Beer Judge Certification Program

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www.bjcp.org

Beer Judging Examination
Exam Procedures

Planning for the Exam

Planning for giving a BJCP Beer Judging Exam requires attention to a number of important details.

Requirements

In general, a minimum of six participants are required to schedule a **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**, and the date and administrator must be approved by the BJCP Exam Director (exam_director@bjcp.org). If a scheduled exam does not meet the requirement of having a minimum of six eligible participants, then our preference is that it be rescheduled for a date when there is sufficient demand. Exams cannot be rescheduled without the Exam Director's permission. In cases where the exam is given to fewer than six participants without the prior written approval of the Exam Director, then

1) The Exam Administrator BJCP experience points may be reduced
   a) For 1 or 2 examinees; no credit
   b) For 3 to 5 examinees; half credit
   c) For 6 or more; full credit
2) The start of grading of the exam is deferred for three to six months until it can be merged with another set of exams.

Plan on scheduling the exam at least six months in advance, since there are limits on how many exam sites are allowed in any given month. It is also, strongly recommended that the sponsor collect a non-refundable deposit to ensure that there are enough participants committed to take the exam. An exam can only be scheduled by submitting an Exam Data Approval Form (EDAF). The maximum number of participants for the BJCP Beer Judging Examination is twelve, with limited exceptions made by the BJCP Exam Directors. For example, the maximum number may be increased to twenty if the local exam administrator recruits BJCP exam graders from the region to fill four exam grading slots. The motivation is that the graders help sustain the exam program while contributing to the growth of the BJCP in their region. These four grading assignments could be a different twenty exam set, or two standard twelve exam sets. If the graders do not complete their assignments, the maximum number of participants reverts to the default value of twelve.

All participants taking the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** must have either passed the web-based **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination** or scored higher than 60% on the written portion of the

BJCP Legacy Beer Examination (given prior to April 1, 2012). These participants should bring their BJCP-ID, BJCP certificate, or e-mail confirmations of passing so that the exam administrator can verify their status. Any exam submitted to the BJCP for grading that was written by a participant that was not eligible to take the exam on the date it was written will not be graded and the exam fee will not be refunded.

It is also the Exam Administrator's responsibility to make sure everyone taking the exam is of legal drinking age under the laws in effect in the location where the exam is given.

Exam Proctors

Administering the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** requires an exam administrator as well as a minimum of two proctors. The proctors' role is to score the exam beers with no additional information beyond that made available to the examinees other than allowing the proctors to use the **BJCP Style Guidelines**. The proctors are to provide scoresheets not biased by information not available to the examinees, whichis why the exam administrator does not also function as a proctor – the exam administrator selects/prepares the exam beers and generally knows too much about the beers.

Grading tasting examinations requires high quality proctor scoresheets. To ensure this, the proctors must come from a pre-approved proctor list drawn from the pool of "active" National and Master judges found on the BJCP web site in the pages at http://www.bjcp.org/apps/reports/proctors.php . This page is dynamically generated when the BJCP database of judge scores and experience is updated. If the administrator for an exam administration site is not able to obtain proctors from this list, they **MUST** contact the Exam Director at least two weeks prior to the exam to get advance approval to use alternative proctors.

The BJCP Exam Director (exam_director@bjcp.org) can grant waivers from the proctor rules but such exceptions are expected to be rare. The use of a proctor with less than National-level rank, including the use of judges with minimum tasting score of 80 and more than 10 judging experience points requires pre-approval by the Exam Director. We further desire that at least one proctor be a Master-level judge (or higher) or a judge with a minimum tasting score of 90 and with at least 20 judging experience points. If one or more of the proctors is Master-level, then a third proctor can be used that only has a Certified-level rank.

Potential proctors must be identified when scheduling a **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**. The Exam Director can grant waivers to the proctor requirements, but these waivers are expected to be limited to examinations outside of North America and to areas with very few existing BJCP judges. Such waivers must be coordinated with the Exam Director before scheduling the examination.

Travel Expenses

Each exam proctor earns one judging experience point and five Grand Master Service Requirement (GMSR) credits for his or her efforts, and this is generally sufficient to balance expenses associated with traveling to the exam. The exam administrator is allocated 30% of the exam fees for expenses associated with the exam, and a portion of this can be used to subsidize the proctors' travel expenses. However, in special cases, such as when the exam is in a remote location or there are a large number of examinees, the BJCP Board of Directors may grant stipends to cover higher than normal administrative and travel expenses. Requests for these stipends must be made to the Exam Director at least three months prior to the exam date, and the requests are limited to reasonable and actual expenses, such as one night in a hotel or gasoline. Scanned copies of receipts should be submitted to the exam director after the exam, and reimbursement will be made by the BJCP treasurer.

Exam Translations

As the BJCP becomes a global organization, an increasing number of exams are being offered in other languages such as Spanish, Portuguese and French. The Exam Directors are actively recruiting and training graders who are fluent in these languages, and several additional volunteers have offered assistance in translating style guidelines, exam questions and other documents.

Exam translators will be offered compensation of US $20 per exam, contingent on the exam translations being completed in less than 30 days for an exam set (or part of a large exam set) with twelve or fewer participants. After the exams have been received and scanned at the Brewers Association, the Exam Director will send a Dropbox link to a folder containing the scanned exams along with a cover letter with more detailed instructions about the assignment. The translation fees will be processed by the BJCP treasurer upon notification by the Exam Director that the assignment was satisfactorily completed.

Exam Fees

The fees for the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** are US $40 for first time takers and $15 for subsequent retakes. The fee for the **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination** is $15.

Thirty percent of the fee for each exam is designated for expenses related to holding the exam, and may be split between the sponsor and administrator. If there are to be additional expenses such as room rentals or transportation, please get approval from the exam director prior to the exam, and send receipts to the exam director for reimbursement.

The sponsor or administrator, at their discretion, may reduce individual exam fees by waiving a portion of their allotment. This is acceptable as long as the BJCP receives $28 (70% of $40) or $10.50 (70% of $15) for each participant.

Examinees should pay the Exam Administrator (if using checks, make them out directly to the Exam Administrator). The Exam Administrator then submits the payment using PayPal **directly to the BJCP** for 70% of total fees. No cash or checks, please. The payment system is at http://www.bjcp.org/apps/exam_pay/exam_find.php. The PayPal system is for Exam Administrators only; do not advertise this link to examinees.

Before the Exam

Examinee Data Capture Form

Approximately one to two weeks before the exam, you will receive an email from the Exam Director assigned to your exam. If you do not receive this email at least three days prior to the exam, please send an inquiry to exam_director@bjcp.org. The email from Exam Director will include a cover letter and an Excel spreadsheet called the Examinee Data Capture Form (EDC). This spreadsheet replaces the handwritten Participant Information Forms. You will need to enter the names, addresses, email addresses and other information for all participants taking the BJCP exam into the EDC. The first column in the EDC is the Exam ID, which has the format YYMMSTCI, where YY and MM are the two digit year and month, respectively, ST is the two letter code for the state or province, and CI are the first two letters for the city where the exam will be held. For exams outside of the US and Canada, the two digit country code replaces the abbreviation for the state. The second column of the EDC is a two-digit identification number (typically from 1 to 12) that will be combined with the Exam ID to create a unique Participant ID for each examinee.

You may wish to distribute the spreadsheet to the examinees before the exam so they can enter their own information and then email it back to you. The information can then be cut-and-pasted into a master spreadsheet. Be sure to check the information for accuracy and formatting, and that the final spreadsheet has data for only those examinees who actually took the exam. It is vital that you enter the Exam ID correctly, as this is the only way an individual exam is associated with the examinee. For privacy reasons, please do not distribute the information in the EDC to anyone other than the Exam Director.

Exam Papers

The email from the Exam Director will also include PDF copies of the proctor and examinee scoresheets. You will need to make six copies of these for each examinee and proctor, but we recommend making some extra copies in case there is a beer spillage accident. **The exams will be copied before they are sent to the graders, so please instruct the participants to write on only one side, to write legibly with sufficient contrast for scanning the exams and to NOT write comments in the margins.** If the examinee needs more space for comments than is available on the examinee scoresheet, please provide a blank sheet of lined paper with a header that includes the Participant ID and beer number. Note that the scoresheets and other documents needed for the administration of the BJCP Beer Judging Exam can be found on the BJCP website, under "Exam Administrator Resources."

Exam Beers

You will need six beers for the exam, with sufficient volume of each for all examinees and proctors. A good rule of thumb is 3-4 oz. per sample. It is strongly recommended that these beers be homebrews and represent a reasonable cross section of mainstream classic beer styles. Leftover beers from homebrew competitions are excellent sources of beers for a BJCP exam, and beers from similar styles can often be blended to make a unique sample. Do not use historical or specialty beers (i.e. do not use BJCP styles 27 through 34). The six exam beers must be unique styles; multiple versions of the same style shall not be used in an exam, e.g., you cannot present two different examples of a Irish Stout. Up to three classic-style commercial beers may be used if sufficient suitable examples of homebrewed beer are not available, but these selections should be communicated to the exam director (exam_director@bjcp.org) in advance of the exam. When using classic-style commercial examples, insure that the brands chosen actually do reasonably represent the style named on the label. Two of the beers should have distinctly noticeable faults or characteristics (avoid threshold flavor faults/characteristics including mildly stale examples), such as the examples in this list:

- diacetyl/buttery;
- DMS/cooked vegetable;
- oxidized/cardboard;
- lactic or acetic acid sourness;
- green apple/acetaldehyde;
- fruitiness/esters;
- solvent-like/higher alcohols;
- puckering/astringent;
- grossly incorrect body, alcohol content, color or other style characteristics.

Naturally flawed beers or blends of different homebrewed beers are strongly preferred. Doctoring beers to obtain these characteristics is discouraged due to variable results, but if there is no alternative, the doctoring procedures outlines in Section II.E of the BJCP Study Guide should be used. The base beers being doctored should not be clean light lagers, as in a flavor training class, but more common styles such pale ales, German lagers or dark ales. One of the beers should be an excellent (38-44) or outstanding (45-50) example of its style. In order to ensure that the proctors and examinees are judging the same

beer, the beers should be blended and decanted from a pitcher. Each beer should be served to the participants under optimum temperature conditions. Avoid delays between decanting beers and serving. Announce each beer style and sub-style as it is served but provide no additional information.

Strive to serve beers in the following categories – both lagers and ales, light and dark beers, and both low and high gravity styles, for example:

1. Lager (BJCP styles 1-9)
2. German Wheat (BJCP style 10) or European Sour Ale (BJCP style 23)
3. British, Irish or Scottish Ale (BJCP styles 11-16)
4. American Ale (BJCP styles 18-20)
5. Belgian Ale (BJCP styles 24-26)
6. IPA or Strong Ale (BJCP styles 17, 21, 22)

A specific example of a suite of exams beers is as follows:

1. British Strong Bitter – flaw such as incipient oxidation and weak hop aroma
2. Weissbier - good example, but with slightly too much sourness
3. Doppelbock – no flaws, outstanding example
4. Saison – somewhat flawed, with higher than desirable phenols or alcohol
5. Imperial Stout – very good example, but lacks smoothness found in best examples
6. American IPA – seriously flawed with fruitiness, astringency or diacetyl

While only one hypothetical suite of beers, these cover a range of styles, colors, strengths and quality. The appropriate range in scores likely spans the low teens to the mid-40s. The beers should be presented to the candidates in order of the assertiveness of the style flavors (as one would do when arranging flights at a beer competition). You are also encouraged to discuss your ideas for exam beers with the Exam Director prior to the exam.

The proctors' scoresheets will be the basis of comparison for the graders' evaluation of the examinees. Proctors must be served each beer with only the same information as provided to the test takers. It is highly recommended that the Exam Administrator refrain from preparing scoresheets if he or she also prepares and serves the test beers. This may introduce bias into the scoring since the exam administrator knows more about the source of the beers than the participants. If you are unable to obtain two suitable proctors that have no knowledge of the beers please contact the Exam Director for help in producing exam beers that you will be unfamiliar with so you can score them. Note that we are now using expanded scoresheets for the proctors and are asking them to refrain from discussion until after they finish their scoring and comments on the scoresheet – at that time they are to complete the consensus sheet for the beer but are **not to alter** their original scoresheets.

Provide information to the Exam Director about each beer served using the following template:

1. Style of beer as brewed, entered in competition or marketed.
2. Identify as homebrewed, or brand of beer if commercial example
3. Draft or bottled
4. If bottled, conditioned or counter pressure filled
5. Approximate age (freshness) of beer (if known)
6. Distinctive fault(s) or characteristic(s), e.g., contaminated, diacetyl, esters, oxidation, distinctive hop aroma/flavor, body, alcohol, etc.
7. Comments on blending, doctoring, adjusting, whatever that might impact the perception of the beer.
8. Any other notes that might be useful for the graders, such as expected scoring range or why the beer was chosen for the exam.

During the Exam

Format

The **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** has a 90-minute time limit. If there are any participants taking the BJCP Written Proficiency Exam on the same day, it must be administered first, with a 15-30 minute break before the commencement of the Beer Judging exam. *Those participants only taking the judging exam should be respectfully quiet if they arrive while the written exam is being administered.*

The beers in the judging exam should be served at 15 minute intervals. The scoresheets for the Beer Judging examination should not be passed out until the Beer Written Proficiency Examination has finished. A typical schedule is:

- 9:00: Beer Written Proficiency Exam (if it is being given on the same day) starts
- 10:30: Beer Written Proficiency Exam concludes, answer sheets collected
- 10:30-11:00: Break, Beer Judging Exam paperwork is distributed.
- 11:00: Judging exam begins, first beer served
- 12:30: Judging exam concludes, with scoresheets collected

Exam Checklist

1. Copies of the exam cover sheet.
2. Copies of the examinee and proctor scoresheets.
3. Exam beers, bottle opener, pitcher and cups.
4. Water and bread to cleanse the palate.
5. Mechanical pencils.
6. Sufficient supply of standard size (8.5. by 11), ruled paper – preferably not three-hole punched loose-leaf paper, since it tends to jam in scanner and copy machines. If this is not available, the Exam Director can provide a lined template that can be used to generate answer sheets.

At the Start of the Exam, Please Explain that:

- The Judging Exam is closed book, so the BJCP Style Guidelines and other references cannot be used.
- The exam requires advance payment. Offer a refund to anyone who is not prepared, but only before the exam has been distributed.
- Examinees need to ensure that they provide the exam administrator with accurate postal and email addresses on the EDC since that contact information will be ported into the BJCP judge database
- Examinees must place their examinee codes on all exam papers, **write on only one side of the scoresheets, to write legibly with sufficient contrast for scanning the exams, and to not write comments in the margins.**
- The six test beers should be evaluated as if the prospective judges were participating in a BJCP competition. They will be graded on completeness, descriptive ability, perception, feedback and scoring accuracy.

Use of Electronic Devices

Use of the following electronic devices is **not allowed** during the BJCP examinations:

- Calculators, except for basic "four-function" models. By "four-function" we mean basic calculators that do not have the ability to store programs or data for redisplay.
- Pagers

- PDAs
- Laptop or desktop computers.
- Cell phones. In the case of an emergency, phones may be left with the Administrator with instructions for answering.
- Walkman/iPod or other listening devices.
- Headphones of any type.

Examinees with any special needs are required to contact the Exam Director to work out specific procedures a minimum of six weeks in advance of the exam date.

The Examinee Data Capture Form should be emailed to the Exam Director promptly and should include accurate contact information for the participants. The Exam Director will not need this information for the proctors since their names and BJCP IDs are written on their score sheets. It would also be helpful if you provide your BJCP ID in an email to the Exam Director, as well as the BJCP ID of anyone else requesting administrative credits for the exam.

Results: When the grading has been completed, the official results and a report to the participant will be mailed to the examinees as soon as the exam information has been entered into the BJCP database. The judging record will list the competitions in which the each participant has judged. There are often omissions, but instructions will be provided on how to bring the judging records up-to-date. In keeping with the BJCP Privacy Policy, the exam scores are not released to the Exam Administrator.

After the Exam

Copy the exams: The exam administrator is responsible for making a complete copy of the exams, proctor sheets, and exam beer notes - every page must be copied. The exam administrator should retain the copies until the BJCP Exam Director underlines that the originals have been received. If this confirmation is not received within two weeks, contact the Exam Director to confirm – exams have been lost in the mail before. The administrator should then provide a copy of their individual exam to each of the examinees. This copy is the only copy that will be made available to the examinees. Under no circumstances will the BJCP be returning the originals or copies of the exams. The cost of making this copy is expected to be covered by the 30% of the exam fee allotted for the administration of the exam. Examinees should not be given copies of the proctors' scoresheets.

Examinee Data Capture Form: The exam administrator needs to tabulate the contact information and exam number for each examinee into an Excel template that is provided by the Exam Director. That spreadsheet is ported directly into the BJCP database, so please ensure that the information is accurate.

Scoring and Turnaround Time: The original exams should be mailed to Brewers Association as soon as possible after the exam date, but no later than one week after the test. The mailing address is:

>Brewers Association
>PO Box 1679
>Boulder, CO 80306
>Attn: John Moorhead

It is anticipated that the exam results will be returned within twelve weeks of the exam date. Most of this time is used by volunteer National and higher ranked judges to do the comprehensive scoring of the exams. Their scoring and feedback is then reviewed by both an Associate Exam Director and the Exam Director before being sent to the Assistant Exam Director for processing and recording of the results.

Experience Points: You as the exam administrator will receive Exam Administrator experience as ten GMSR points (see http://www.bjcp.org/gmsr.php for the details) which in turn results in two non-judging experience points. You are permitted to delegate some or all of these experience points to those who assist with the exam, but at present no additional points will be given for these supporting roles. As noted above, additional judging experience points are available to proctors who serve as independent tasters of the exam beers. They are to evaluate the beers with only the same information as that given the examinees – namely the style in question. They are not to consult and resolve scoring discrepancies. The proctors should be informed that their scoresheets will be evaluated by the graders and exam director for quality, and points may not be awarded if the proctors' work is substandard. Similarly, some or all of the administrator's points may not be awarded if it is apparent that these instructions were not followed, or the exams are not received within ten days of the exam date.