



# Beer Judge Certification Program

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[www.bjcp.org](http://www.bjcp.org)

## *Exam Procedures*

### **Before the Exam**

**Exam Requirements:** In general, a minimum of five participants are required to organize a BJCP examination, and the date and administrator must be approved by the BJCP Exam Director. Plan on scheduling the exam well in advance, there 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 sitting for the exam. In the case that five participants do not register within one week of the exam date, the exam will be cancelled and refunds returned. In the case where sufficient numbers register, but do not show up, the deposit will be split between the BJCP and the sponsor.

It is 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 exam requires the 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, that is 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. The quality of the proctors' scoresheets is extremely important to grading the tasting portion of the examination. The proctors need to be able to produce scoresheets of the National judge level of quality or better. For these reasons, the proctors should be drawn from the "active" members shown on the BJCP web site in the pages at <http://www.bjcp.org/apps/reports/national.php> or <http://www.bjcp.org/apps/reports/master.php>; these pages are 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 these two lists they **MUST** contact the relevant BJCP Exam Director to get advance approval to use alternative proctors.

**Exam Fees:** The fees for the BJCP exam are US \$50 and \$30 for first time takers and retakes, respectively. Partial retakes are acceptable, where the fee is \$15. Thirty percent of this total 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/\$21 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** at 70% of total fees. No cash or checks, please. The payment

system is at [http://www.bjcp.org/apps/exam\\_pay/exam\\_find.php](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.

**Exam Papers:** Approximately two weeks before the exam, you will be sent the exam questions, the participant information form (PIF) and beer scoresheets. You will need to make copies of these forms for each exam taker. On the PIF, please place sequential numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) after the four digit, four letter exam code (e.g., 0501-CALA) to identify the examinees. This ensures anonymity throughout the grading process. **The exams will be 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 photocopied for the graders and copy machines tend not to copy all the way to the edges of the original.**

**Exam Beers:** You will need four beers 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 beers be homebrews and represent a reasonable cross section of mainstream classic beer styles. Do not use specialty, fruit or herb beers. The four exam beers must be unique styles; multiple versions of the same style shall not be used in an exam, e.g., you can not present two different examples of a Dry Stout. Up to two classic-style commercial beers may be used if sufficient suitable examples of homebrewed beer are not available. 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 must have one of the following distinctly noticeable faults or characteristics (avoid threshold flavor faults/characteristics including mildly stale examples):

a) lightstruck/skunky; b) diacetyl/buttery; c) DMS/cooked vegetable; d) oxidized/cardboard; e) lactic or acetic acid sourness; f) green apple/acetaldehyde; g) fruitiness/esters; h) solvent-like/higher alcohols; i) puckering/astringent; j) grossly incorrect body, alcohol content, color or other style characteristics.

Blends of different beers and doctoring may be used. We would prefer that one of the beers 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 both lagers and ales, light and dark beers, and both low and high gravity examples. One example of a suite of exams beers is as follows:

1. English Pale Ale – flaw such as incipient oxidation and weak hop aroma
2. Classic American Pilsner – No flaws, outstanding example
3. Oktoberfest – seriously flawed with fruitiness, phenols and sourness
4. Imperial Stout – very good example, but lacks smoothness found in best examples

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. It is encouraged to discuss your ideas for exam beers with the Exam Director prior to the exam.

At least two active BJCP judges ranked National or higher and **capable of preparing a National or better quality scoresheet** are strongly encouraged to score and evaluate the beers. Certified ranked proctors may be used if they have scored at the National level on the tasting portion of the exam. These 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, as the Exam Administrator who is preparing and serving the test beers, you refrain from preparing scoresheets in order to avoid bias since you will know 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.

## During the Exam

**Combined Format:** The most common approach is to give the two portions of the exam concurrently. First hand out the essay questions, then after 60 minutes, pour the first beer. Serve the other beers at half-hour intervals to allow the examinees to make smooth transitions between the essay and tasting portions of the exam. Announce when each hour of the three hour time period has expired and when there are 30 minutes left in the exam.

**Format for Partial Retakes:** It is also acceptable to serve all four beers during the last hour of the exam to accommodate partial retakes. These situations should be cleared in advance with the exam director, but the following schedule applies:

- Essay Portion: Exam papers are collected after 2.5 hours.
- Tasting Portion: Exam beers are served and judged during the third hour of the exam.

The fee for each is \$15, and this schedule only applies to partial retakes. First time takers and those retaking both portions are given a maximum of three hours to complete the exam.

### Exam Checklist:

1. Copies of the exams (all pages), examinee scoresheets, exam preamble, and PI forms.
  - Have sufficient copies of the PI form for all the examinees, the proctors, and yourself.
2. Copies of the proctor scoresheet.
3. 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.
4. Exam beers, bottle opener, pitcher and cups.
5. Water and bread to cleanse the palate.
6. Pencils, pencil sharpener if using wooden pencils.

### At the Start of the Exam, Please Explain that:

- The exam is closed books and consists of a written port composed of a combination of fill in the blank, true/false, multiple choice, and free form essay questions as well as four beers to be scored over a three hour time period. Good time management is needed to complete the exam.
- Most questions can be answered in about one page. If the participants are writing significantly more or less, adjustments may 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 legibly complete the participant information form. It is otherwise difficult to return the results.
- Examinees must place their examinee codes on all exam papers **and write on only one side of the answer sheets.**
- The four test beers should be evaluated as if they were entered in a BJCP competition.

**Electronic Devices:** Use of the following electronic devices is **not allowed** during the exam:

- 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 6 weeks in advance of the exam date.

**PI Forms** should also be completed by the proctors, and even by you the exam administrator. We have found that this gives us another means of collecting address changes for some judges.

**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—every page must be copied. The exam administrator should retain the copy until after they have heard from the BJCP Exam Director that the originals have been received by the BJCP. Once they have heard from the Exam Director that the originals have been received they should 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% exam fee hold-back that the BJCP allows for administration of the exam.

**Scoring and Turnaround Time:** Exams should be mailed to the exam director as soon as possible after the exam date, but no later than one week after the test.

It is anticipated that the exam results will be returned within sixteen to twenty weeks of the exam date. Approximately half of this time is used by volunteer National and higher ranked judges to do the initial 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 will receive Exam Administrator experience as ten Grand Master Service Requirement (GMSR) points (see <http://www.bjcp.org/gmsr.php> for the details) which in turn results in two non-judging experience points. Additional judging experience points are available to proctors who serve as independent tasters of the exam beers. Proctors will receive five GMSR points but since the proctors are judging the exam beers their GMSR points will be recorded as one judging experience point. 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 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.