



## Beer Judge Certification Program

5115 Excelsior Blvd, #326  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

www.bjcp.org

# Beer Judging Examination Procedures

Administering a BJCP Beer Judging Exam requires attention to a number of important details. The exam directors will expect you to read the [Exam Administrator Guide](#) available on [bjcp.org](#). The guide outlines several organizational policies and regulations that govern all BJCP exams. The procedure document provides additional details regarding exam mechanics and recommended practices.

## Planning for the Exam

### Requirements

A minimum of six participants is required to schedule a **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**. The date and administrator must be approved by the BJCP Exam Director. The maximum number of participants for the BJCP Beer Judging Examination is twelve, with limited exceptions made by the BJCP Exam Directors.

If a scheduled exam does not meet the requirement of having a minimum of six eligible participants, it should 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

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

It is recommended that the exam site collect a non-refundable deposit to ensure enough participants committed to take the exam.

The exam administrator must verify that all exam candidates are qualified to the exam. 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 provide 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.

If an examinee has an exam of the same type currently in the grading process, he is ineligible to take an additional exam of the same type.

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.



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### **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 unavailable to the examinees. Avoiding this bias 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. Proctors shall not serve as exam administrators.

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> . We further desire that when possible, 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 may be considered that only has a Certified-level rank.

If the administrator for an exam site is not able to obtain proctors meeting standard qualifications, they **MUST** contact the Exam Director prior to the exam to get advance approval to use alternative proctors.

Proctors must be identified when scheduling a **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**. Exam applications are evaluated and approved based on the information within the application. Changing that information places the site eligibility in question. All requests for waivers must be coordinated with the Exam Director before administering the examination.

### **Exam Fees**

Examinees pay the Exam Administrator and do not pay the BJCP directly. The Exam Administrator then submits the payment for the exam using PayPal directly to the BJCP for 70% of total fees. Thirty percent of the fee for each exam is designated for expenses related to holding the exam.

The payment system can be accessed 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. Information for all exam fees is available on BJCP.org.

### **Exam Expenses**

Each exam proctor earns one judging experience point and five Grand Master Service Requirement (GMSR) credits for his or her efforts. 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, 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. Exam Administrators shall use the **Proctor Reimbursement Request Form** to outline the site requests. 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).



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### **Exam Translations**

As the BJCP is a global organization, an increasing number of exams are being offered in other languages. If your site is requesting that an exam be administered in languages other than English, contact the Exam Directorate to obtain appropriate approvals. The Exam Directorate can work with local exam staff to address appropriate protocols.

## **Before the Exam**

### **Collecting Exam and Participant Information**

Both the BJCP and individual examinees are relying on you to accurately record exam and participant information.

Prior to the exam, you will receive an email with supporting documents from the Exam Director assigned to your exam. The email includes an Excel workbook called the EXAMCODE-Admin-Data-Report.xlsx.

This workbook has the following tabs:

- **ExamData:** will be prepopulated, please confirm accuracy.
- **ExamineeData:** enter the names, addresses, email addresses and other information for all participants taking the BJCP exam. The second column, ExamineeID, is a two-digit identification number (typically from 01 to 12) that will be combined with the Exam ID to create a unique Participant ID for each examinee. Check the information for accuracy and formatting, and that the final sheet has data for only those examinees who took the exam. Ensure that all fields are complete. It is vital that you enter the Examinee ID correctly, as this is the only way an individual exam is associated with the examinee.
- **StaffData:** enter your information as Exam Admin and info for your Proctors.
- **SampleData:** enter information regarding the samples you use for the examination.
- **ScoringData:** enter final scores for each proctor, the proctor consensus and each examinee.

For privacy reasons, please do not distribute the information in the Admin-Data-Report to anyone other than the Exam Director.

### **Exam Papers**

The email from the Exam Director will also include copies of proctor and examinee scoresheets. We recommend making additional copies in case of spillage or similar accidents. The required quantities for exam forms is referenced in the Checklist below.

### **Exam Beers**

You will need six beers for the exam, with sufficient volume of each for all examinees and proctors. A general guideline 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.

- 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 an Irish Stout.
- **Do not use historical or specialty beers (i.e. do not use BJCP styles 27 through 34).**
- **Do not use provisional styles**



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- No more than 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.
- One of the beers should be an excellent (38-44) or outstanding (45-50) example of its style.
- 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 preferred. Doctoring beers 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 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.

Strive to serve beers in the following categories – both lagers and ales, light and dark colored 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)

An 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, the example above covers 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).



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Prior to the exam, the exam director will request information regarding your exam beer selections. Provide information to the Exam Director using the description file template supplied by the exam team and discuss your ideas for exam beers with the Exam Director prior to the exam.

To ensure that 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.

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. Do not share any information about the exam beers until the beers are served during the exam, judges of the type the BJCP desires as proctors should have no problem completing scoresheets during the exam setting.

Exam Administrators should refrain from preparing detailed 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. Proctors use expanded scoresheets and refrain from discussion until after they finish their scoring and record 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.

### During the Exam

#### **Exam Format**

The **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** has a 90-minute time limit. All six beers must be judged in an uninterrupted 90 minute session. No formal break or intermission is permitted. The beers in the judging exam must be served at 15 minute intervals. It is helpful to have an assistant help in distributing the beer samples.

An example schedule:

- 10:00 – Exam instructions distributed to examinees and proctors and reviewed.
- 10:30 – First beer is served.
- 10:45 – second beer is served.
- 11:00 – third beer is served.
- 11:15 – fourth beer is served.
- 11:30 – fifth beer is served.
- 11:45 – sixth beer is served.
- 12:00 – exam concludes, scoresheets collected.

#### **Exam Administrator Checklists**

##### **A. Did you...?**

- ✓ Collect and verify all participant and proctor data
- ✓ Verify the eligibility of all examinees, including identifying potential; exams currently being graded



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### **B. Items needed on exam day**

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Copies of the exam instruction sheet = 1 per participant</li><li>✓ Copies of the examinee scoresheets = 6 per participant</li><li>✓ Copies of the proctor instruction sheet = 1 per proctor</li><li>✓ A copy of the proctors' consensus sheet = 1</li><li>✓ Copies of the proctor's scoresheet = 6 per proctor</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Exam beers, bottle opener, pitcher and cups.</li><li>✓ Water and bread to cleanse the palate.</li><li>✓ Mechanical pencils.</li><li>✓ Sufficient supply of standard size (8.5 by 11), ruled for additional writing if needed. Avoid three-hole punched loose-leaf paper, since it tends to jam in scanner and copy machine</li></ul> |
|--|--|

### **At the Start of the Exam, Remind Participants:**

- Review the Participant Exam Instructions with all examinees. The instructions outline several data functions associated with their exam as well as reminders regarding the importance of clear handwriting.
- The Beer 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.

### **At the Start of the Exam, Remind Proctors:**

- Thorough and readable scoresheets are critical to grading. We expect senior level judges to provide clear communication.
- Do not leave any portion of the Proctor Scoresheet blank, including Overall Impression.
- Review the Proctor Instructions with all proctors. The instructions highlight best practice and common pitfalls.

### **Use of Electronic Devices**

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

- ✗ Calculators, except for basic "four-function" models that do not have the ability to store programs or data for redisplay. A smartphone cannot be used as a calculator during the exam.
- ✗ Pagers or PDAs ( Personal Digital Assistant)
- ✗ Laptop or desktop computers.
- ✗ Cell phones. In the case of an emergency, phones may be left with the Administrator with instructions for answering.
- ✗ iPod, other listening devices, or headphones of any type
- ✗ Computer watches

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



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### **Ending the Exam:**

You may reveal the origins or commercial brands of the exam beers to the examinees and discuss the reasons for selection. This can be done during the proctors' consensus discussion if they will not overhear prior to reaching consensus.

You **shall not share** the proctor scoresheets or information contained within the sheets.

Discussion between participants and proctors about the beers should be kept to a minimum – if done at all. Examinees can sometimes misunderstand or misconstrue proctor comments that later become obstacles for the examinee to appropriately evaluate his results and feedback. Since the grading process encompasses numerous components, informal conversation or isolated information can sometimes set an expectation that isn't reflective of the entire process. As an example, consensus scores are only one input used to establish baseline scores to compute scoring accuracy. Other factors include the background information on the exam beer and how the mean score of all tasters compares to the consensus scores. Moreover, it's unrealistic to expect a proctor can accurately recollect every characteristic recorded in written form, potentially misrepresenting the beverage sample.

### **After the Exam**

#### **Scan the Exams**

The exam administrator is responsible for making and retaining a complete record of the exams, proctor sheets, and exam beer notes - every page must be recorded by scan or otherwise-approved method.

#### **Exam Scans:**

BJCP has adopted the protocol of accepting scanned exams directly from exam administrators. If you are unable to personally address this portion of exam administration, you may use an independent service provider (for example, Fed Ex/Kinkos, office supply store). Similar to the obsolete costs of photocopying and shipping, the cost of this service should come out of the 30% portion exam fees the BJCP provides to the exam administrator. If you are unable to access scan capability, please contact me to address alternatives.

Quality scanning is critical to the grading process. Graders are unable to perform their work if they are unable to read the files provided by your site. To facilitate quality scanning and optimal file sharing, keep the following in mind:

- Optimize scanner functions – scan should reflect sufficient contrast to be readable.
- Use of ink markers (for example Sharpie) can sometimes alter contrast and should not be used
- File size – each set of scoresheets is typically 2-3 Mb in size with if they have sufficient resolution. Excessively large file sizes may not be incorporated into BJCP file sharing or data programs.

*Note:* Photos of exam files – either by traditional camera, phone, or other electronic device – may not be acceptable. Please discuss with your ED prior to submitting.

Files shall be constructed and named using BJCP file naming conventions. These standards are fully outlined in the attached document *File Naming Rules*, and an example is provided below. Similar to quality scans, correct file construction is critical to the exam review process. When files are constructed or named incorrectly, we're unable to distribute the files to examinees via BJCP data functions, nor are we able to share files through the judge record portal.



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FILENAME and FORMAT	CONTENTS
EXAMCODE-01-Exam.pdf	The six scoresheets associated with exam participant #01. Follow this format for subsequent participants.
EXAMCODE-Proctor1.pdf	The six scoresheets associated with Proctor 1
EXAMCODE-Proctor2.pdf	The six scoresheets associated with Proctor 2
EXAMCODE-Consensus.pdf	The proctor consensus sheet
EXAMCODE-Admin-Data-Report.xlsx	The data report completed by the exam administrator

To ensure exams can be graded and reviewed in no more than fourteen weeks, promptly *provide scanned files within one week of the exam*. Files may be sent via email attachment, compressed/zip file, or through file sharing applications like Dropbox or GoogleDocs. Administrators shall keep the original exams and associated support files until BJCP verifies both the receipt and the acceptable use (readability) of the files. If files need correction, you will need the original copies to facilitate a remedy.

After files have been confirmed, you may provide a copy of each examinee's exam to them, although this is not required. Participants can access a PDF copy of their exam through the judge record portal at a later date. ***In no circumstances should the examinees be given copies of the proctors' scoresheets or information contained within.***

### ***Submitting Data Files***

The exam administrator shall promptly email the completed Admin-Data-Report to the Exam Director in addition to the scanned exams, proctor sheets and proctor consensus.

### ***Results and Scoring***

When grading has been completed, the official results and a report to the participant will be provided to the examinees. In keeping with the BJCP Privacy Policy, exam scores are not released to the Exam Administrator. The associated judging record for participants will list competitions in which the each participant has judged. If there are omissions, instructions can be provided regarding how to bring the judging records up-to-date. Additional information regarding the grading process can be found on [bjcp.org](http://bjcp.org).

### ***Experience Points***

As the exam administrator, you are eligible 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. Proctors receive both GMSR points as well as additional judging experience points. Proctors do not receive administrator credit. All or some of either the proctor or administrator credit may not be awarded if it is apparent that procedures were not followed or if the exams are not received within ten days of the exam date.