



# What to Expect from the Certified Cicerone<sup>®</sup> Exam

## Congratulations!

Congratulations! You've passed the Certified Beer Server exam and have decided to pursue the title of Certified Cicerone<sup>®</sup>. 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 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 your region. If you live in the United States, plan on studying the US Certified Cicerone syllabus. Canadian and the United Kingdom syllabi are available for candidates in those countries. Certified Cicerone candidates outside the U.S., Canada, and the UK choose to study the International English syllabus. You can find all Certified Cicerone syllabi [here](#).

After reviewing the syllabus, consider reviewing the [sample written exam](#) and [sample tasting exam](#) to get a sense of the 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](#).** The BJCP style guidelines and the Brewers Association Draught Beer Quality Manual are critical for candidates' success.

We also offer some study options explicitly designed to prepare for this level of certification. Each of our online [Road to Cicerone courses](#) 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. We also offer options for guided [flavor training](#) to help candidates prepare for the tasting exam.

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

# Registering for the Exam

You've been studying hard and are ready to commit to taking the exam. You will take the written exam securely online and the tasting and demonstration portions in person at one of various locations worldwide. You do not need to take the written exam before the tasting exam and are free to schedule the exam components in the order you feel most prepared for. Consult the Certified Cicerone [exam schedule](#) to find dates and times that work best for you. 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.

Before registering for the online written exam, make sure to review the [system requirements](#) for taking the exam. Once you've found an exam date that works for you, click the "Register" button next to that exam. If you've taken the exam previously, make sure to select the "retake" option from the drop-down menu to benefit from reduced-priced examination retakes. You will need to be logged in to your cicerone.org account.

To proceed, you must agree to the Certified Cicerone [exam policies](#), including our [Code of Conduct](#), so please review these before purchasing the exam (you can find these in the Appendix of this document as well). Then you'll proceed to checkout.

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](mailto:info@cicerone.org). We ask that you refrain from registering for the exam until we can confirm the ability to provide accommodations during that exam.

## Exam Day

### WRITTEN EXAMINATION DETAILS

About a week before your scheduled exam date, we'll email you instructions for logging in to the testing environment. The instructions are sent to the email address listed on your cicerone.org profile, so please confirm it is current and correct when you register for an exam. We'll ask you to complete a quick orientation quiz on the platform so that you can go through the process of logging in and making sure everything works correctly. You will have the opportunity to take that orientation quiz up to three times if you need to. Completing the orientation is required to ensure system compatibility and identify any unanticipated technical issues before you take the actual exam.

On exam day, you'll log into the testing environment. If you log in early, don't be alarmed if you don't see your exam – it will appear precisely at the scheduled start time (you may need to refresh your browser to see it). You will have three hours to complete the online written exam. The timer begins on your first question.

The exam is **closed book**. You may not use study materials during the test. Headphones or headsets are not allowed during the exam. **If you open or access any unauthorized websites during the exam, your results will be invalidated.** We cannot permit note taking during the exam, and you may not leave the testing session once it has started.

For exam security, the audio and video of you, and everything you do on your computer screen, will be recorded throughout your orientation quiz and the exam itself. The audio, video, and screen recording of your exam session is audited using a blend of artificial intelligence and human review to ensure exam session integrity. Please make sure you take the exam in a quiet, well-lit space free of distractions to facilitate this process.

During the exam, if you have problems with the online proctoring software, you'll be able to chat with a technical support representative who can help troubleshoot. You'll also be allowed to contact a member of the Cicerone Certification Program during the exam. If you get disconnected from the exam itself, you can log in to the software and pick up where you left off. And, if all else fails and you have serious technical difficulties during the exam, we'll work with you to reschedule your test. Ultimately, we want you focused on taking the exam, not the technology needed to administer it.

## TASTING EXAM AND DEMONSTRATION DETAILS

About a week before your scheduled exam date, we'll send you an email with detailed instructions about your exam date. The instructions are sent to the email address listed on your cicerone.org profile, so please confirm it is current and correct when you register for an exam. Additionally, please familiarize yourself with our **in-person examination protocols**. At the time of this writing, we must adhere to strict protocols for in-person testing while COVID-19 remains a public health issue.

On exam day, dress comfortably. Please refrain from wearing scented products that may interfere with the tasting exam. Candidates wearing strongly scented products cannot sit the exam. We work closely with our hosts to ensure the exam site is free of distractions. However, please feel free to bring earplugs to wear during the exam if you are especially sensitive to noise.

After you are seated, shut down any mobile devices as their use is prohibited during the exam. The proctor will distribute the samples and the two-page tasting exam to you when the exam begins. There is no talking, except to communicate with the proctor from this point. Each of your samples will be at least 1.5 ounces (45 ml), and we cannot provide additional beer samples. Do not begin tasting until the proctor has instructed you to do so. At that time, please write your first and last name in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Then you may begin evaluating your samples.



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

You'll have a maximum of 45 minutes to complete the tasting exam. If you finish the tasting exam early, get your proctor's attention by raising your hand. They may not be available immediately, but they will let you know when they are. You can give your completed tasting exam to the proctor at that time, and they will then take you to a separate area to complete the demonstration. If other test takers complete the tasting ahead of you, there might be a wait to finish the demonstration, so please be patient.

As part of the demonstration, 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. Each candidate will have three minutes to complete the demonstration portion. Your proctor may not be in the room recording you, so when you have completed your demonstration, please leave the area (do not touch the camera, let it continue to record), find your proctor, and let them know you've finished. You are then free to leave.

We will send all participants a list of how we treated each of the tasting exam samples within two business days of the exam. We will send the results within four weeks of your exam.

## Tasting Exam Instructions

The tasting exam includes three parts. The first is the off-flavor identification section. This flight contains your control sample and samples A, B, C, and D. In samples A through D, three (3) samples contain an off flavor. One (1) sample does not have an off flavor. Please identify the off flavor you taste in each sample. The list of potential off flavors appears at the top of the section.

The second section is beer style recognition. For samples E, F, G, and H, you have a choice of two beer styles. Taste the sample and identify the style of beer by circling or underlining your answer.

The third segment is the quality assessment portion. The samples in this section are weighted more heavily because we ask you for more information than in the previous areas. We have identified the style of beer for you. The only thing you know is that the beer may be from a bottle, can, or keg. Your job is to taste samples I, J, K, and L. Please determine whether each beer is worthy of sale. Based on what you know about the flavor profile of the beer style, conclude whether they have flavors associated with improper handling between the brewery and the point of sale. First, answer whether you taste a flaw associated with mishandling. If you taste such a flaw, circle "Yes."

Then please tell us two more things: 1) what is the flaw and 2) the likely cause of that flaw. If you do not detect a fault, you do not need to do anything beyond circling "No." However, if there is any reason you feel you should clarify your decision, please do so.

## Exam Grading

After the written exam, you can expect to wait up to six weeks to receive your results. We understand the wait can be excruciating, and you may be wondering why it takes that long.

Between six and eight different graders, who are Master Cicerones<sup>®</sup>, Advanced Cicerones<sup>®</sup>, or Certified Cicerones<sup>®</sup>, score different 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, 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, another person reviews the candidate's answers to assess what score should be awarded. Once the scoring is complete, we then work to tabulate each candidate's section and final scores. If a candidate has an overall score of 78 or 79, our staff reviews that exam in full before reporting results. The requirements for a passing grade are 80 percent overall and 70 percent on the tasting exam.

Once scores are finalized, we send results to candidates via email.

The following table provides a breakdown of how each portion of the exam contributes 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. 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.

You can start with the Certified Cicerone exam [schedule](#) to register for a retake. Once you've identified an exam date that works for you, click on the "Register" button next to it. On the following page, ensure that you've selected the "retake" option for the exam, as those are offered at a reduced fee. Then you'll proceed to checkout and complete the registration process.

The demonstration portion of the exam is optional with a 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 cannot 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 unanswered questions, please send an email to [info@cicerone.org](mailto:info@cicerone.org), and we'll do our best to help you out.

# Appendix: Certified Cicerone® Exam Policies

## Codes of Conduct

### Examiner Code of Conduct:

Exam proctors, oral examiners, graders, and other individuals responsible for supporting Cicerone Certification Program examinations or training shall:

1. Perform their responsibilities with respect, objectivity, and professionalism.
2. Safeguard exam candidates' privacy and personal information.
3. Maintain confidentiality of test questions, rubrics, and candidate responses.
4. Take reasonable care to provide exam candidates with a safe environment.
5. Foster an exam or learning experience free of discriminatory behavior, intimidation, or harassment, including sexual harassment.
6. Pledge never to use their position with the Cicerone Certification Program to influence the behavior or actions of another community member in an unethical manner.
7. Report violations of the code of conduct to +1 866-519-6325 or [app.mycompliancereport.com/report?cid=CC](https://app.mycompliancereport.com/report?cid=CC) and participate in any related investigations.

### Candidate Code of Conduct:

Individuals participating in Cicerone Certification Program examinations shall:

1. Be respectful of other exam candidates, proctors, and individuals associated with the organization hosting the exam.
2. Abstain from using electronic devices, books, flashcards, or any other study materials or communication aides during testing unless authorized by the Cicerone Certification Program.
3. Refrain from any behavior that may disrupt the exam or distract other test takers.
4. Inform the exam proctor if the testing environment may affect performance.

Our goal is to provide a testing or learning environment free of discriminatory behavior, intimidation, or harassment, including sexual harassment. Candidates may also report violations of the code of conduct in a safe, confidential manner to +1 866-519-6325 or [app.mycompliancereport.com/report?cid=CC](https://app.mycompliancereport.com/report?cid=CC).

Cicerone Certification Program representatives or exam candidates who fail to adhere to these codes of conduct are subject to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to dismissal of exam administration responsibilities, removal from the exam, or revocation or suspension of certification earned through the Cicerone Certification Program.

## Registration

- Registration is subject to availability
- Registration typically closes ten days before the exam date
- Registrants must be of legal drinking age and must have passed the Certified Beer Server Exam
- Written examinations administered online are facilitated by a third-party proctoring provider (ProctorFree). By registering for the exam, you authorize the Cicerone Certification Program to create a ProctorFree account on your behalf
- 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 and non-transferable

## **Exam Rescheduling, Timelines, and Fees**

Candidates may postpone their exam pursuant to the following guidelines:

- More than 30 days from the exam date - no fee to postpone or reschedule
- Less than 30 days before the exam date - a \$25 fee applies and is collected when the exam is rescheduled
- Neglecting to attend an exam for which one is registered (no show/no call) results in forfeiture of the exam registration
- Candidates must contact Cicerone staff ([info@cicerone.org](mailto:info@cicerone.org)) to arrange postponement and rescheduling
- Postponement due to injury, illness, or a medical emergency will be considered upon review of a doctor's note
- Exam rescheduling is subject to availability
- Exam and rescheduling fees are non-refundable and non-transferable

## **Exam Accommodations**

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

All test takers requesting accommodations must email [info@cicerone.org](mailto:info@cicerone.org) and have their accommodations approved before registering. 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 accommodation from a qualified evaluator may be necessary.

If we approve your request for accommodations, 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 (for online examinations, candidates may access preapproved translation web pages)
- Extended testing time, up to:
  - 50% (time and one half)
  - 100% (double time; documentation required)
- Large-print written exam (14pt)
- Additional rest breaks
- Printed copy of spoken directions

Note: 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 any portion of the exam
- Discussing or otherwise transmitting exam question content during or after the exam
- Referring to notes, reference materials, or accepting assistance or advice from anyone else while taking the exam
- Any visual contact, intentional or accidental, with the tasting exam preparation

Candidates taking the written portion of the exam online agree to cooperate with any inquiries into test integrity and security. In rare instances, this may include retaking the exam. Inability to support these efforts may result in forfeiture of exam fees.

## **Exam Cancellation and Postponement**

All exams are subject to rescheduling, location changes, or time changes. In the rare instance the program must cancel or postpone an exam, we will notify candidates a minimum of two weeks before the scheduled date. We will work with affected candidates to reschedule their exam.

Consider inquiring with Cicerone program staff about the potential for postponement before booking non-refundable travel.