



Beer Judge Certification Program

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www.bjcp.org

Mead Examination Exam Procedures

Planning for the Exam

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

Requirements

In general, a minimum of five participants are required to schedule a **BJCP Mead Examination**. There will be a Mead Exam administered in conjunction with the AHA National Homebrew Conference. Additional Mead Exams may be scheduled at other US and international locations by submitting an EDAF along with confirmation that there will be at least five qualified participants. **If a scheduled exam does not meet the requirement of having a minimum of five 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 five 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 4 examinees; half credit
 - c) For 5 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.

There are no preconditions to taking the BJCP Mead Examination, anyone is eligible to take this exam. As noted above, at least five participants will generally be required to schedule a **BJCP Mead Examination**, but exceptions will be made in special circumstances.

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 Mead Examination** requires an exam administrator as well as a minimum of two proctors. The proctors' role is to score the exam meads 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, that is

why the exam administrator does not also function as a proctor – the exam administrator selects/prepares the exam meads and generally knows too much about the meads.

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/meadproctors.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 Mead 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, gasoline, or translation fees. Scanned copies of receipts should be submitted to the exam director after the exam, and reimbursement will be made by the BJCP treasurer (preferably through PayPal).

Exam Fees

The fees for the BJCP Mead exam are US \$50 for non-BJCP members, and \$30 for existing BJCP judges. 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 \$35 (70% of \$50) for non-BJCP members or \$21 (70% of \$30) for existing BJCP judges.

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, the Exam Director will email you 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. Each Participant will have a unique identification number (typically from 1 to 12) that should be used to label his or her scoresheets according to the instructions in the cover letter from the Exam Director.

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 Examinee 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 for All Examinations

Approximately one to two weeks before the exam, you also will be sent the exam questions and other documents that are needed for the exam. You will need to make copies of these forms for each exam taker. On the EDC, please place sequential numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) after the four digit, four letter exam code (e.g., **1304-STCI**) to identify the examinees. This ensures anonymity throughout the grading process. **The exams will be scanned or copied before they are sent to the graders, so please use standard size (8.5 by 11) ruled paper and instruct the participants to write on only one side and to NOT write in the margins. The originals need to be scanned/photocopied for the graders and scanners/copy machines tend not to copy all the way to the edges of the original. The exam director will also provide a lined answer sheet template that may be used if ruled paper is not available.**

Exam Meads

You will need three meads for the tasting portion of 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 preferable that these meads be homebrews. Meads judged should include one mead from each major BJCP style category, including one varietal mead, one melomel and one other mead. At least one should be flawed and at least one should be a very good example. Open category meads (sub-style 26C) should be avoided. The three exam meads 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 Pyment. Up to two classic-style commercial meads may be used if sufficient suitable examples of homebrewed mead 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. One of the meads must have one of the following distinctly noticeable faults or characteristics (avoid threshold flavor faults/characteristics including mildly stale examples):

- oxidized/cardboard;
- lactic or acetic acid sourness;
- fruitiness/esters;

- solvent-like/higher alcohols;
- puckering/astringent;
- grossly incorrect body, alcohol content, color or other style characteristics.

Naturally flawed meads or blends of different homebrewed meads are strongly preferred. Doctoring meads to obtain these characteristics is discouraged due to variable results, but if there is no alternative, the doctoring procedures outlined in Section II.E of the BJCP Beer Study Guide should be used. We would prefer that one of the meads 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 mead, the meads should be blended and decanted from a pitcher. Each mead should be served to the participants under optimum temperature conditions. Avoid delays between decanting meads and serving. Announce each mead style and sub-style as it is served, and provide the sweetness, strength, and carbonation parameters. Provide honey variety, if appropriate, and also provide fruit, spice, or other flavoring information for Melomel and Metheglin sub-styles. Other than this, provide no additional information.

Strive to serve both low and high gravity examples. One example of a suite of exam meads is as follows:

- 1) Melomel – flaw such as incorrect or undetectable fruit, or overly acidic or cloying
- 2) Traditional Dry Mead – No flaws, outstanding example
- 3) Sack Braggot – very good example, but lacks balance found in best examples

While only one hypothetical suite of meads, these cover a range of styles, colors, strengths and quality. The appropriate range in scores likely spans the low teens to the mid-40s. It is encouraged to discuss your ideas for exam meads 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 mead 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 meads. This may introduce bias into the scoring since the exam administrator knows more about the source of the meads than the participants. If you are unable to obtain two suitable proctors that have no knowledge of the meads please contact the Exam Director for help in producing exam meads 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 mead served using the following template:

- 1) Style of mead as brewed, entered in competition or marketed
- 2) Identify as homebrewed, or brand of mead if commercial example
- 3) Draft or bottled
- 4) If bottled, conditioned or counter pressure filled
- 5) Approximate age (freshness) of mead (if known)
- 6) Distinctive fault(s) or characteristic(s), e.g., contaminated, esters, oxidation, balance, alcohol, etc.
- 7) Honey varietal, if specified to examinees, as well as fruit/spice information for flavored meads

During the Exam

Format

The **BJCP Mead Examination** has a 165-minute total time limit but it is given as two distinct and separate portions. All participants must take both portions of the exam, there is no option to take just one

portion. The essay portion of the Mead exam is always given first. The scoresheets for the tasting portion of the exam should not be passed out for the essay portion. Start the essay portion, giving the examinees exactly two hours. Announce when the first hour of the two hour time period has expired and when there are 30 minutes left in the essay portion. When the time period for the essay portion has expired, immediately collect all test papers from examinees. After a short break, pass out the examinee scoresheets and begin administer the tasting portion of the test, bringing out the first mead sample when starting the test, then bringing out the second mead sample after 15 minutes, and the final mead example at 30 minutes into the tasting test.

The scoresheets for the tasting examination should not be passed out for the essay examination. A typical schedule is:

- 9:00: essay portion begins
- 10:30: essay portion concludes, with answer sheets collected
- 10:30-10:45: a brief break, tasting portion paperwork handed out
- 11:00: tasting portion begins
- 11:45: tasting portion concludes, with scoresheets collected

Exam Checklist

1. Copies of the exam cover sheet.
2. Copies of the exam questions.
3. Mechanical Pencils.
4. 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 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 Mead Exam is closed book, so the BJCP Style Guidelines and other references cannot be used.
- Most essay questions can be answered in about 1.5 to 2 pages. If the participants are writing significantly more or less, adjustments may need to be made. Partial credit is given for incomplete answers, so instruct the participants not to skip any questions.
- 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 he provides 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 answer pages and the scoresheets** and not write comments too close to the margins.

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 confirms 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: 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
1327 Spruce Street
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.