WSET

WSET® Level 1 Award in Beer

Specification

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Designed by Paul Barrett

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Introduction

This Specification contains necessary information for both candidates and Approved Programme Providers (APPs) about the WSET Level 1 Award in Beer.

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of the Learning Outcomes of the Level 1 Award in Beer. These outcomes should be used by APPs to prepare programmes of learning, and by candidates to plan their studies, because the exam is specifically set to test these outcomes.

The Specification also provides a list of recommended tasting samples, guidance concerning the exam and the exam regulations.

At the end of this document you will also find information on the other WSET qualifications.

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Introduction to the WSET Level 1 Award in Beer

Qualification aims

The Level 1 Award in Beer is a beginner level introduction to beer, intended for people who have little or no prior knowledge. It is designed to provide a sound but simple overview and is suitable for those starting a career in the industry or pursuing an interest in beer.

Successful candidates will be able to list and state the purpose of the main ingredients and production steps used to make beer, state the key characteristics of specified beer styles, and know the key principles involved in successful beer and food pairing and storage and service. They will consequently be able to answer customer queries and provide recommendations for beer service.

Qualification structure

Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the qualification aims, there are three Learning Outcomes.

Learning outcome 1	Know the main ingredients and the main steps used in beer production.
Learning outcome 2	Know the specified styles of beer and state their key characteristics.
Learning outcome 3	Know the key principles and practices involved in the storage and service of beer.

Entry requirements

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 1 Award in Beer.

Please refer to Section 1 in Chapter 5 for additional eligibility information.

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 1 Award in Beer is 6 hours of GLH. This includes 45 minutes for the exam.

Recommended progression routes

The WSET Level 1 Award in Beer provides a good foundation for progressing to the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer.

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Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome 1

Know the main ingredients and the main steps used in beer production.

Assessment Criteria

1. List and state the purpose of the main ingredients used in beer production.
2. List and state the purpose of the main production steps used in beer production.

Ranges

Range 1: Main beer ingredients	
Malt (malted grains) and other sources of sugar	Grains Types of malt – base malts, speciality malts Other sources of sugar The grain bill
Water	
Hops and other flavourings	Hops, hop cones Hop varieties • Traditional German, Czech or British hops • American, New Zealand or Australian hops Using hops Other flavourings
Yeast	Yeast Types of yeast – ale yeast, lager yeast, other types of yeast and bacteria Approaches to fermentation: adding cultured yeast and/or bacteria, spontaneous fermentation

Range 2: Main production steps	
Malting	Steeping and germination, kilning
Brewing	Milling – grist Mashing – mash, wort Wort boiling Fermentation Carbonation Packaging
Key processes	Starch to sugar conversion: starch is converted to sugar in presence of enzymes Alcoholic fermentation: yeast consumes sugar and creates alcohol, aromas and carbon dioxide

Learning Outcome 2

Know the specified styles of beer and state their key characteristics.

Assessment Criteria

1. Name the malt-driven styles of beer and state their key characteristics.
2. Name the hop-driven styles of beer and state their key characteristics.
3. Name the yeast-driven styles of beer and state their key characteristics.
4. Name the sour styles of beer and state their key characteristics.

Ranges

Range 1: Malt-driven styles	
Brewed with base malts only	American or international pale lager Munich helles Blonde ale
Brewed with some speciality malts	Munich dunkel Brown ale Porter or stout Barley wine

Range 2: Hop-driven styles	
Brewed with traditional Czech, German or British hops	Traditional Czech or German pilsner Bitter
Brewed with American, Australian or New Zealand hops	American pale ale American IPA Hazy IPA

Range 3: Yeast-driven styles	
Yeast-driven ales	Weissbier Dubbel Tripel Saison Witbier

Range 4: Sour styles	
Sour styles	Berliner weisse Geuze (gueuze)

Learning Outcome 3

Know the key principles and practices involved in the storage and service of beer.

Assessment Criteria

1. State the key practices in the storage and service of beer.
2. State the common faults found in beer.
3. State the key considerations when making a food and beer pairing recommendation.

Ranges

Range 1: Storage and service	
Storage	Drink beer fresh, keep beer cool, protect beer from light, keep beer sealed
Service	Glassware Keg beer – pouring keg beer Bottled beer – opening a bottle sealed with a crown cap, pouring bottled beer Service temperature

Range 2: Common beer faults	
Faults	Staling, light strike (skunking), bacterial infection

Range 3: Beer and food	
	Preferences and sensitivities Primary interactions – sweetness, umami, acidity, salt, bitterness, chilli heat Application Other considerations – intensity, aromas

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Recommended Tasting Samples

Samples should be chosen from the list of styles included in this Specification under Learning Outcome 2.

An introduction to tasting beer

- One malt-driven style brewed with some speciality malts
- One hop-driven style brewed with American, Australian or New Zealand hops
- One yeast-driven ale

The samples chosen should show clear differences in aroma profile as well as variety in terms of colour, clarity and bitterness levels.

Malt-driven styles

- One malt-driven style brewed with base malts only
- Optional: one malt-driven style brewed with some speciality malts

Hop-driven styles

- One hop-driven style brewed with traditional Czech, German or British hops
- Optional: one hop-driven style brewed with American, Australian or New Zealand hops

Yeast-driven styles

- One yeast-driven ale
- Optional: one additional yeast-driven ale

Sour styles

- One sour style

Beer and food

Recommended styles for the beer and food exercise:

- Munich helles
- Porter or stout
- Tripel

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Exam Guidance

Exam administration

Exams are conducted by WSET Approved Programme Providers (APPs). APPs must comply with WSET policies and procedures set out in the APP Handbook.

Assessment method

The WSET Level 1 Award in Beer is assessed by a closed-book theory exam of 30 multiple-choice questions, to be completed in 45 minutes. Each question has only one correct answer, which should be indicated on either (a) a computer-readable answer sheet, or (b) a computer/other device, depending on the mode of assessment delivery. Full instructions on how to complete the test will be given on the day of the exam.

Each correctly answered multiple-choice question is worth one mark, and marks are NOT subtracted for incorrect answers. A candidate is required to pass with a minimum mark of 70 per cent (21 marks out of 30).

About the WSET Level 1 Award in Beer exam

All exam questions are based on the published Learning Outcomes and exam papers are carefully compiled to reflect this content. The recommended study materials (An Introduction to Beer) contain the information required to answer these questions.

A chart giving a detailed breakdown of the exam weighting is shown below.

Learning Outcome	Number of multiple-choice questions (1 mark per question)
Learning Outcome 1	13
Learning Outcome 2	13
Learning Outcome 3	4
Total number of questions	**30**

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Exam Regulations

1 Entry requirements

1.1 Eligibility

1.1.1 Candidates applying to sit the WSET Level 1 Award in Beer exam must be over the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the exam is being held, or be preparing for the exam 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 1 Award in Beer 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 exam is being held, or those who choose not to taste alcohol (e.g. for health or religious reasons) will not be allowed/required to sample any alcoholic beverage as part of their course, but this is not 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 Candidates sitting in English where it is not their first language are strongly recommended to have IELTS at 6 or above or be able to demonstrate an equivalent ability level.

1.2.3 Candidates sitting in other languages should have an equivalent level of literacy in the language used for the exam.

2 Format and results

2.1 The WSET Level 1 Award in Beer assessment is a closed-book examexamexamexam of 45 minutes' duration and consists of 30 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each.

2.2 Exam results are issued by WSET as follows:

- WSET will issue an all-candidate grade list to the APP so that they can communicate results to their candidates.
- Subsequently, WSET posts candidates' record of achievement letters and certificates to APPs, who are responsible for forwarding these documents to their candidates.

2.3 Results are graded as follows:

Mark of 70% or more	Pass
Mark of 69% or below	Fail

WSET reserves the right to make changes to the grade thresholds published above.

2.4 While WSET would not normally make changes to grade algorithms or thresholds, there may be circumstances in which it is necessary to do so to secure the maintenance of standards over time.

3 Reasonable adjustments

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

3.2 It is the policy of WSET that such candidates should not be placed at a disadvantage in the exams. 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 exam if they are unsuccessful. There is no limit on the number of attempts that may be made.

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

5 Exam conditions and conduct

5.1 By registering for a WSET exam, candidates agree to the following conditions:

- Candidates must not be involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the exam. Malpractice or misconduct will be investigated in line with published WSET policy and may lead to sanctions including disqualification from the exam.
- Before the exam all candidates must supply proof of identity in the form of an official photo ID.
- The exam is to be completed in the time specified for each unit.
- Possession of reference material of any kind is prohibited.
- Once exam conditions are in place, no communication of any kind between candidates is permitted until they have left the exam room or the end of the exam has been announced.
- During the exam, candidates are only permitted to have the following items with them: tasting glasses, spittoons, pens, pencils, erasers and drinking water.
- It is prohibited for candidates to photograph exam materials, reveal the content of exam papers to others, or to reproduce it in any way. The use of electronic devices of any kind, other than a computer or mobile device which is being used to sit an exam, is prohibited.
- Mobile phones (which are not being used in a remote invigilation context) must be switched off and placed out of sight, away from the exam desk.
- The use of audible 'alarms' on any clock or watch is prohibited.

In-person exams

- Candidates may not leave the room until the first 15 minutes of the exam time have elapsed.
- Candidates who arrive after the published start time will NOT be allowed to sit the exam if any other candidate has already left the exam.
- 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 exam if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the published start time.
- Candidates may not leave, and then return to, the exam room once the exam has started unless they can be accompanied by an invigilator at all times while they are out of the exam room.

- Candidates who complete the exam early may leave the exam 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 exam question.
- Any candidate who is suspected of misconduct will be advised to leave the exam room immediately.
- No exam question papers are to be removed from the exam room; candidates who fail to submit the question paper with their answer sheet will be deemed guilty of misconduct.

Remote invigilation exams

- Clear guidance on how to administrate remotely invigilated exams and associated regulations will be given to applicable candidates in advance of their exam.

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 WSET reserves the right to permanently exclude candidates found guilty of misconduct from WSET qualifications.

5.4 Exam papers and answer sheets are the property of WSET and will not be returned to candidates.

6 Exam feedback, enquiries and appeals

6.1 Candidates requiring enquiry (re-mark) and/or feedback on their exam paper should contact their APP and request an Enquiry and Feedback Form.

6.2 Any candidate dissatisfied with the result of an enquiry of an exam paper should contact the APP and request an Appeal Against Enquiry Application Form, which must be completed and returned to WSET, 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.

7 Candidate satisfaction

7.1 Should any candidate 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 exams, they should first make a complaint to their APP. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, candidates are asked to contact our Quality Assurance Team by emailing qa@wsetglobal.com. Please note that all complaints will be dealt with confidentially, but WSET cannot act on anonymous complaints.

8 General conduct

8.1 WSET has a reasonable expectation that its staff and those representing WSET at our Approved Programme Providers (APPs) will be treated professionally and respectfully as they carry out their jobs. Inappropriate behaviour including verbal or physical abuse, persistent or unrealistic demands, or threats that cause stress to staff will be viewed as misconduct and may lead to permanent exclusion from WSET qualifications.

9 Exam regulations

9.1 WSET reserves the right to add to or alter any of these regulations as it thinks fit.

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WSET Qualifications

The WSET has a range of qualifications that cover sake, wine and spirits as well as beer. In full, the qualifications are:

WSET Level 1 Award in Beer
WSET Level 2 Award in Beer

WSET Level 1 Award in Sake (603/2051/5)
WSET Level 2 Award in Sake
WSET Level 3 Award in Sake (603/2066/7)

WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits (600/1501/9)
WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits (600/1507/X)
WSET Level 3 Award in Spirits

WSET Level 1 Award in Wines (600/1504/4)
WSET Level 2 Award in Wines (603/4432/5)
WSET Level 3 Award in Wines (601/6352/5)
WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines

More information about all of these qualifications can be found on the WSET website wsetglobal.com.

Regulation

WSET is recognised as an awarding organisation by Ofqual, the English regulator for qualifications and exams. Where applicable, the Ofqual accreditation numbers are listed next to the Qualification titles above.

Diversity and Equality Policy

WSET 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 Quality Assurance Team by emailing qa@wsetglobal.com.

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A world of knowledge

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