



Beer Judge Certification Program

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2010 EXAM SCORING GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the BJCP is to promote beer literacy, the appreciation of real beer, and to recognize beer tasting and evaluation skills. It is a unique program of peer review, and scoring of exams is the heart of the process. While we attempt to be as objective as possible with scoring, exams of this nature tend to be quite subjective. This is unavoidable in a subject as complex as beer evaluation. Scorers are asked to be sensitive to the challenge of the exam. A book can be written on many exam questions. The taker's challenge is to assemble the most important information on the subject and present it in an orderly fashion. On the other hand, some questions are limited, and one should ask oneself, "What more could or should be said about this, considering the time constraints?"

The scorer's priority is to determine the proper level of the judge, i.e. fail, 60, 70, 80 or 90. The second priority is the position within the level, i.e. 70 or 75. Remember that a 70 may turn a person off from the program, while a 75 may inspire further study and achievement. Try to avoid assigning scores that end in 9 since that can make examinees feel they should argue for an additional point to move up to the next level. As in judging a beer, one should be careful about becoming a fault finder. Higher rankings should be attainable, and the scorer should be careful about being too critical. In particular, be careful about underscoring.

SCORING CURVE

The following score curve has prevailed for the past ten years.

<u>SCORE</u>	<u><60</u>	<u>60s</u>	<u>70s</u>	<u>80s</u>	<u>90s</u>
Normal Range	0-15%	20-30%	40-50%	10-20%	0-5%

By establishing a uniform scoring standard, we can determine what criteria are expected for an exam to fall within a particular scoring range. When the exams are graded against this standard, the scoring curve should describe the average distribution of many sets of exams, but is not expected to describe the results of any particular set of exams.

TEST GUIDELINES

In scoring a test, the scorer should be comfortable that the examinee has demonstrated skills that relate to the judge level for which the score qualifies, using the following:

<60: Little knowledge of brewing and/or styles, and/or insufficient communication skills to be a judge. Generally has weak tasting skills.

60s: A basic grasp of fundamentals. May have some big knowledge gaps, but still knows most of the basics. Has an acceptable minimum communication and judging skills.

70s: Knows basics well enough not to have to take the test again to be called “Certified.” Test can have errors and small gaps in answers. Depth in answers is not necessary.

80s: Good knowledge of all subjects. Some errors allowable, but no significant gaps. Some depth indicated. Taste and essay portions should show similar ability.

90s: Excellent knowledge level. No significant errors, and no gaps. Good depth to answers. Obviously an experienced beer taster. Shows evidence of independent thought.

SCORING MECHANICS

TASTE PORTION: (30% weight): The proctors’ consensus scores (use the consensus scores the proctors assigned on the consensus sheet they completed as part of the exam, do not use an average of the proctors’ scores) are recorded and their comments noted, particularly those describing the flaws and attributes of each beer. The abilities of the proctors can vary, so their weaknesses are not allowed to affect the outcome of the exam.

1) SCORING: (20 points/100) The judge’s score and the average score of the administrators for each beer are entered on the Exam Grading Form. Scoring mark is determined using the following variance table:

Variance from Adm.	Points Given	Variance from Adm.	Points Given
0-4	20	19-22	14
5-8	19	23-26	13
9-12	18	27-30	12
13-14	17	31-35	11
15-16	16	36-40	10
17-18	15	>40	9

These variances are added automatically by the Exam Grading Form determine the score. Scoring by the administrator can be variable, so the variance table is not rigid. In other words, suppose that the majority of the participants observe a flaw that was not noted by the administrator and give the beer a lower average score. Without tasting the beer, we cannot determine if the flaw was present, but the participants should be given the benefit of the doubt and the variances from the administrator reduced accordingly. Comparing the average participant scores with the proctors scores is a good way to evaluate the scoring skill of the proctors.

2) COMMENTS (80 points/100): The remaining 80% of the tasting score is divided equally among the four test beers. For each beer, a maximum of 20 points is awarded based on:

- Perception (5 points/beer): Points should be deducted for missed flaws and errors in flavor and aroma perception.
- Descriptive Ability (5 points/beer): A beer judge should be able to describe aromas, flavors and appearance using the proper terminology.

- c) Feedback (5 points/beer): The brewer should receive useful and constructive feedback explaining how to adjust the recipe or brewing procedure in order to produce a beer that is closer to style.
- d) Completeness/Communication (5 points/beer): This is essentially the percentage of the scoresheet that is completed, but readability and organization of the comments are also important.

The points awarded for the judging of each beer should be correlated with the experience levels, i.e. 12-13 points would be expected from a recognized judge, 14-15 from a certified judge, 16-17 from a national judge and 18-20 from a master judge. Scoresheets which are indicative of a subpar judging performance generally fall in the 9-11 point range. Record the score for each beer on the Exam Grading Form (EGF).

ESSAY PORTION: (70% weight, ten questions @ 10 points). Since January 1, 2009 all exams are scored with respect to the 2008 style guidelines. The score for each answer should be entered on the EGF, and comments for the feedback sheet noted. Decide on the specific facts desired in each answer. In addition to the facts related, consider the depth of knowledge demonstrated, completeness of answers and communicative ability, including neatness. Understanding of positions by various authorities on controversial subjects is desirable, as is knowledge of commercial and classic examples of the styles. Omissions and incorrect or contradictory information should detract from score, however, partial credit may be allowed for a wrong answer if the content is correct.

REPORT TO PARTICIPANT (RTP) FORMS

The lead scorer is responsible for completing the feedback form that will be returned to each examinee. Both scorers should contribute a reasonable amount of helpful, concise feedback for the Comments section. The format for the RTP consists of a cover page summarizing and explaining the results followed by additional pages giving feedback on specific questions and beers. The RTP form is setup so that the header for the second page and any possible additional pages will have the participant number as part of the page header. To highlight the judging ranges and suggested readings on the first page of the RTP use the 25% gray shading option available in Microsoft Windows rather than ovals or boxes. The sections of the RTP should be completed as follows:

SCORES: This section will be completed by the Exam Director after the exams have been reviewed, so please leave this section blank.

ESSAY/TASTE SUMMARIES: The even-numbered questions on the BJCP exam focus on beer styles, while the odd numbered questions are more technical in nature. In addition, the first question asks for a brief discussion of the purpose and levels of the BJCP and has 15 multiple choice questions about ethics and the judging process. Use your assigned scores on each question to determine which descriptor to highlight on the feedback form. For example, suppose an examinee scores 7, 8, 6, 8 and 7 on the five beer style questions. The average of these scores is 7.2, so "Certified" should be highlighted on the Style Knowledge line of the RTP form. A similar procedure should be used for the other areas of the essay and tasting portions of the exam.

RECOMMENDED STUDY: Indicate which references should be read or reviewed to correct deficiencies on the essay and tasting portions.

Feedback: This section allows the graders to elaborate on specific areas that need attention. These comments appear on separate sheets with a header containing the participant number and exam location. Some bells and whistles appear on the RTP template, but feel free to use a more basic design for your feedback. Begin this section with constructive feedback that will encourage further development, for example “Congratulations on passing the BJCP exam.”

Since the exams are not returned to the participants, it is helpful to refer to specific questions on which the examinee did well or poorly. Our goal is to provide helpful feedback while minimizing the number of protests, so please refrain from commenting on areas which are debatable. The goal of the feedback section is not to answer the question, but to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. When using the RTP template provided to the graders, the overall comment section for the following example illustrates a good balance between technical guidance and corrective feedback.

Question II.1. Describe, compare and contrast **Foreign Extra Stout, Robust Porter, and Sweet Stout.**

Metric/Rating	Master	National	Certified	Recognized	Apprentice	Not Answered
Complete and accurate descriptions			X			
Distinguishing characteristics			X			
Compare and contrast the styles		X				

- Correct commercial examples? Yes
- Overall: The descriptions were generally solid and reflected a good fundamental understanding of these three styles. Distinguishing characteristics were a little weak. For example, the foreign extra stout has a more complex malt profile with various malt and fermentation flavors (assertive roastiness, fruity esters, etc.), the robust porter style can have more bitterness and assertive hopping than the other two styles, and sweet stout often includes the addition of lactose, which the other two do not.

SCORING CONSENSUS

The exam graders reconcile their scores by e-mail and agree on a final result. If the scores for the essay and tasting portions of the exam are in good agreement (within seven points), then the consensus score is often the average score. Both graders should be comfortable with the location of this consensus score not only with respect to the judging levels, but also within a given level, i.e. low, mid or high end of the range. If this is not the case, one or both of the graders should adjust his/her score as they would when judging beers at a homebrew competition. If the deviations are more than seven points, then the graders should discuss the exam in detail and adjust their scores until they reach a consensus. If there is still a problem, request further scoring by the Associate Director to break the deadlock or determine what final scores should be assigned to borderline exams. **When a consensus score has been reached for each exam, the lead grader should also e-mail the completed EGF (including scores from the second grader), the consensus scores and completed RTPs to the Associate and Exam Director.**

TIMETABLE and EXPENSES

Our target is to turn exams around in twelve weeks. This requires that graders complete the scoring in no more than four weeks. The BJCP is a nonprofit organization, so the graders and the directors are not expected to profit from the grading of exams. Reasonable expenses may be tabulated and submitted to the BJCP treasurer with receipts for reimbursement.