, spiced
<b>Tequila</b>		Silver/Blanco, Gold/Joven/Oro, Reposado, Añejo

**ELEMENT 7**

*Demonstrate an understanding of the process and principles involved in the storage, selection and service of wine.*

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Outline the correct procedures for the storage, selection and service of wine.
2. Identify common faults found in wines.
3. Identify the key considerations when making a food and wine pairing recommendation.
4. State the social, health and safety issues relating to the consumption of wines and spirits.

**Ranges**

<b>Range 1: Storage and service</b>	
<b>Storage</b>	Optimum conditions, effects of poor storage
<b>Criteria for wine selection</b>	Wine style, wine quality, individual preferences, price, occasion
<b>Service</b>	Sequence of service, serving temperatures, opening and decanting, glassware and equipment
<b>Range 2: Common faults</b>	
<b>Faults</b>	Cork taint, oxidised, out of condition
<b>Range 3: Principles of food and wine pairing</b>	
<b>Wine considerations</b>	Sweetness, acidity, tannins/oak, complexity, fruitiness, alcohol level
<b>Food considerations</b>	Sweetness, acidity, umami, salt, bitterness, chilli heat, fat, flavour intensity
<b>Range 4: Social, health and safety issues</b>	
<b>Social responsibility</b>	Safe consumption of alcohol



# WSET Level 2 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

WSET LEVEL 2 SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO TASTING WINE®	
<b>APPEARANCE</b>	
<b>Clarity</b>	clear – hazy
<b>Intensity</b>	pale – medium – deep
<b>Colour</b>	White: lemon – gold – amber Rosé: pink – salmon – orange Red: purple – ruby – garnet – tawny
<b>NOSE</b>	
<b>Condition</b>	clean – unclean
<b>Intensity</b>	light – medium – pronounced
<b>Aroma characteristics</b>	e.g. fruits, flowers, spices, vegetables, oak aromas, other
<b>PALATE</b>	
<b>Sweetness</b>	dry – off-dry – medium – sweet
<b>Acidity</b>	low – medium – high
<b>Tannin</b>	low – medium – high
<b>Body</b>	light – medium – full
<b>Flavour characteristics</b>	e.g. fruits, flowers, spices, vegetables, oak flavours, other
<b>Finish</b>	short – medium – long
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
<b>Quality</b>	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding

# Recommended Tasting Samples

It is recommended that a student try the following samples during the course of their studies. The following examples have been arranged to show how they can be used in conjunction with the classroom sessions.

## Tasting Technique

Any inexpensive Italian Pinot Grigio  
 Any Gewurztraminer  
 Any oaked non-aromatic white (e.g. white Rioja Crianza)  
 An inexpensive fruity Valpolicella  
 Barolo  
 Any botrytis sweet wine (e.g. Tokaji, Beerenauslese)

## Grape growing and winemaking

Vouvray Demi-sec  
 Oaked South African Chenin  
 Any dry rosé wine (e.g. Navarra Rosado)  
 Californian White Zinfandel  
 Beaujolais or Beaujolais Villages  
 Premium oaked Californian Zinfandel

## Principal grape varieties

### Chardonnay

#### Chablis Premier Cru

Côte d'Or Commune or Premier Cru  
 Any inexpensive, high-volume New World Chardonnay  
 Any premium New World Chardonnay

### Sauvignon Blanc

Sancerre or Pouilly-Fumé  
 New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc

### Riesling

Premium German Kabinett or Spätlese (e.g. Einzellage)  
 Clare Valley or Eden Valley Riesling

### Pinot Noir

Côte d'Or Commune or Premier Cru  
 Any premium New World Pinot Noir

### Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot

Any inexpensive, high-volume fruity Merlot  
 Saint-Émilion Grand Cru  
 Grand Cru Classé (e.g. Haut-Médoc/Pauillac/Margaux)  
 Any premium New World Cabernet Sauvignon

### Shiraz and Grenache

Côtes du Rhône or Côtes du Rhône Villages  
 Châteauneuf-du-Pape  
 Northern Rhône Syrah  
 Premium Barossa Shiraz

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**Regionally important grape varieties and named wines**

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**General**

Viognier

**Italy**

Chianti Classico or Chianti Classico Riserva

Soave or Gavi

**Spain**

Inexpensive Spanish red (e.g. Rioja Joven)

Rioja Reserva or Gran Reserva

Rías Baixas Albariño

**Argentina and Chile**

Premium Argentinian Malbec or Chilean Carmenère

Argentinian Torrontés

**South Africa**

Premium South African Pinotage

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**Sparkling wines**

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NV Champagne

Cava

Prosecco or Asti

Any New World bottle-fermented sparkling wine

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**Sweet and fortified wines**

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Sauternes

Any non-botrytis dessert wine (e.g. Vin Doux Naturel)

LBV Port

Fino Sherry

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**Spirits**

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Neutral White Rum or Vodka

London Dry Gin

Cognac VSOP

Scotch Whisky

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# Examination Guidance

## Examination Administration

Examinations are conducted by WSET Approved Programme Providers (APPs). Administratively, APPs must comply with the criteria and codes of practice set out in the *Operating Handbook*.

## Assessment Method

The WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits will be assessed by a closed-book examination paper set by WSET® Awards, comprising 50 multiple-choice questions, to be completed in one hour.

All examination questions are based on the published learning outcome and elements and the recommended study materials contain the information required to answer these questions.

A candidate will be required to pass with a minimum mark of 55 per cent. WSET® Awards does not offer aegrotat awards; all assessment requirements of the qualification must be met.

## About the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits Examination

The WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits examination paper consists of 50 multiple-choice questions. Each question has only one correct answer, which should be indicated on a computer-readable answer sheet. The examination invigilator will give the full instructions on how to complete the answer sheet on the day of the examination. Each correctly answered multiple-choice question is worth one mark, and marks are NOT subtracted for incorrect answers.

All WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits examination papers are carefully compiled to reflect the weighting as indicated in the syllabus. A chart giving a detailed breakdown of the examination weighting is shown below.

Element	No. of questions
1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the factors that influence wine style.	6
2. Describe the characteristics of the principal grape varieties used in still wine production and the style and quality of wines produced from these grapes in the key wine producing countries and regions of the world.	19
3. Describe the style and quality of both still wines made from regionally important grape varieties and other regionally important named wines made in the key wine producing countries of the world.	10
4. Outline the methods used in the production of sparkling wines and describe the style of these wines produced in the key wine producing countries of the world.	4
5. Outline the methods used in the production of sweet and fortified wines and describe the style of these wines produced in the key wine producing countries of the world.	4
6. Outline the key principles and methods used in the production of the principal categories of international spirits and describe the styles of the spirits produced.	4
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the process and principles involved in the storage, selection and service of wine.	3
<b>Total questions</b>	<b>50</b>

**Issuing of Results**

Results of examinations are issued by WSET Awards as follows:

- WSET® Awards will issue an all-candidate grade list to the APP so that they can communicate results to their candidates. This grade list will be issued within two weeks of the receipt of completed scripts by WSET® Awards.
- WSET® Awards will issue candidates' letters and certificates to APPs, who are responsible for forwarding these documents to their candidates.

# Sample Examination Questions

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust does not release past papers for the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits. In order to give candidates an idea of the sort of questions that might be asked, this section includes five sample examination questions. The examination consists of 50 questions similar to these.

1. Compared with red wines, white wines are generally fermented at...
  - a) Either higher or lower temperatures
  - b) The same temperature
  - c) Higher temperatures
  - d) Lower temperatures
  
2. Which grape variety is considered to produce high-quality white wines in both Germany and Australia?
  - a) Merlot
  - b) Semillon
  - c) Shiraz
  - d) Riesling
  
3. Pinotage is a grape variety that is primarily used for...
  - a) South African red wines
  - b) Portuguese fortified wines
  - c) Australian white wines
  - d) Californian rosé wines
  
4. Which of the following words indicates that a wine has been aged for a period in oak?
  - a) Chenin Blanc
  - b) Classico
  - c) Côtes du Rhône
  - d) Crianza
  
5. A Tawny Port is...
  - a) Golden in colour, with yeasty flavours
  - b) High in tannins and acidity
  - c) Sweet, with nutty aromas
  - d) Sparkling and dry in style

## Answers

1d, 2d, 3a, 4d, 5c.

# Examination Regulations

## 1 Entry Requirements

### 1.1 Eligibility

**1.1.1** Candidates applying to sit the examination must be over the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held, or be preparing for the examination as part of a recognised full-time programme of study, or have obtained consent from their parents or legal guardians.

**1.1.2** There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits through overlaps with other qualifications or parts of qualifications.

**1.1.3** Candidates who are under the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held will not be allowed to sample any alcoholic beverage as part of their course, but this is not a barrier to successfully completing the qualification. Similarly, candidates who choose not to taste alcohol for health, religious or other reasons will not find this a barrier to successfully completing the qualification.

### 1.2 Recommended prior learning

**1.2.1** There are no requirements for candidates to have previous knowledge or previous experience of alcoholic beverages.

**1.2.2** The indicative levels of literacy and numeracy required for the examination are as follows:

**literacy:** Level 2 of the UK basic skills national standards, or equivalent level of literacy in the language used for the examination.

**numeracy:** Level 2 of the UK basic skills national standards, or equivalent.

## 2 Format and Results

**2.1** The WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits assessment is a closed-book examination of 60 minutes duration and consists of 50 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each.

**2.2** Results for successful candidates will be issued to APPs within two weeks from receipt of completed scripts.

**2.3** Results are graded as follows:

Mark of 85% and above	Pass with distinction
Mark of between 70% and 84%	Pass with merit
Mark of between 55% and 69%	Pass
Mark of between 45% and 54%	Fail
Mark of 44% and below	Fail unclassified

## 3 Reasonable Adjustments

**3.1** Examination candidates who have special examination requirements, which are supported by independent written assessment, are requested to notify the examinations officer at their APP of any such requirement at the time of enrolment. Further guidance for examination officers and candidates is available from WSET® Awards as required.

**3.2** It is the policy of WSET® Awards that such candidates should not be placed at a disadvantage in the examinations. Candidates are responsible for informing their APP of any such requirement at the time of enrolment.

## 4 Resits

**4.1** Candidates may apply to resit the examination if they are unsuccessful. There is no limit on the number of attempts that may be made.

**4.2** Candidates who have passed are not permitted to retake to improve their grade.

## 5 Examination Conditions and Conduct

**5.1** It is a condition of entry that candidates agree to the following specific conditions for the closed-book examination.

- At the start of the examination all candidates must supply the invigilator with proof of identity in the form of photographic ID.
- The examination is to be completed in a maximum of 60 minutes.
- No reference is to be made to any material, in whatever form, other than the examination question paper and answer sheet.
- Once the invigilator has declared that examination conditions are in place, no communication of any kind between candidates is permitted until they have left the examination room or the invigilator has announced the end of the examination.
- During the examination candidates are only permitted to have the following items with them; pens, pencils, erasers, drinking water and a small handbag or shoulder bag so long as it only contains personal items.
- It is prohibited for candidates to take any photographs of the examination room or examination materials.
- The use of electronic devices of any kind is prohibited.
- The use of dictionaries of any kind is prohibited.
- The use of audible 'alarms' on any clock or watch is prohibited.
- Candidates may not leave the room until the first 15 minutes of the examination time have elapsed.
- Candidates who arrive after the published start time will NOT be allowed to sit the examination if any other candidate has already left the examination.
- Candidates who arrive late may be allowed to enter the room at the discretion of the invigilator and only if other candidates are not compromised. Under normal circumstances we would not expect any candidate to be allowed to start the examination if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the published start time.
- Candidates may not leave, and then return to, the examination room once the examination has started unless they can be accompanied by an invigilator at all times while they are out of the examination room.
- Candidates who complete the examination early may leave the examination room up until the last 10 minutes providing they do not disturb other candidates; no re-admission is permitted.
- Invigilators have no authority to comment upon, interpret, or express an opinion on any examination question.
- Any candidate who is suspected of misconduct will be advised to leave the examination room immediately and their examination paper will be submitted to the Examination Panel to determine its validity and any future ban on sitting papers.
- No examination question papers are to be removed from the examination room; candidates who fail to submit the question paper with their answer sheet will be deemed guilty of misconduct.
- It is prohibited for candidates to reveal the content of examination papers to others, or reproduce it in any way.

**5.2** Candidates also agree to abide by the Invigilator's instructions. Failure to do so may render a candidate's results invalid.

**5.3** Examination papers and answer sheets are the property of WSET® Awards and will not be returned to candidates.



## **6 Examination Feedback, Enquiries and Appeals**

**6.1** Candidates requiring feedback and/or an enquiry (re-mark) on their examination paper should contact their APP and request an Application Form for Feedback and Enquiries Against Examination Results. The form must be completed and submitted to WSET® Awards along with the appropriate fee within six weeks of the date of the examination. Any request received outside this time-frame will not be reviewed. Feedback and enquiries will be issued within two weeks of receipt by WSET® Awards.

**6.2** Any candidate dissatisfied with the result of an enquiry of an examination paper should contact the APP and request an Appeal against Examination Results Application Form, which must be completed and returned to WSET® Awards, together with the appropriate fee, no more than 10 working days following notification of the enquiry decision. Appeals received outside this time-frame will not be reviewed. Appeals will be issued within two weeks of receipt by WSET® Awards.

## **7 Student Satisfaction**

**7.1** Should any student have concerns that their APP is not providing the service that they expect, or is behaving in a way that is inconsistent with the standards required in terms of administration, tuition or examinations they should first take this up with their APP. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, candidates are asked to contact our APP Administration Team, [appadmin@wset.co.uk](mailto:appadmin@wset.co.uk). Please note that all complaints will be dealt with confidentially, but WSET® Awards cannot act on anonymous complaints.

## **8 WSET® Awards Regulations**

**8.1** WSET® Awards reserves the right to add to or alter any of these regulations as it thinks fit.

WSET® gratefully acknowledges the support of the following **CORPORATE PATRONS** in helping to promote excellence in wine and spirit product training and qualifications:



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