



What to Expect from the Certified Cicerone[®] Exam

Congratulations!

You've passed the Certified Beer Server exam and have decided to pursue the title of Certified Cicerone[®]. The journey to becoming a Certified Cicerone requires a lot of work and dedication. You may be wondering where to begin, and what to expect during the exam. This document will help guide you toward your goal.



Exam Preparation

The Certified Cicerone exam is challenging, and requires substantial preparation. To pass the exam, candidates must demonstrate knowledge and skill of the following:

- Expertise in retail beer storage and service issues
- Comprehension of modern beer styles
- Familiarity with beer history and historical styles
- Ability to identify off flavors and beer styles by taste
- Understanding of beer ingredients and the brewing process
- Grasp of beer and food pairing principles

The amount of time candidates need to prepare varies, depending on their background. An experienced beer industry veteran, or someone with exceptional tasting and academic skills, may prepare for the exam in as little as six months. Other candidates may study for one or two years before being fully prepared.

As with all Cicerone exams, your first resource should be the syllabus. We administer Certified Cicerone exams based on different syllabi, depending on the region where the exam is held. If you're planning on sitting the Certified Cicerone exam in the United States, plan on studying the US Certified Cicerone syllabus. Those who are taking the exam in Canada should study the Canadian syllabus. Most Certified Cicerone exams outside of the US, the UK, or Canada will be based on the International English syllabus. However, at the time of this writing, Certified Cicerone syllabi specific to the Australian market is in development. Make sure you've selected the applicable region in your account settings to access the appropriate syllabus [see Fig. 1].

After reviewing the syllabus, consider reviewing the [sample written exam](#) and [sample tasting exam](#) to get a sense of the format and types of questions asked. From there, you have several options to begin studying. The Cicerone Certification Program has carefully curated a list of key resources (many free) available [here](#) and in Appendix A of this document. The BJCP style guidelines and the Brewers Association Draught Beer Quality Manual in particular are critical for candidates' success.

We also offer some study options designed specifically to prepare for this level of certification. Each of our [Road to Cicerone® coursebooks](#) focuses on a different area of the Certified Cicerone syllabus. Each course includes an online end-of-course quiz to help you gauge your understanding of the content before taking the exam. For a more immersive training experience, the [Road to Cicerone Bootcamp](#) is a five-day course held in Chicago, IL, focusing on hands-on learning. We also offer options for in-person and guided [flavor training](#) to help candidates prepare for the tasting exam.

In addition to the key resources and study materials we offer, we recommend several resources from other suppliers in our [Resources and Links](#) section of our website.

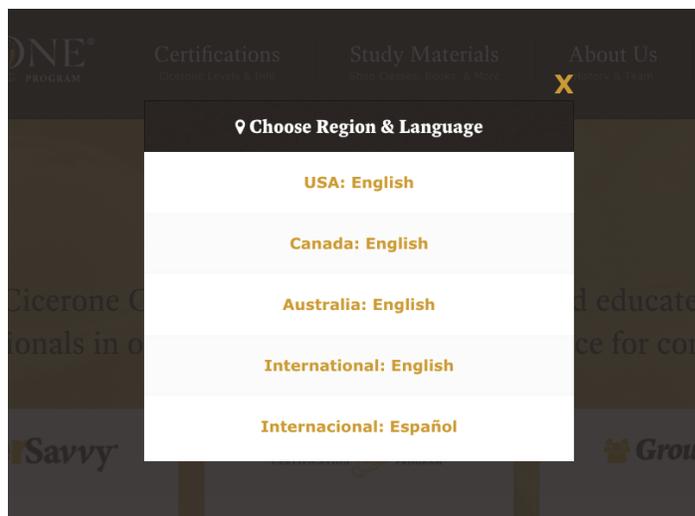
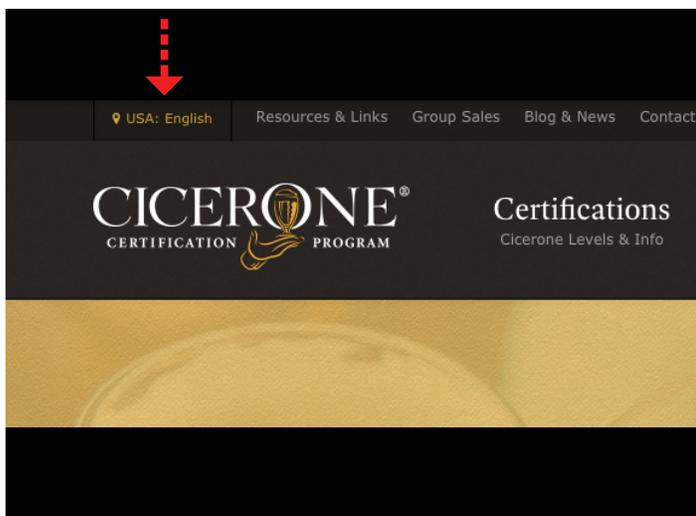


Fig. 1: Make sure you've selected the applicable region in your account settings to access the appropriate syllabus.

Registering for the Exam

You've been studying hard, and want to commit to an exam date. Your next step is to consult the [Certified Cicerone exam schedule](#). We update this list regularly as we add new exam dates, so we recommend checking back often if you don't see an exam convenient to you.

One of the features of the exam schedule is the ability to filter by region—users can select from Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America from the drop-down list under the “Choose Region” text. If you're not seeing any exams in your region, make sure you've selected the appropriate region in that menu.

Candidates who choose the North American region have the option to narrow their search for exam sites by postal code. If your search does not return any results, double check to make sure you've made a selection in the drop-down menu under the text “Narrow Results.”

Once you've found an exam date that works for you, click the “Register” button next to that exam. On the following page, you'll be able to select either “First Time Exam,” or “Retake Written,” or “Retake Tasting” if you've taken the exam previously, from the drop-down menu. Make the selection that's appropriate to you.

To proceed, you must agree to the Certified Cicerone [exam policies](#), so please review these before purchasing the exam (you can find these in Appendix B of this document as well). Then you'll proceed to checkout. If you do not have the option to move on from this page, confirm that you've logged in to your cicerone.org account.

Candidates who have health-related needs, disabilities, or whose first language is not English may request special accommodations for their exam. To see available accommodations, review the [exam policies](#). To inquire about available accommodations during your desired exam date, please email info@cicerone.org. We ask that you refrain from registering for the exam until we can confirm the ability to provide accommodations at that exam.

Exam Day

One week before the exam, you will receive exam day instructions from one of our exam managers. This email will contain a brief overview of the exam, special instructions, and details about the exam location. Please read that email carefully, and feel free to reply to the sender if you have questions about any of the instructions.

On exam day, dress comfortably as you'll be testing for up to five hours. Consider wearing layers or bringing along a light jacket or sweatshirt, to ensure you remain comfortable if the exam space becomes cooler or warmer than you'd prefer. We'll ask that you arrive ten to fifteen minutes prior to the exam start time to get situated.

Please be punctual, as we cannot delay the exam for late arrivals.

When you arrive, we'll need a photo ID to check you in, so don't forget to bring one. If you are traveling from a different country, ask your proctor if you can fill out an International Waiver form. Some exam syllabi will have questions about laws and regulations specific to the country where the exam is being held. If you do not live or work in that country, we will not count your scores on such questions against you.

Once seated, your proctor will give you instructions for completing two documents: The Certified Cicerone exam waiver, and the Certified Cicerone blinding sheet. With the exam waiver, you certify that you are of legal drinking age in the region of the exam, that you've passed the Certified Beer Server exam, and that you will not remove exam materials or otherwise transmit exam content. The blinding sheet is the method by you'll receive your exam results. Every exam is graded blind, meaning your identity is concealed from exam graders.

EXAM DAY QUICK CHECKLIST

- Photo ID
- Black pens
- Water bottle
- Comfortable clothing

**Relax and have fun!
You've been preparing
for this!**

The way we identify your work is through the blinding code you choose on the blinding sheet. The blinding code is any seven-digit number of your choosing that will uniquely identify you. Most American candidates use their mobile phone numbers without the area code as it's easy to remember. You will write this seven-digit number on every page of exam material you turn in.

Before the exam begins, you'll also power down all mobile devices, and seal them in an envelope provided for you. You may not access your mobile devices until the entire exam is complete. From this point forward, there is no talking, unless to ask the proctor(s) a question.

THE WRITTEN EXAM

The exam begins with the written portion, which consists of short answer and fill-in-the-blank questions, along with three essays. You will have up to three hours to complete the written portion of the exam. In most exams, candidates may turn in completed exams, face down, at a specific location in the exam space. After turning in completed exams, candidates may not attempt to retrieve their exam.

During the exam, we encourage you to ask the proctor any questions you have. Simply raise your hand or quietly get his or her attention. They may not be able to give an exact answer if it may give away answers to exam questions, but they will do their best. You may also use the restrooms if needed. It is not necessary to ask permission. Simply turn your exam face down and do not take anything with you.

THE TASTING EXAM

After the written portion, everyone will take the tasting exam. Depending on the size of the exam and the layout of the exam venue, we may ask candidates to collect the tasting samples themselves. In other exams, we may distribute samples to candidates. You will have a maximum of 45 minutes to complete the tasting exam. **The tasting exam consists of three flights:** In the first, you will receive a control beer and four samples. You will also have a list of five flavor compounds found on the Certified Cicerone syllabus. Your proctor will treat three of the four samples with a flavor compound from that list, leaving one sample untreated. Your job is to identify the names of the flavor compounds in the treated samples, and identify the untreated sample. The next section of the tasting is style discrimination. Here we'll provide four samples. With each, you have a choice between two beer styles. Your job will be to select which beer style each sample best represents. The final section is the beer acceptance portion. The scenario for these final samples is that you are the beer expert in a restaurant or bar. A customer has returned the beer and believes there's something wrong with it. Your job is to taste the last four samples and determine whether to continue serving the beer. If you decide to remove that product from service, you must identify the flaw in the beer that drove that decision, and then explain the probable cause of that flaw in a retail setting.

Once the tasting exam is over, the proctor may disclose how the samples were treated and the brands used. This discussion is primarily for quality control purposes, and we urge candidates to resist the temptation to calculate their tasting score based on this discussion alone. None of the exam proctors can predict your tasting score on exam day.



A typical Certified Cicerone tasting exam set up—you will be presented 15 labeled samples that are divided into three flights.

THE DEMONSTRATION

After the tasting portion, everyone will complete the demonstration. This part of the exam takes place in an area away from other candidates, for example, a vacant office, conference room, or a remote section of a restaurant. We'll give you a question slip and a relevant item, and you'll answer the question while being video recorded. We'll score your video response later. Some candidates find this portion of the exam especially intimidating, but keep in mind that few people (rarely more than one grader) will ever see this video! Each candidate will have three minutes to complete the demonstration portion.

If you finish the written exam early, you may have an opportunity to complete the demonstration before the tasting exam begins. Simply get your proctor's attention and ask how he or she would like to proceed. If your proctor is preparing the tasting exam, however, you may need to wait until after you've completed the tasting exam.

After you've completed the written, tasting, and demonstration, you're free to leave the exam site and access your mobile device(s). Enjoy a beer without having to think about it!

Exam Grading

After the exam, you can expect to wait approximately six weeks to receive your results. We understand the wait can be excruciating, and you may be wondering why it takes that long. Following the exam, the proctor sends the hard copies to the Cicerone Certification Program offices in Chicago. Once in the office, our staff separates the exams into different sections and scans each page. Our team then uploads the scanned images and distributes them to our graders.

Between six and eight different graders, who have achieved the title of Master Cicerone®, Advanced Cicerone®, or Certified Cicerone®, score different graders sections of each exam. This ensures no single person has undue influence on the overall score. These graders have demonstrated extensive knowledge in the sections they grade through their scores on the exam, in addition to professional experience related to those areas. Since our graders are working beer professionals, and we try to be respectful of their time by giving them several days to grade and return a set of exams.

The grading process is rigorous. Two graders score several parts of the exam and we use the average of the two scores. We monitor for any disparity between graders' scores. If we see any discrepancies, a third person reviews the candidate's answers to assess what score should be awarded. Once the scoring is complete, we then work to tabulate the section and final scores for each candidate. If a candidate has an overall score of 78 or 79, our staff reviews that exam in full before we report results. **The requirements for a passing grade are 80 percent overall and 70 percent on the tasting exam.**

Once scores are finalized, we will notify candidates via email.

The following table provides a breakdown of how each portion of the exam contribute to the overall score:

Topic	Short Answer	Essay	Demonstration	Tasting Exam
Keeping and Serving Beer	16.5%	4.5%	4.0%	0%
Beer Styles	20.5%	4.5%	0%	0%
Beer Flavor and Evaluation	8.25%	0%	0%	16.75%
Beer Ingredients and Processes	11.5%	3.5%	0%	0%
Pairing Beer with Food	10%	0%	0%	0%
Total % Overall Score	66.75%	12.5%	4%	16.75%

Retaking the Exam

Don't be discouraged if you do not receive a passing score on your first attempt. The exam is challenging and many industry professionals have needed more than attempt to earn the title. Depending on your score, you may only need to retake part of the exam. **Candidates must wait a minimum of six weeks from the exam date to re-sit the written portion of the exam,** but there are no time restrictions on retaking the tasting portion.

To register for a retake, you can start with the Certified Cicerone exam [schedule](#). Once you've identified an exam date and location that works for you, simply click on the "Register" button next to it. On the following page, you'll be able to select "Retake Written" or "Retake Tasting" from the drop-down menu. We offer exam retakes at a discounted rate, so make sure you haven't accidentally registered for a "First Time Exam." Then you'll proceed to checkout and complete the registration process.

The demonstration portion of the exam is optional with either a written or tasting exam retake. You need not register to retake the demonstration, just make sure your proctor knows you wish to retake that portion. When calculating exam retake scores, we'll always use the highest tasting score, the highest overall written score, and the highest demonstration score. We're unable to mix individual section scores from more than one written exam to calculate the final score.

We hope this document provides some insight into the Certified Cicerone exam, and helps guide your studies. If you have any questions still unanswered, please send an email to info@cicerone.org and we'll do our best to help you out.

Appendix A: Key Resources for the Certified Cicerone® exam

Resource	K&S	Styles	Flavor	I&P	B&F
Tasting Beer – Randy Mosher	●	●	●	●	●
The Oxford Companion to Beer	●	●	●	●	
Draught Beer Quality Manual	●				
Draught Beer Quality Fact Sheets	●				
Road to Cicerone: Keeping & Serving Beer Course	●				
2015 BJCP Style Guidelines		●			
Road to Cicerone: German Beer Styles Course		●			
Road to Cicerone: British & Irish Beer Styles Course		●			
Aroxa Website and Flavor Cards			●		
Brewing Classic Styles – Jamil Zainasheff		●		●	
How to Brew – John Palmer				●	
The Brewmaster's Table – Garrett Oliver		●			●

Resources organized by primary syllabus section

General Resources

Tasting Beer – Randy Mosher

The Oxford Companion to Beer – Edited by Garrett Oliver

Keeping and Serving Beer

Draught Beer Quality Manual – Maintained by the Brewers Association, found at draughtquality.org

Draught Beer Quality Fact Sheets – Maintained by the Brewers Association, found at draughtquality.org

Road to Cicerone: Keeping & Serving Beer Course – Cicerone Certification Program

Beer Styles

2015 BJCP Style Guidelines – Maintained by the BJCP, found at bjcp.org

Brewing Classic Styles: 80 Winning Recipes Anyone Can Brew – Jamil Zainasheff

Road to Cicerone: German Beer Styles Course – Cicerone Certification Program

Road to Cicerone: British & Irish Beer Styles Course – Cicerone Certification Program

Beer Flavor and Evaluation

AROXA™ Website and Flavor Cards – found at Aroxa.com

Beer Ingredients and Brewing Processes

How to Brew: Everything You Need To Know To Brew Beer Right The First Time – John Palmer

Pairing Beer with Food

The Brewmaster's Table: Discovering the Pleasures of Real Beer with Real Food – Garrett Oliver

Appendix B: Certified Cicerone® Exam Policies

Registration

- Registration is subject to availability.
- Registration closes one week prior to the exam date.
- Registrants must be of legal drinking age and must have passed the Certified Beer Server Exam.
- Candidates retaking the written portion of the exam may do so no sooner than six weeks after their original exam date. There is no waiting period for tasting exam retakes.
- Exam fees are non-refundable.

Candidate Exam Rescheduling

- Any postponement/rescheduling must be personally arranged with the Cicerone Certification Program staff.
- All non-emergency postponements must be made a minimum of two weeks before the scheduled exam date. Failure to do so will result in a \$50 rescheduling fee. The rescheduling fee is \$25 for postponement of a partial retake (tasting or written)
- Candidates with emergencies may postpone the exam until a later date without penalty. To avoid a rescheduling fee, candidates must contact Cicerone Certification Program staff within 24 hours of their scheduled exam.
- If you fail to attend your exam without previously contacting a member of the Cicerone Certification Program staff, you will be charged a \$275 no-show fee before you are able to reschedule your exam. This is applicable to retakes of both exam parts, first time full exams and written retakes. If you were signed up for a tasting retake only and do not attend the exam or contact a staff member prior, you forfeit your registration.
- Re-registration is subject to availability.

Exam Accommodations

The Cicerone Certification Program is committed to serving test takers with disabilities, health-related needs, or for candidates whose first language is not English by providing services and reasonable accommodations that are appropriate given the purpose of the test.

All test takers requesting any type of accommodations must email info@cicerone.org and have their accommodations approved before their exam can be scheduled. Your request should be submitted as early as possible, especially if you are requesting an alternate test format.

Obtaining supporting documentation describing your need for an accommodation from a qualified evaluator may be necessary.

If we approve your request for accommodations, then you will be able to schedule an accommodated exam. We request that you not register for an exam until you receive our decision regarding your accommodation request.

Accommodations available:

- English to native language dictionary
- Extended testing time:
 - 50% (time and one half)

- 100% (double time; documentation required)
- Large print written exam (14pt)
- Additional rest breaks
- Printed copy of spoken directions

Test takers who have health-related needs requiring them to bring equipment, beverages, or snacks into the testing room or to take extra or extended breaks need to follow the accommodations request procedures.

Disqualification

The following activities can disqualify one or more portions of a candidate's exam score, lead to the temporary dismissal of a candidate from the Certified Cicerone exam, or result in revocation of the title of Certified Cicerone®:

- Misrepresentation of identity or age
- Use of electronic devices while taking the exam (unless incoming emergency phone calls are cleared with the exam proctor in advance)
- Talking or otherwise communicating with other candidates during either portion of the exam
- Discussing the demonstration question with other candidates before the conclusion of the exam
- Any visual contact, intentional or accidental, with the tasting exam preparation

Exam Cancellation and Postponement

All exams are subject to rescheduling, location changes, or time changes

The Cicerone Certification Program reserves the right to cancel or postpone exams due to low registration. In the rare instance the program must cancel or postpone an exam, we will notify candidates a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled exam day. Candidates will either be guaranteed a seat at the next exam scheduled in the region, or their registration will be moved to an alternate exam site. Candidates may consider inquiring with Cicerone program staff about the potential for postponement before booking air travel.