WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines

Specification

![WSET — Wine & Spirit Education Trust]

Specification

WSET® Level 1 Award
in Wines

Contents

Introduction

This specification contains necessary information for both candidates and Approved Programme Providers (APPs) about the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines.

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of the learning outcomes for the Level 1 Award in Wines. 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 (including syllabus weighting), sample examination questions and the examination regulations.

At the end of this document you will find information on the other WSET qualifications and WSET's qualification division, WSET Awards.

1 Introduction to the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines

Qualification Aims

The WSET Level 1 Award in Wines is intended for people who have little or no prior knowledge of wines. It is designed to provide a sound but simple introduction to wines. The qualification will assist those who need a basic familiarity with the main types and styles of wines, for example people who work with wines as part of a larger beverage portfolio in the retail and hospitality sectors.

Successful candidates will be able to know the key stages in grape growing and winemaking, list the principal types and styles of wine, state the key characteristics of wines made from the principal grape varieties as well as other examples of wines, and know the key principles involved in the storage and service of wine. They will consequently be in a position to answer customer queries and provide recommendations for the service of wine.

Qualification Structure

Learning Outcomes

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

Learning Outcome 1	Know the key stages in grape growing and winemaking.
Learning Outcome 2	Know the types, characteristics and styles of wines made from the principal grape varieties and other examples of wines.
Learning Outcome 3	Know the key principles and practices involved in the storage and service of wine.

Enrolment

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines. 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 for health or religious reasons, 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.

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 1 Award in Wines is 6 hours, all as GLH. This includes the 45 minutes for the examination.

Recommended Progression Routes

The WSET Level 1 Award in Wines, or an equivalent level of experience, is recommended for entry to the WSET Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits.

2 WSET Level 1 Award in Wines: Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome 1

Know the key stages in grape growing and winemaking.

Assessment Criteria

1 Name the main parts of a grape and what they contain.

2 Name the key stages in the annual cycle of grape growing and know what happens during ripening.

3 Name and define different grape-growing climates and state how they can affect the characteristics of grapes.

4 List the requirements for and the products of alcoholic fermentation.

5 Name and correctly order the key stages in the production of still white, red and rosé wines.

Range 1: Parts of a grape	
Parts of a grape	**Skin** – colour, tannin
	Pulp – water, sugar, acid

Range 2: Grape growing	
Key stages in the annual cycle of grape growing	Flowering, grape ripening

Range 3: Climate	
Effect of climate	Cool climate, warm climate

Range 4: Alcoholic Fermentation	
Requirements for alcoholic fermentation	Sugar, yeast
Products of alcoholic fermentation	Alcohol, carbon dioxide

Range 5: Production of still white, red and rosé wines	
Production of white wines	**Grapes** – white
	Stages – crushing, pressing, fermentation, maturation, bottling
Production of red wines	**Grapes** – black
	Stages – crushing, fermentation, draining, pressing, maturation, bottling
Production of rosé wines	**Grapes** – black
	Stages – crushing, fermentation, draining, maturation, bottling

Learning Outcome 2

Know the types, characteristics and styles of wines from the principal grape varieties and other examples of wines.

Assessment Criteria

1   Name and define the types of wine and the characteristics that contribute to their styles.

2   Name the principal grape varieties and identify the characteristics and styles of their wines.

3   Identify and relate examples of wines from principal grape varieties to the grape varieties, types, characteristics and styles of wines.

4   Identify and relate other examples of wines to the types, characteristics and styles of wines.

Range 1: Principal types and styles of wines	
Types of wines	Still, sparkling, fortified
Characteristics of wines	**Colour** – white, red, rosé **Notable structural characteristics** – sweetness, acidity, tannin, alcohol, body **Typical aromas and flavours** – fruit, oak, other
Styles of wines	A combination of the above characteristics

Range 2: Principal grape varieties	
White grape varieties	Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Riesling
Black grape varieties	Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Syrah/Shiraz

Range 3: Examples of wines from principal grape varieties	
White	Sancerre, Chablis, Burgundy (white)
Red	Burgundy (red), Bordeaux
Sparkling	Champagne

Range 4: Other examples of wines	
White	Sauternes
Rosé	White Zinfandel
Red	Beaujolais, Côtes du Rhône, Chianti, Rioja, Châteauneuf-du-Pape
Sparkling	Prosecco, Cava
Fortified	Sherry, Port

Learning Outcome 3

Know the key principles and practices involved in the storage and service of wine.

Assessment Criteria

1 Identify and define the ideal conditions for storing and methods for preserving wine.

2 Identify the recommended service temperature description for the principal types and styles of wine.

3 State the correct procedures for opening and serving wine.

4 Identify the principal food and wine interactions and recognise the effect they typically have on a wine.

Range 1: Storage of wine	
Ideal storage conditions	Temperature, light, position of bottle
Preserving wine	Vacuum system, blanket system

Range 2: Service temperature description	
White and rosé wines	Sparkling wines – well chilled
	Sweet wines – well chilled
	Light- and medium-bodied white and rosé – chilled
	Full-bodied white – lightly chilled
Red wines	Medium- and full-bodied red – room temperature
	Light bodied red – lightly chilled

Range 3: Serving wine	
Opening	Still wine, sparkling wine
Serving wine	Glassware, checks on the appearance and nose of the wine

Range 4: Principal food and wine interactions	
Components in food that affect wine	Sweetness, umami, salt, acidity, flavour intensity, fat, chilli heat
Components in wine that are affected by food	Sweetness, acidity, bitterness (tannins, oak), fruitiness, alcohol

3 Recommended Tasting Samples

- 3 red wines and 2 white wines from the principal grape varieties which must display contrasting notable characteristics
- 1 sweet wine that is named in Learning Outcome 2 or 1 rosé wine

WSET Level 1 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

APPEARANCE	
Colour	white – red – rosé
NOSE	
Aroma characteristics	*e.g.* aromas of fruit, oak, other
PALATE	
Notable structural characteristics	sweetness, acidity, tannin, alcohol, body
Flavour characteristics	*e.g.* flavours of fruit, oak, other

4 Examination Guidance

Examination Administration

Examinations are conducted by WSET Approved Programme Providers (APPs). Administratively, APPs must comply with the criteria and codes of practice set out in the Operating Handbook.

Assessment Method

The WSET Level 1 Award in Wines is assessed by a closed-book examination that consists of 30 multiple-choice questions, to be completed in 45 minutes.

All examination questions are based on the published learning outcomes and the recommended study materials contain the information required to answer these questions.

A candidate is required to pass with a minimum mark of 70 per cent.

About the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines Examination

The WSET Level 1 Award in Wines examination paper consists of 30 multiple-choice questions. Each question has only one correct answer, which should be indicated on a computer-readable answer sheet. The examination invigilator will give the full instructions on how to complete the answer sheet on the day of the examination. Each correctly answered multiple-choice question is worth one mark, and marks are NOT subtracted for incorrect answers.

All WSET Level 1 Award in Wines examination papers are carefully compiled to reflect the syllabus. A chart giving a detailed breakdown of the examination weighting is shown below.

Learning Outcome	Multiple-Choice Questions (1 mark per question)
1	6
2	18
3	6
	30 marks

Issuing of Results

Results of examinations are issued by WSET Awards as follows:

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

5 | Sample Examination Questions

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust does not release past papers for the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines. In order to give candidates an idea of the sort of questions that might be asked, this section includes five sample questions. The examination consists of 30 questions similar to these.

1 Which one of the following grape varieties produces red wine?

  a Cabernet Sauvignon

  b Sauvignon Blanc

  c Riesling

  d Chardonnay

2 Chablis is

  a a dry white wine

  b a dry red wine

  c a sweet white wine

  d a sweet red wine

3 Red wines are best stored in direct sunlight.

  a True

  b False

4 Umami makes wines seem more sweet and fruity.

  a True

  b False

5 Which one of the following is a fortified wine?

  a Cava

  b Beaujolais

  c Prosecco

  d Port

6 Examination Regulations

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 consent from their parents or legal guardians.

1.1.2 There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines 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 for health or religious reasons, 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.

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 The WSET Level 1 Award in Wines assessment is a closed-book examination of 45 minutes' duration and consists of 30 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each.

2.2 Results are graded as follows:

Mark of 70% and above	Pass
Mark of 69% and below	Fail

2.3 WSET reserves the right to make changes to the 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 Awards as required.

3.2 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 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 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 for the closed-book examination.
- 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.
- Once the invigilator has declared that examination conditions are in place, no communication of any kind between candidates is permitted until they have left the examination room or the invigilator has announced the end of the examination.
- During the examination candidates are only permitted to have the following items with them; pens, pencils, erasers, drinking water and a small handbag or shoulder bag so long as it only contains personal items.
- It is prohibited for candidates to take any photographs of the examination room or examination materials.
- The use of electronic devices of any kind is prohibited.
- Mobile phones must not be on the examination desk, they must be switched off and placed out of sight.
- The use of dictionaries of any kind is prohibited.
- The use of audible 'alarms' on any clock or watch is prohibited.
- Candidates may not leave the room until the first 15 minutes of the examination time have elapsed.
- Candidates who arrive after the published start time will NOT be allowed to sit the examination if any other candidate has already left the examination.
- 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 examination 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 examination 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 examination 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 room 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 room; candidates who fail to submit the question paper with their answer sheet will be deemed guilty of misconduct.
- It is prohibited for candidates to reveal the content of examination papers to others, or reproduce it in any way.

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 and answer sheets are the property of WSET Awards 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 Awards, 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 take this up with their APP. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, candidates are asked to contact our Quality Assurance Team, qa@wsetglobal.com. Please note that all complaints will be dealt with confidentially, but WSET Awards cannot act on anonymous complaints.

8 WSET Awards Regulations

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

7 WSET Awards Qualifications

WSET Awards Qualifications

The WSET has a range of qualifications that cover wine and sake as well as spirits. These are developed and maintained by WSET Awards (see Chapter 8 for more information). In full, the qualifications are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

WSET Level 3 Award in Spirits

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

WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines

More information about all of these qualifications can be found on the WSET website wsetglobal.com.

Who can offer a WSET Awards Qualification?

WSET Awards qualifications can only be offered by organisations approved by WSET Awards, known as Approved Programme Providers (APPs), and candidates wishing to study for a WSET qualification must enrol with an APP. The candidate'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) is published on the WSET website wsetglobal.com. Please contact the APP directly to find out about their programmes.

If you are interested in becoming an APP please contact the Quality Assurance Team, qa@wsetglobal.com.

About WSET Awards

WSET Awards is the awarding body of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, which provides quality-assured qualifications that help people to know more about alcoholic beverages and to develop their tasting skills. The development and awarding of WSET qualifications is the sole responsibility of WSET Awards.

The UK government established a regulatory authority, The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), which regulates awarding organisations that offer qualifications. Some WSET Awards qualifications are regulated by Ofqual. The qualification numbers are listed in Chapter 7.

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

Diversity and Equality Policy

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 Quality Assurance Team, qa@wsetglobal.com.

WSET Prizes

The WSET Prizes programme exists primarily to support the professional advancement of individuals working or seeking to work within the industry. Where suitable, Prizes are available to students not working in the trade, however this is not an active goal of the programme. Each academic year, 1st August to 31st July, the Prizes are presented for academic achievement, in accordance with the given Prize criteria. Students will be contacted by WSET Awards should they be eligible to for a Prize. A list of current Prizes can be found at the link below, although these are subject to change without notice. wsetglobal.com/about-us/awards-bursaries

Note that these prizes do not take the form of financial grants to fund studies, but are in recognition of examination performance.

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