



'confidence for front line staff'

Specification for the
**WSET® Level 1
Award**
in Spirits

Specification

The WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits

This specification contains necessary information for both candidates and programme providers about the WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits.

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of learning outcomes. These outcomes should be used by providers to prepare programmes of learning, and by candidates to plan their studies, because the examination is set to test these outcomes.

The specification also provides syllabus weighting, study and examination guidance including the examination regulations.

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The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Qualifications

WSET® Awards is the qualifications division of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

We provide quality-assured qualifications that help people to know more about alcoholic beverages and to develop their tasting skills. We do this by:

- liaising with the drinks industry to set suitable specifications
- approving programme providers to offer our qualifications
- setting examinations
- issuing certificates to successful candidates.

The development and awarding of WSET® accredited qualifications is the sole responsibility of WSET® Awards, the Awarding Body of The Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

Qualification Frameworks

The UK Government has established a new regulatory authority, the **Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator** (OfQual), which regulates Awarding organisations who offer qualifications on the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF). WSET® qualifications are included in the QCF as listed below.

Qualifications and Curriculum Framework

Full Title : The WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines

QCF Level : **1** Accreditation number 600/1504/4

Description : This qualification provides a basic introduction to the main styles of wines available to front-line staff involved in the service or sale of wine. The qualification aims to provide the basic product knowledge and skills in the storage and service of wines required to prepare a person for their first job in wine hospitality or retail.

Full Title : The WSET® Level 1 Award in Wine Service

Description : This qualification builds on the knowledge and skills taught in the Level 1 Award in Wines, and shows how these can be used in a restaurant workplace. It is ideal for anyone who needs to gain basic skills in wine service, including those wishing to make their first steps into a career as a sommelier.

Qualifications and Curriculum Framework continued

Full Title : The WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits

QCF Level : **1** Accreditation number 600/1501/9

Description: This qualification provides a basic introduction to the main categories of spirits available to front-line staff involved in the service or sale of spirits. The qualification aims to provide basic product knowledge to prepare a person for a role in hospitality or the spirits industry.

Full Title : The WSET® Level 2 Award in Spirits

QCF Level : **2** Accreditation number 600/1507/X

Description: This qualification offers a greater breadth and depth of knowledge in the specific area of spirits and liqueurs than that offered by the broader-based Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits. This qualification offers focused coverage of all product categories in the field of spirits, end use of the identified products together with the theory of tasting technique.

Full Title : The WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits

QCF Level : **2** Accreditation number 600/1508/1

Description: This qualification offers broad coverage of all product categories in the field of alcoholic drinks, together with the theory of tasting technique. It is suitable for those with little previous experience.

Full Title : The WSET® International Higher Certificate in Wines and Spirits

Description: The International Higher Certificate gives more comprehensive coverage of the wines and spirits of the world, with an increased focus on tasting technique

Full Title : The WSET® Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits

QCF Level : **3** Accreditation number 600/1511/1

Description: The Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits gives more comprehensive coverage of the wines and spirits of the world, with an increased focus on tasting technique.



National Qualifications Framework continued

Full Title : The WSET® Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits

Description: This is a specialist qualification where detailed knowledge is combined with commercial factors and a thorough system for the professional evaluation of wines and spirits. The Diploma is recommended by the Institute of Masters of Wine for candidates wishing to pursue membership.

Full Title : The WSET® Level 5 Honours Diploma in Wines and Spirits

Description: This is an individual research project, where students can develop higher-level research, evaluation and analytical skills in a specialist wine and spirit subject of their choice.

BS EN ISO 9001:2008

WSET® Awards operates a Quality Management System which complies with the requirements of BS EN ISO 9001:2008 for the management of awards for qualifications and examinations in the product knowledge and tasting competence of alcoholic beverages.



BS EN ISO 9001:2008
FS 66504

How to prepare for the Level 1 Award in Spirits

WSET® qualifications can only be offered by organisations approved by WSET® Awards, known as Approved Programme Providers (APPs) and students wishing to study for a WSET qualification must enrol with an APP. The student's relationship is with their APP and the APP is responsible for the delivery of the course and administering the examination, which is set by WSET® Awards.

Group study with an APP is the best way of learning how to taste, but some APPs also prepare candidates for our examinations by distance learning.

A list of Approved Programme Providers (APPs) in the United Kingdom and overseas is published on the WSET® website (www.wsetglobal.com). Please contact the APP directly to find out about their programmes.

Development of Key Skills

- Key Skills

The UK Government, through the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator, has defined levels of attainment in six key skills: communication, application of number, information technology, working with others, improving own-learning and performance, problem solving.

The WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits does not specifically assess any of the key skills. However, it is considered that there are opportunities for students to develop certain key skills.

For the benefit of tutors and students, a mapping key for the six key skills has been produced. The mapping key will give examples where, in the natural course of study for a WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits, it is possible to practice and generate evidence in key skills. It should be noted that the opportunities for developing key skills and generating evidence might be affected by the mode of study adopted.

Not all key-skills requirements are covered by the WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits. We, therefore, advise that any student who wishes to complete the key-skills requirements should contact a specialist key-skills advisor who should be able to give suitable advice for the completion of tasks.

However, two of the key skills have been identified where it is possible to develop and practice key skills:

- communication
- improving own-learning and performance.

To aid the key-skills tutor and student, we have created tracking guides for the key skills a student should be able to demonstrate when undertaking a WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits, and these are available in the APP Handbook and from the WSET® website (www.wsetglobal.com).

The guides identify key-skill opportunities which will occur when using the recommended WSET® Tutor Guides and Level 1 study pack as part of the course of study for the WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits. Tutors who adopt alternative approaches to teaching may generate different opportunities for the development and demonstration of key skills.

Diversity and Equality

WSET® Awards 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 Centres Co-ordinator and Quality Assurance Manager, WSET® Awards.

Customer Service Statement

The quality and scope of service customers can expect from WSET® Awards is published in our Customer Service Statement. A copy can be obtained from the Centres Co-ordinator and Quality Assurance Manager, WSET® Awards.

In the unlikely event of any dissatisfaction with the service received, please contact the registered APP in the first instance. If the issue is not resolved please contact the Centres Co-ordinator and Quality Assurance Manager, WSET® Awards.

Scholarship Scheme

For those candidates employed in the drinks business in the UK, as well as for a more limited number of candidates from the general public and overseas, WSET® Awards manages a scheme to match outstanding candidates in their examinations to scholarship awards made available by industry sponsors. The awards are typically visits to wine or spirit producing regions. In a number of cases, further interviews are held to determine suitable candidates.

Please note that these scholarships do not take the form of financial grants to fund studies, but are a recognition of examination performance.

Further information and a current list of scholarships are published on the WSET® website (www.wsetglobal.com).

Qualification aims

The Level 1 course is for those preparing for, or employees starting, their first job in hospitality or the spirits industry. The course will introduce them, at a very basic level, to the main categories of spirit available, spirits service, marketing and basic product knowledge. This will enable students to meet workplace or Realistic Working Environment (RWE) spirit service standards and deal with basic customer enquiries. The course aims to provide students with product and service information relevant to their place of employment or study.

The qualification aims to provide the basic product knowledge and background in marketing spirits to prepare a person with the knowledge to underpin the job skills and competences, for example, in positions in the sale and service of spirits in hospitality or the spirits industry.



Enrolment

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits. Students who are under the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held will not be allowed to sample any alcoholic beverage as part of their course, but this is not a barrier to successfully completing the qualification. Similarly, students who choose not to taste alcohol for health, religious or other reasons will not find this a barrier to successfully completing the qualification.

Guided Learning Hours

It is recommended that the teaching time for the programme is no less than six and a half hours and should be no more than nine.

Progression Routes

WSET® Level 2 Award in Spirits

This qualification offers a greater breadth and depth of knowledge in the specific area of spirits and liqueurs. This qualification offers focused coverage of all product categories in the field of spirits, end use of the identified products together with the theory of tasting technique.

Qualification Unit and Learning Outcome Table

Unit Title	Learning Outcome Code	Learning Outcome Title
Unit Spirits Product Knowledge	1	Understand the basic principles of spirit production
	2	Understand the main types and styles of spirits available
	3	Know how to serve spirits to customers
	4	Understand the basic principles of marketing used for the sale of spirits
	5	Understand the issues relating to the safe consumption of spirits

LEARNING OUTCOME ONE – UNDERSTAND THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SPIRIT PRODUCTION

Assessment Criteria

1. Identify the **types of raw materials** used in the production of spirits.
2. Outline the general **production processes** for spirits.

TYPES OF RAW MATERIALS	
Sugar	Fruit (grapes), vegetable (sugar cane)
Starch	Grains (maize, barley, wheat, rye), vegetables (blue agave, potato)
PRODUCTION PROCESSES	
Pre-distillation	Fermentation
Distillation	Pot still, continuous still, distillation strength
Post Distillation	Ageing, blending, additions (water, caramel, flavours, sugar)



Unit - Spirits Product Knowledge continued

LEARNING OUTCOME TWO - UNDERSTAND THE MAIN TYPES AND STYLES OF SPIRITS AVAILABLE

Assessment Criteria

1. Identify the **main spirit categories** available.
2. Describe the **styles and characteristics** of spirits made within the categories.
3. Indicate the **factors that determine the main styles of spirit** within the categories.

MAIN SPIRIT CATEGORIES

Categories	Vodka, Rum, Tequila, Whisk(e)y, Gin, Cognac, Liqueurs
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FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE MAIN STYLES OF SPIRIT

Raw material	Fruit, vegetable, grain
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How spirit is made	Fermentation, type of still, distillation strength, ageing, blending, additions
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WSET LEVEL 1 SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO TASTING SPIRITS®

STYLE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Colour	colourless – golden – brown – other
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Aroma and flavour intensity	light – medium – pronounced
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Aroma and flavour characteristics	<i>e.g.</i> fruity, floral, vegetable, grain, spice, herb, oak
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Other	alcohol, body, sweetness
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Finish	short – long simple – complex
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Recommended Tasting Samples

- 2 White rums
- 1 Dark rum
- 2 Tequilas
- 3 Whiskies
- 2 Gins
- 2 Cognacs
- 2 Liqueurs

LEARNING OUTCOME THREE – KNOW HOW TO SERVE SPIRITS TO CUSTOMERS

Assessment Criteria

1. Indicate the different ways in which **spirits are served**.
2. Identify which **category of spirit serve is appropriate for different spirits**.

SERVICE OF SPIRITS

Drink style	Sipping, mixed drinks, cocktails
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LEARNING OUTCOME FOUR – UNDERSTAND THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING USED FOR THE SALE OF SPIRITS

Assessment Criteria

1. Indicate the different ways that spirits are **marketed**.

MARKETING OF SPIRITS

How spirits are marketed	Lifestyle, quality, heritage, point of difference
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LEARNING OUTCOME FIVE – UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES RELATING TO THE SAFE CONSUMPTION OF SPIRITS

Assessment Criteria

1. State the **legal issues** relating to the serving and consumption of spirits.
2. State the **social, health and safety issues** relating to the serving and consumption of spirits.

LEGAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Social responsibility	Safe consumption of alcohol
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Unit - Spirits Product Knowledge continued

Examples of Level 1 Examination Questions

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust does not release past papers for the WSET® Level 1 examination.

The multiple-choice examination papers are carefully compiled to reflect the weighting given to the learning outcomes of the Unit. The chart below gives a breakdown of the allocation of examination questions to each of the learning outcomes of the Unit.

Unit Title	Learning Outcome Title	Questions per Paper
Unit		
Learning Outcome 1	Understand the basic principles of spirit production	6
Learning Outcome 2	Understand the main types and styles of spirits available	16
Learning Outcomes 3 and 4	Know how to serve spirits to customers Understand the basic principles of marketing used for the sale of spirits	5
Learning Outcome 5	Understand the issues relating to the safe consumption of spirits	3
Total Questions		30

To give students an idea of the sort of questions which might be asked, here is a selection. The examination consists of 30 questions similar to these, to be completed in a maximum of 45 minutes.

1. Grapes are the raw material for which one of the following spirits?
 - a) Whisky.
 - b) Cognac.
 - c) Rum.
 - d) Tequila.
2. "Colourless, medium intensity of pepper and grass." Which one of the following spirits does this describe?
 - a) Silver Tequila.
 - b) Aged rum.
 - c) Blended whisky.
 - d) VS Cognac.

Answers to example questions:

- 1) b.
- 2) a.

1 Entry Requirements

1.1 Eligibility

- 1.1.1 Candidates applying to sit the 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 parental consent.
- 1.1.2 There are no restrictions on entry to the Level 1 Award in Spirits through overlaps with other qualifications or parts of qualifications.
- 1.1.3 Students who are under the legal minimum age for the retail purchase of alcoholic beverages in the country where the examination is being held will not be allowed to sample any alcoholic beverage as part of their course, but this is not a barrier to successfully completing the qualification. Similarly, students who choose not to taste alcohol for health, religious or other reasons will not find this 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 The indicative levels of literacy and numeracy required for the examination are as follows:

literacy: Level 1 of the UK basic skills national standards, or equivalent level of literacy in the language used for the examination

numeracy: Level 1 of the UK basic skills national standards, or equivalent.

2 Format and Results

- 2.1 Candidates will be required to pass a single-unit examination:
A closed-book examination that consists of 30 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each. A total mark of 70% is required to achieve a pass.
- 2.2 All examination questions are based on the published learning outcomes and the recommended study materials contain the information required to answer these questions correctly.
- 2.3 Results for successful candidates will be issued to APPs within 2 week from receipt of the completed scripts.
- 2.4 WSET® Awards does not offer aegrotat awards, all assessment requirements of the qualification must be met.

3 Reasonable Adjustments

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® Awards as required.

It is the policy of WSET® Awards that such candidates should not be placed at a disadvantage in the examinations.

Candidates are responsible for informing their APP of any such requirement before every assessment.

4 Resits

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

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

5 Examination Conditions and Conduct

5.1 It is a condition of entry that candidates agree to the following specific conditions:

- at the start of the examination all candidates must supply the invigilator with proof of identity in the form of photographic ID
- the examination is to be completed in a maximum of 45 minutes
- no reference is to be made to any material, in whatever form, other than the examination question paper and answer sheet
- no communication of any kind between candidates is permitted
- the use of electronic devices of any kind is prohibited
- the use of dictionaries of any kind is prohibited
- the use of audible “alarms” on any clock or watch is prohibited
- candidates who arrive after the published start time may be allowed to enter the room at the discretion of the invigilator and only if other candidates are not compromised
- candidates may not leave the room until the first 15 minutes of the examination time have elapsed

- candidates who complete the examination/assessment 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 examination question

- any candidate who is suspected of misconduct will be advised to leave the examination hall immediately and their examination paper will be submitted to the Examination Panel to determine its validity and any future ban on sitting papers

- no examination question papers are to be removed from the examination hall, candidates who fail to submit the question paper with their answer sheet will be deemed guilty of misconduct.

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 Examination papers submitted for marking become the property of WSET® Awards and will not be returned to candidates.

6 Examination Feedback, Enquiries and Appeals

Candidates requiring feedback and/or an enquiry (re-mark) on their examination paper should contact their APP and request an Application Form for Feedback and Enquiries Against Examination Results. The form must be completed and submitted to WSET® Awards along with the appropriate fee within 6 weeks of the date of the examination. Any request received outside of this time frame will not be reviewed. Feedbacks and enquiries will be issued within 2 weeks of receipt by WSET® Awards.

Any candidate unsatisfied with the result of an enquiry of an examination paper should contact the APP and request an Appeal against Examination Results Application Form, which must be completed and returned to WSET® Awards, together with the appropriate fee, no more than 10 working days following notification of the enquiry decision. Appeals received outside of this time frame will not be reviewed. Appeals will be issued within 2 weeks of receipt by WSET® Awards

7 Student Satisfaction

Should any student 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 take this up with their APP. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, students are asked to contact our Quality Assurance Manager, by email at awards@wset.co.uk. Please note that all complaints will be dealt with confidentially, but WSET® Awards cannot act on anonymous complaints.

8 WSET® Awards Regulations

WSET® Awards reserves the right to add to, or alter, any of these regulations as it thinks fit.



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WSET® Contacts

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To obtain a list of Approved Programme Providers (APPs) closest to you, where you can study or sit an examination, please see the WSET® website: www.wsetglobal.com

To obtain the APP Registration Pack, a copy of our Diversity and Equality Policy and our Customer Service Statement

Contact WSET® Awards

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7089 3840 • Fax: +44 (0)20 7089 3846
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For any other enquiries, please see the WSET® website:

www.wsetglobal.com
or contact **WSET® Awards**

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