



**WSET**

WSET® Level 2 Award  
in Beer

# Specification

WSET

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# Introduction

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This Specification contains necessary information for both candidates and Approved Programme Providers (APPs) about the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer.

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of the Learning Outcomes of the Level 2 Award in Beer. These outcomes should be used by APPs to prepare programmes of learning, and by candidates to plan their studies, because the examination is specifically set to test these outcomes.

The Specification also provides a list of recommended tasting samples, guidance concerning the examination and the examination regulations.

At the end of this document you will also find information on the other WSET qualifications.

# 1

## Introduction to the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer

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### Qualification Aims

The WSET Level 2 Award in Beer is intended for people who have little or no prior knowledge of beer. It is suitable wherever a good level of beer knowledge is required to underpin job skills and competencies, for example in the customer service and sales functions of hospitality, retailing and wholesaling industries. It is also useful for those who have a general interest in beer and wish to broaden their knowledge.

Successful candidates will be able to understand how key ingredients and production processes influence the styles of beer; describe the styles of beer produced; and give basic guidance on appropriate selection and service, as well as understand the principles of beer tasting and evaluation.

### Qualification Structure

#### Learning Outcomes

In order to meet the qualification aims there are four learning outcomes.

<b>Learning Outcome 1</b>	Know the main ingredients used in beer production, how they are processed and their influence on the style of beer produced.
<b>Learning Outcome 2</b>	Know how beer production influences the style and quality of beer.
<b>Learning Outcome 3</b>	Know how key beer styles are produced and labelled and their typical characteristics.
<b>Learning Outcome 4</b>	Know the key principles and processes involved in the storage and service of beer.

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## Entry Requirements

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer.

Please refer to Section 1 in Chapter 5 for additional eligibility information.

## Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

TQT is an estimate of the total amount of time, measured in hours, that a learner would reasonably need to be able to show the level of achievement necessary for the award of a qualification. It is made up of GLH and private study time. GLH include all tutor-supervised learning and supervised assessments.

The TQT for the Level 2 Award in Beer is 28 hours. This is made up of 17 GLH (of which 1 hour is for the examination) and 11 hours' private study.

# 2

## Learning Outcomes

### Learning Outcome 1

Know the main ingredients used in beer production, how they are processed and their influence on the style of beer produced.

#### Assessment Criteria

1. Describe how malt and adjuncts are produced and used in beer production and how they influence style.
2. Describe how water influences style.
3. Describe how different types of hops are grown and processed, and their influence on style.
4. Describe how yeast and bacteria are used in beer production and their influence on style.

#### Ranges

##### Range 1: Malt (malted grains) and adjuncts

<b>Barley</b>	Parts of the barley grain Starch, enzymes, proteins and nutrients Malting process – steeping, germination, kilning The Maillard reaction, caramelisation
<b>Malt options</b>	Base malts – lager and pilsner malt, pale ale malt Speciality malts – highly kilned malts, dark roasted malts, caramel (crystal) malts, smoked malts Other malted grains – malted wheat The grain bill
<b>Adjuncts</b>	Cereal adjuncts Sugar and sugar syrups Honey, maple syrup and black treacle (molasses)
<b>Other</b>	Unfermentable sugars and sweeteners

##### Range 2: Water

<b>Water</b>	Effects on flavour profile – carbonates and bicarbonates, sulfate Water and style
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**Range 3: Hops and other flavourings**

<b>Parts of the hop cone</b>	Strig, bract, lupulin glands
<b>Hop growing and production processes</b>	Hop growing conditions, harvesting and storing
<b>Hop characteristics</b>	Hop bitterness, hop aromas
<b>Hop varieties</b>	Traditional German and Czech hops – Hallertauer Mittelfrüh, Tettnanger, Spalt, Saaz (Žatec) Traditional British hops – East Kent Golding(s), Challenger, Fuggle American hops – Cascade, Chinook, Simcoe®, Citra®, Amarillo®, Mosaic® New Zealand and Australian hops – Nelson Sauvin, Motueka, Galaxy
<b>Hop products</b>	Whole hops, hop pellets, hop extracts, other hop products
<b>Other flavourings</b>	Fruits, spices, herbs

**Range 4: Yeast and bacteria**

	Cultured yeast strains
<b>Ale yeast</b>	Abbey ale yeast, saison yeast, witbier yeast, British ale yeast, American ale yeast Flavours produced in fermentation, impact on final beer style
<b>Lager yeast</b>	Flavours produced in fermentation, impact on final beer style
<b><i>Brettanomyces</i></b>	Flavours produced in fermentation, impact on final beer style
<b>Bacteria</b>	Acetic acid bacteria, lactic acid bacteria, impact on final beer style



## Learning Outcome 2

Know how beer production influences the style and quality of beer.

### Assessment Criteria

1. State the process involved in and the products of alcoholic fermentation.
2. Describe the key stages and equipment used in the brewing process.
3. Know the main beer production options and how they influence the style and quality of beer.

### Ranges

#### Range 1: Brewing

<b>Alcoholic fermentation process</b>	Yeast converts sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide and produces aromas and heat
<b>Brewing process</b>	Milling Mashing Mash separation – sparging Wort boiling and main hop additions Wort clarification Wort cooling Fermentation – fermentation with cultured ale yeast or lager yeast, mixed fermentation, attenuation Maturation – ale maturation, lager maturation Fermentation or maturation in wooden vessels Carbonation – bottle-conditioning Filtration Packaging Pasteurisation Cask-conditioning
<b>Brewing equipment</b>	Mill, mashing vessel, lauter tun, kettle (copper), whirlpool, heat exchanger, fermentation vessel, filter, maturation vessel
<b>Beer production options</b>	Timing of hop additions Original extract and original gravity Fermentation/maturation temperature Fermentation/maturation length
<b>Spontaneous and mixed culture fermentation options</b>	Spontaneous fermentation, barrel maturation, blending, wort/kettle souring, sour mashing, co-fermentation

## Learning Outcome 3

Know how key beer styles are produced and labelled and their typical characteristics.

### Assessment Criteria

1. Identify the terms used to label key beer styles and describe the typical characteristics of the beer associated with these labelling terms.
2. Describe the options for using malt and adjuncts, hops, and yeast and bacteria in the production of key beer styles.
3. Describe key brewing processes used to produce key beer styles.

### Ranges

#### Range 1: Malt-driven styles

##### Malt-driven lagers

<b>Straw or gold-coloured lagers</b>	American lager International pale lager Light lager Munich helles
<b>Amber, copper or brown-coloured lagers</b>	Munich dunkel International dark lager Märzen Vienna lager International amber lager
<b>Strong lagers</b>	Helles bock Dunkles bock Doppelbock
<b>Smoked lager</b>	Rauchbier märzen, <i>Rauchbier</i>

##### Malt-driven ales

<b>Straw or gold-coloured ales</b>	American blonde ale American wheat Kölsch
<b>Amber, copper or brown-coloured ales</b>	Irish red ale Brown ale (American-style, British-style)
<b>Brown or black-coloured ales</b>	Porter (American-style, English-style) Dark mild ale Irish stout Other stouts: oatmeal stout, American stout, sweet stout
<b>Strong ales</b>	Imperial stout Barley wine (American-style, English-style) Scotch ale

**Range 2: Hop-driven styles****Hop-driven lagers**

<b>Traditional Czech and German hops</b>	Czech pilsner German pilsner
<b>American, Australian and New Zealand hops</b>	Contemporary hopped lager

**Hop-driven ales**

<b>Traditional British hops</b>	Bitter: ordinary bitter, best bitter, strong bitter
<b>Traditional German hops</b>	Altbier
<b>American hops</b>	American pale ale American amber ale IPA: American IPA (West Coast IPA), double IPA, hazy IPA (New England IPA, juicy IPA), other IPAs

**Range 3: Yeast-driven styles****Yeast-driven ales**

<b>Abbey ale yeast</b>	Dubbel Tripel Related labelling term: Trappist
<b>Saison yeast</b>	Saison
<b>Witbier yeast</b>	Witbier
<b>Weizen yeast</b>	Weissbier (hefeweizen) Dunkelweizen Kristalweizen Weizenbock

**Range 4: Mixed fermentation styles**

<b>Production</b>	Spontaneous fermentation, coolship ( <i>koelschip</i> ) Mixed culture fermentation: Wort/kettle souring and sour mashing, co-fermentation
<b>Spontaneous fermentation styles</b>	Lambic styles: geuze, fruit lambic ( <i>kriek, framboise</i> )
<b>Mixed culture fermentation styles</b>	Berliner weisse Gose Flanders red Oud bruin Related labelling terms: <i>Oude/vieille/vieux</i>

**Range 5: Other Speciality Beers**

Barrel aged beer  
Flavoured beer  
Low-alcohol and alcohol-free beer  
Gluten-free beer

## Learning Outcome 4

Know the key principles and processes involved in the storage and service of beer.

### Assessment Criteria

1. State the ideal conditions for storing beer.
2. State the recommended temperatures and correct procedures for serving beer.
3. Describe how common faults affect the aromas and flavours of beer.
4. Describe the principal food and beer interactions.

### Ranges

#### Range 1: Storage and service

<b>Ideal conditions for storage</b>	Drink beer as fresh as possible, keep beer cool, keep beer sealed, protect beer from light, store cans and crown-cap bottles upright, bottle ageing
<b>Packaging and shelf life</b>	Kegs, casks, bottles and cans, growlers
<b>Service temperature</b>	Suggested service temperature
<b>Glassware</b>	Glassware examples Chalice, dimpled mug, footed pilsner, <i>Masskrug</i> , nonic pint, shaker, snifter, <i>Stange</i> , stemmed tulip, tekku, thistle, <i>Weizenglas</i>
<b>Beer on tap</b>	Pouring keg beer Pouring nitrogenated beer Pouring cask beer
<b>Bottled beer</b>	Opening a bottle sealed with a crown cap Opening a bottle sealed with a crown cap and cork Opening a bottle sealed with a mushroom cork Pouring bottled beer
<b>Common faults</b>	DMS (dimethyl sulphide), acetaldehyde, diacetyl, phenolic off-flavours (including 4-VG), staling (oxidation), light strike (skunking), bacterial infection
<b>Beer and food</b>	Preferences and sensitivities Primary interactions: sweetness in food, umami in food, acidity in food, salt in food, bitterness in food, chilli heat in food Application Other considerations: intensity, aromas, carbonation

# 3

## Recommended Tasting Samples

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### **Tasting technique**

- British-style brown ale
- Weissbier
- Sweet stout
- American pale ale
- Oude Geuze (Gueuze)

### **Brewing process and malting**

- Munich Helles
- Munich Dunkel

### **Malt-driven styles**

- Doppelbock
- Rauchbier Märzen
- Any two malt-driven ale styles

### **Hop-driven styles**

- Czech Pilsner
- German Pilsner
- American IPA
- Hazy IPA

### **Yeast-driven styles**

- Saison
- Tripel
- Dubbel
- Witbier

### **Mixed fermentation styles**

- Oude Geuze (Gueuze)
- Oude Kreik
- Flanders red
- Framboise
- Gose

### **Other speciality beers**

- Any two low alcohol beers
- Any gluten-free beer
- Any barrel-aged beer

### **Off-flavours**

- American or international pale lager (can)
- American or international pale lager (green bottle)
- American or Hazy IPA (stored refrigerated)
- American or Hazy IPA (kept in a warm environment)

# 4

## Examination Guidance

### Examination Administration

Examinations are conducted by WSET Approved Programme Providers (APPs). APPs must comply with WSET policies and procedures set out in the APP Handbook.

### Assessment Method

The WSET Level 2 Award in Beer is assessed by a closed-book theory examination of 50 multiple-choice questions, to be completed in 60 minutes. Each question has only one correct answer, which should be indicated on either (a) a computer-readable answer sheet, or (b) a computer/other device, depending on the mode of assessment delivery. Full instructions on how to complete the test will be given on the day of the examination.

Each correctly answered multiple-choice question is worth one mark, and marks are NOT subtracted for incorrect answers. A candidate is required to pass with a minimum mark of 55 per cent.

### About the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer Examination

All examination questions are based on the published Learning Outcomes and examination papers are carefully compiled to reflect this content. The recommended study materials (Beer: looking behind the label) contain the information required to answer these questions.

A chart giving a detailed breakdown of the examination weighting is shown below.

Learning Outcome	Multiple-choice questions (1 mark per question)
1	14
2	14
3	16
4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 marks</b>

# 5

## Examination Regulations

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### 1 Entry Requirements

#### 1.1 Eligibility

**1.1.1** Candidates applying to sit the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer examination must be over the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held, or be preparing for the examination as part of a recognised full-time programme of study, or have obtained consent from their parents or legal guardians.

**1.1.2** There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 2 Award in Beer through overlaps with other qualifications or parts of qualifications.

**1.1.3** Candidates who are under the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held, or those who choose not to taste alcohol (e.g. for health or religious reasons) will not be allowed/required to sample any alcoholic beverage as part of their course, but this is not a barrier to successfully completing the qualification.

#### 1.2 Recommended Prior Learning

**1.2.1** There are no requirements for candidates to have previous knowledge or previous experience of alcoholic beverages.

**1.2.2** Candidates sitting in English where it is not their first language are strongly recommended to have IELTS at 6 or above or be able to demonstrate an equivalent ability level.

**1.2.3** Candidates sitting in other languages should have an equivalent level of literacy in the language used for the examination.



## 2 Format and Results

**2.1** The WSET Level 2 Award in Beer assessment is a closed-book examination of 60 minutes duration and consists of 50 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each.

**2.2** Examination results are issued by WSET as follows:

- WSET will issue an all-candidate grade list to the APP so that they can communicate results to their candidates.
- Subsequently, WSET posts candidates' record of achievement letters and certificates to APPs, who are responsible for forwarding these documents to their candidates.

**2.3** Results are graded as follows:

Grade band	Required percentage
<b>Fail unclassified</b>	Mark of 44% or below
<b>Fail</b>	Mark of between 45% and 54%
<b>Pass</b>	Mark of between 55% and 69%
<b>Pass with merit</b>	Mark of between 70% and 84%
<b>Pass with distinction</b>	Mark of 85% or more

WSET reserves the right to make changes to the grading algorithms and grade thresholds published above.

## 3 Reasonable Adjustments

**3.1** Examination candidates who have special examination requirements, which are supported by independent written assessment, are requested to notify the examinations officer at their APP of any such requirement at the time of enrolment. Further guidance for examination officers and candidates is available from WSET as required.

**3.2** It is the policy of WSET that such candidates should not be placed at a disadvantage in the examinations. Candidates are responsible for informing their APP of any such requirement at the time of enrolment.

## 4 Resits

**4.1** Candidates may apply to resit the examination if they are unsuccessful. There is no limit on the number of attempts that may be made.

**4.2** Candidates who have passed are not permitted to retake them to improve their grade.

## 5 Examination Conditions and Conduct

**5.1** By registering for a WSET exam, candidates agree to the following conditions:

- Candidates must not be involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination. Malpractice or misconduct will be investigated in line with published WSET policy and may lead to sanctions including disqualification from the exam.
- Before the exam all candidates must supply proof of identity in the form of photographic ID.
- The exam is to be completed in the time specified for each unit.
- Possession of reference material of any kind is prohibited.
- Once exam conditions are in place, no communication of any kind between candidates is permitted until they have left the examination room or the end of the exam has been announced.
- During the exam candidates are only permitted to have the following items with them: tasting glasses, spittoons, pens, pencils, erasers and drinking water.
- It is prohibited for candidates to photograph exam materials, reveal the content of exam papers to others, or to reproduce it in any way. The use of electronic devices of any kind, other than a computer or mobile device which is being used to sit an exam, is prohibited.
- Mobile phones (which are not being used in a remote invigilation context) must be switched off and placed out of sight, away from the examination desk.
- The use of audible 'alarms' on any clock or watch is prohibited.

### **In-Person Examinations**

- Candidates may not leave the room until the first 15 minutes of the exam time have elapsed.
- Candidates who arrive after the published start time will NOT be allowed to sit the exam if any other candidate has already left the exam.
- Candidates who arrive late may be allowed to enter the room at the discretion of the invigilator and only if other candidates are not compromised. Under normal circumstances we would not expect any candidate to be allowed to start the exam if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the published start time.
- Candidates may not leave, and then return to, the examination room once the exam has started unless they can be accompanied by an invigilator at all times while they are out of the examination room.
- Candidates who complete the exam early may leave the examination room up until the last 10 minutes providing they do not disturb other candidates; no re-admission is permitted.
- Invigilators have no authority to comment upon, interpret, or express an opinion on any exam question.

- Any candidate who is suspected of misconduct will be advised to leave the examination room immediately.
- No exam question papers are to be removed from the examination room; candidates who fail to submit the question paper with their answer sheet will be deemed guilty of misconduct.

### **Remote Invigilation Examinations**

- Clear guidance on how to administrate remotely invigilated exams and associated regulations will be given to applicable candidates in advance of their examination.

**5.2** Candidates also agree to abide by the invigilator's instructions. Failure to do so may render a candidate's results invalid.

**5.3** WSET reserves the right to permanently exclude candidates found guilty of misconduct from WSET qualifications

**5.4** Examination papers and answer sheets are the property of WSET and will not be returned to candidates.

## **6 Examination Feedback, Enquiries and Appeals**

**6.1** Candidates requiring enquiry (re-mark) and/or feedback on their examination paper should contact their APP and request an Enquiry and Feedback Form.

**6.2** Any candidate dissatisfied with the result of an enquiry of an examination paper should contact the APP and request an Appeal Against Enquiry Application Form, which must be completed and returned to WSET, together with the appropriate fee, no more than 10 working days following notification of the enquiry decision. Appeals received outside this time-frame will not be reviewed.

## **7 Candidate Satisfaction**

**7.1** Should any candidate have concerns that their APP is not providing the service that they expect, or is behaving in a way that is inconsistent with the standards required in terms of administration, tuition or examinations, they should first make a complaint to their APP. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, candidates are asked to contact our Quality Assurance Team by emailing [qa@wsetglobal.com](mailto:qa@wsetglobal.com). Please note that all complaints will be dealt with confidentially, but WSET cannot act on anonymous complaints.

## 8 General Conduct

**8.1** WSET has a reasonable expectation that its staff and those representing WSET at our Approved Programme Providers (APP) will be treated professionally and respectfully as they carry out their jobs. Inappropriate behaviour including verbal or physical abuse, persistent or unrealistic demands, or threats that cause stress to staff will be viewed as misconduct and may lead to permanent exclusion from WSET qualifications.

## 9 Examination Regulations

**9.1** WSET reserves the right to add to or alter any of these regulations as it thinks fit.

# 6

## WSET Qualifications

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The WSET has a range of qualifications that cover sake, spirits and wine as well as beer. In full, the qualifications are:

WSET Level 1 Award in Beer

WSET Level 2 Award in Beer

WSET Level 1 Award in Sake (603/2051/5)

WSET Level 3 Award in Sake (603/2066/7)

WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits (600/1501/9)

WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits (600/1507/X)

WSET Level 3 Award in Spirits

WSET Level 1 Award in Wines (600/1504/4)

WSET Level 2 Award in Wines (603/4432/5)

WSET Level 3 Award in Wines (601/6352/5)

WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines

More information about all of these qualifications can be found on the WSET website [wsetglobal.com](http://wsetglobal.com).

## Regulation

WSET is recognised as an awarding organisation by Ofqual, the English regulator for qualifications and examinations. Where applicable, the Ofqual accreditation numbers are listed next to the Qualification title above.

## Diversity and Equality Policy

WSET fully supports the principle of diversity and equality and is responsible for ensuring that all candidates for its qualifications are treated fairly and on an equal basis. A copy of our diversity and equality policy can be obtained from the Quality Assurance Team by emailing [qa@wsetglobal.com](mailto:qa@wsetglobal.com).

## WSET Prizes

Candidates who have achieved outstanding marks in their examinations may be eligible for a prize and will be contacted by WSET should this apply. For more details on the prizes available, please go to:

<https://www.wsetglobal.com/about-us/awards-bursaries/>



**WSET**

## A world of knowledge

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