

BJCP Exam Structure

Details about the requirements needed to take each component of the BJCP exam.

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1. Definitions

BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination: a web-based examination of beer styles, ingredients, beer characteristics, brewing processes, and the BJCP program. For brevity, we refer to this as the entrance exam.

BJCP Beer Judging Examination: a tasting examination that consists of completing score sheets for the six examination beers. For brevity, we refer to this as the judging exam.

BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination: a revised version of the traditional BJCP essay examination, required to advance to the National or higher rank. For brevity, we refer to this as the written exam.

BJCP Legacy Beer Examination: the examination used prior to April 1, 2012 that consisted of an essay portion and a tasting portion where the portions were combined in a 70/30 ratio to determine a total examination score. For brevity, we refer to this as the legacy exam, and the two segments as the essay and tasting exams.

2. Starting Points

If you have never taken a BJCP beer examination, see Section 4: Taking the web-based BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination.

If you are a *BJCP Provisional Judge*, see Section 7: BJCP Beer Judging Examination.

If you are a *BJCP Apprentice Judge*;

If you are a *BJCP Apprentice* judge based on taking the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** prior to April 1, 2012 and your status on April 1, 2012 was listed as “active” in the BJCP database see Section 6: Active BJCP Apprentice Judges.

If you are a *BJCP Apprentice* judge based on taking the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** prior to April 1, 2012 and your status on April 1, 2012 was not listed as “active” in the BJCP database see Section 5: Inactive BJCP Apprentice Judges.

If you are already a ranked BJCP judge, there are several different paths depending on existing scores and rank; see Section 3: Existing, Non-Apprentice BJCP Judges.

3. Existing, Non-Apprentice BJCP Judges

The new exam structure has been carefully designed to be as compatible as possible with the legacy exam while being as fair as possible to current BJCP judges and to those entering the program. The minimum requirements for the basic judging levels are summarized in the Table 1 and are the basis for the criteria used to determine the required written and judging exam scores for current and new judges who wish to advance in the program. There are additional experience point requirements that are outlined in the BJCP Program Guide.

Exam Segment	Recognized	Certified	National	Master
Entrance Exam or essay portion of Legacy Exam	Pass the Entrance Exam or $\geq 60\%$ on essay portion of Legacy Exam			
Beer Judging Exam or tasting portion of Legacy Exam	$\geq 60\%$ on Beer Judging Exam	$\geq 70\%$ on Beer Judging Exam	$\geq 80\%$ on either tasting portion of Legacy Exam or Beer Judging Exam	$\geq 80\%$ on either tasting portion of Legacy Exam or Beer Judging Exam
Written Proficiency Exam or composite score of Legacy Exam		Sufficiently high score to yield a comprehensive score $\geq 70\%$	Sufficiently high score to yield a comprehensive score $\geq 80\%$	Sufficiently high score to yield a comprehensive score $\geq 90\%$

Table 1. Exam score criteria for ranks of new judges or current judges who seek a promotion

The differences between the new and old exam structures may result in some existing judges having a rank without quite meeting the criteria in the above table. However, they are grandfathered into their current level since Table 1 only applies for those needing a higher exam score to qualify for a promotion. Otherwise, their existing judging and tasting scores are retained and they continue on their current trajectories to the next judging level by earning experience points.

1. *Recognized* judges who need a higher exam score to advance to the *Certified* rank have different paths, depending on their scores on the essay portion of the legacy exam.
 - a) *Recognized* judges who scored at least 60% on the essay portion of the legacy exam do not have to take the **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**. As with new members, these judges may advance to the *Certified* rank by scoring at least 70% on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**. Their previous scores on the tasting exam will not be applied since the six-beer entrance exam presents a more rigorous challenge than judging four beers in the tasting portion of the legacy exam.
 - b) *Recognized* judges who scored below 60% on the essay portion of the exam must first pass the **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination** and then score at least 70% on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**, regardless of their score on the tasting portion of the legacy exam.
 - c) *Recognized* judges who have at least ten judging points and achieved a score of at least 80% on either the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** or the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** are permitted to take the **BJCP Written Proficiency Examination**.

2. *Certified* judges who need a higher exam score to qualify for the *National* rank must have at least ten judging points and a minimum score of 80% on either the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** or the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** to gain approval to take the **BJCP Written Proficiency Examination**.
3. Judges who are already *National* or qualified for the *National* rank under the legacy exam system can take either exam component at any time regardless of their previous examination scores.

Due to the increase in the number of exam beers on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** and the decrease in the number of questions on the **BJCP Written Proficiency Examination**, the weighting of the exam segments will be converted to 50/50. Current BJCP judges advance in rank based on the combination of their highest written and highest tasting scores just as with the existing examination. The scores are weighted at 70/30 until they retake either the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** or the **BJCP Written Proficiency Examination**. If the retake score is greater than or equal to the previous highest score on that component of the exam, the weighting changes to 50/50. Otherwise, the weighting remains at 70/30 until at least one of the component scores is improved. The re-weighting of the component scores will not result in a reduction of judge rank or decrease in overall score.

The introduction of the new examinations also does not trigger an automatic re-weighting of existing scores to calculate a new total score. Triggering a recalculation of a new total score, for any individual judge, only happens when they retake one of the new examinations, and only then if there is an improvement in a component score.

4. Taking the web-based BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination

The fee for this exam is \$10, paid by credit card through a secure server. The portal for this exam is:

<http://bjcp.coursewebs.com>

There are 200 questions in a mixture of true-false, multiple-choice-single-answer, and multiple-choice-multiple-answer format. You are allowed 60 minutes to complete this test. The scoring is pass/fail, no numerical score provided though major areas with below passing proficiency will be identified in the examination summary.

Those that fail are not in the BJCP program but can retake the **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination** after at least a one day wait. They must pay an additional \$10 fee each time they retake the exam.

Those that pass this exam are *Provisional* judges – this is not a BJCP rank, and people who pass are not yet BJCP members! *Provisional* judges must pass the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** within one year or they are no longer a *Provisional* judge and must retake the web-based **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**. *Provisional* judges should see Section 7: BJCP Beer Judging Examination for details on taking the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**.

5. Inactive BJCP Apprentice Judges

BJCP *Apprentice* judges who were not listed as “active” members in the BJCP database on April 1, 2012 are treated as new entrants into the program and must start by taking the web-based **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**, see Section 4: Taking the web-based BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination.

6. Active BJCP Apprentice Judges

Apprentice judge is not a permanent BJCP rank. *Apprentice* status will have a two-year lifetime. *Apprentice* judges must pass the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** within two years or they will have to

start over as new entrants to the program. The two-year clock for existing Active Apprentice judges starts on April 1, 2012.

Active *Apprentice* judges who want to advance to the *Recognized* rank have different paths, depending on their scores on the essay portion of the legacy exam.

1. Active *Apprentice* judges with essay scores less than 60% on the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** must first pass the web-based **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**. See Section 4: Taking the web-based BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination. Upon passing the entrance exam:
 - a. If the *Apprentice* judge scored at least 60% on the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**, then he or she is now qualified for the *Recognized* rank. These judges will not need to take the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** to advance but they must notify the BJCP Exam Director (exam_director@bjcp.org) of their change in status. The promotion from the *Apprentice* to the *Recognized* rank is not automatic. To advance beyond the *Recognized* rank, these judges must score at least 70% on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**, regardless of their score on the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**.
 - b. If the *Apprentice* judge scored less than 60% on the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**, then he or she will also need to pass the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**, just like new entrants to the program.
2. Active *Apprentice* judges with essay scores of at least 60% on the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** do not have to take the web-based **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**. Their passing written exam score is regarded as equivalent to passing the entrance exam. Their score on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** determines their maximum attainable judging rank.

7. BJCP Beer Judging Examination

The **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** is the new tasting examination. It consists of completing score sheets for six beers served at 15 minute intervals – a total of 90 minutes is allowed for this examination. The fee is US\$40 for the first time takers of this examination; it is US\$15 for retakes.

For existing BJCP judges, their BJCP ID is sufficient to allow them to take the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**. For *Provisional* judges, a copy of the email message or the certificate acknowledging passing the **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination** is required. **BJCP Beer Judging Examinations** taken by ineligible participants will not be graded and the exam fee will not be returned.

For *Provisional* judges, the score on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** dictates their rank. Those scoring less than 60% will be *Apprentice* judges; those scoring at least 60% will be *Recognized* judges; and those scoring at least 70% and with five or more experience points (at least 2.5 from judging) will be *Certified* judges. For those scoring less than 60%, they must still pass (by retaking) the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** within the one-year timeframe initially established when they first passed the **BJCP Beer Judge Entrance Examination**.

For existing BJCP judges, if there is an improvement in the score on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**, compared to the highest score attained on the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**, then the score earned on the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** will be combined with the highest essay score from the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** to determine a comprehensive examination score. The weighting of the judging/written portion will be converted to 50/50, rather than the 70/30 weighting used for the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**. In no case will a judge's rank be

reduced as a result of retaking the examination. If the examinee does not improve his or her judging/tasting score, there will be no change to either the comprehensive exam score or the weighting.

A minimum of ten participants are required to schedule the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination**. The Exam Director is allowed to make waivers to the ten participant requirement but this is expected to be rare.

Grading tasting examinations requires high quality proctor score sheets. To ensure this, the proctors must come from a pre-approved proctor list drawn from the pool of “active” *National* and *Master* judges found on the BJCP web site at <http://www.bjcp.org/apps/reports/proctors.php>. This page is dynamically generated when the BJCP database of judge scores and experience is updated. If the administrator for an exam administration site is not able to obtain proctors from this list, they **MUST** contact the Exam Director at least two weeks prior to the exam to get advance approval to use alternative proctors. In special cases, such as when the exam is in a remote location or there are a large number of examinees, the BJCP Board of Directors may grant stipends to facilitate the travel of experienced proctors to the exam location. Requests for travel stipends must be made to the Exam Director at least three months prior to the exam date.

The BJCP Exam Director (exam_director@bjcp.org) can grant waivers from the proctor rules but such exceptions are expected to be rare. The use of a proctor with less than *National* rank, including the use of judges with minimum tasting score of 80 and more than 10 judging experience points requires pre-approval by the Exam Director. We further desire that at least one proctor be a *Master* judge (or higher) or a judge with a minimum tasting score of 90 and with at least 20 judging experience points. If one or more of the proctors is *Master-level*, then a third proctor can be used that only has a *Certified* rank.

8. BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination

The **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination** is required for anyone wishing to advance to the *National* rank or higher. This test consists of 20 true-false questions and five essay question. This examination must be completed in 90 minutes. The fee for taking this examination is US\$15.

To qualify to take this examination participants be an existing National or higher ranked judge OR must have scored at least 80% on either the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** or the tasting component of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** and must have a minimum of 10 judging experience points. There will be no exception to these requirements. Exams submitted to the BJCP for grading that were written by participants not meeting these requirements at the time of the exam will not be graded and the fee will not be refunded.

A minimum of three participants are required to schedule the **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination**, but the Exam Director may grant a waiver in special circumstances. This examination is scheduled separately from the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** though sequential **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency** and **BJCP Beer Judging Examinations** will be allowed with a short break between the examinations – each is treated as a separate examination

The true-false questions cover the BJCP program and judging levels, the judging process, and judging ethics. Since everyone taking this examination is an experienced judge, the material covered in the true-false question should be well ingrained. Each incorrect or omitted answer will result in a half-point reduction to the total score on this examination. There is no total score increase for correct answers but there is a penalty for each wrong answer – we expect every advanced BJCP judge to know this material.

The essay portion of the **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination** consists of five questions with each comprising 20% of the total score. Of the five questions, two are style-related, one is a recipe question, and two are technical questions related to ingredients or brewing process. The penalty resulting

from incorrect or omitted answers to the true-false questions will be subtracted from the combined score on the five essay questions.

The full pool of true-false and essay questions on which the **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination** are based may be found in the BJCP Beer Exam Study Guide.

For judges with no previous scores from the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**, a comprehensive exam score is computed using a 50/50 weighting of the judging and written components. This comprehensive exam score determines whether the judge qualifies for the *National* or *Master* ranks, as described in the BJCP Guide (Section II.A of the BJCP Beer Exam Study Guide).

For judges who have taken the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**, if there is an improvement in their score on the **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination**, compared to the highest score attained on the written portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**, then the score earned on the **BJCP Beer Judge Written Proficiency Examination** will be combined with the highest score from either the tasting portion of the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination** or the **BJCP Beer Judging Examination** to determine a comprehensive examination score. In this case, the weighting of the judging/written portion will be converted to 50/50, rather than the 70/30 weighting used for the **BJCP Legacy Beer Examination**. In no case will a judge's rank be reduced as a result of retaking the examination. If the examinee does not improve his or her written score, there will be no change to either the comprehensive exam score or the weighting or essay/taste scores. The rationale for this rule is that judges have to demonstrate evidence of improvement or at least parity to benefit from the reweighting of their component exam scores.

9. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I'm an existing BJCP judge. Do I have to take the online Entrance Exam?

A: Not if you scored at least 60% on the essay portion of the legacy exam. The same rule applies to active *Apprentice* judges.

Q: I'm a *Recognized* judge. How do I advance to *Certified*?

A: You have several alternatives, depending on your current exam scores. You can take the BJCP Written Proficiency Exam if you have a tasting/judging score (old or new exam) of 80% or higher, and at least 10 judging experience points. Otherwise, you have to take the BJCP Beer Judging Examination. If you score at least 70% on the new tasting exam (and have the necessary experience points), you will be promoted to *Certified* – just as with new judges entering the program. One caveat: you must have passed the essay portion of the legacy exam. If you have not already passed the essay portion of the legacy exam, you will also have to pass the online entrance examination before you can be promoted. Finally, if you take either the new written or judging (tasting) exams and score higher than the section scores on your old exam, your overall score may improve because it will be reweighted at 50/50 from the old 70/30.

Q: I'm a BJCP judge. Can I sign up for the Beer Judging Exam?

A: Yes, if you scored at least 60% on the essay portion of the legacy exam, then you can sign up directly without having to pass the online entrance exam.

Q: How do I qualify for the Written Proficiency Exam?

A: Be an existing *National* judge, or have an 80% or higher on your judging/tasting exam (old or new) with at least 10 judging experience points.

Q: Why did you change the exam?

A: To reduce the workload on the grading program given the unprecedented demand, and to better focus on the need for practical judging skills in *Certified* and below judges. Since less than 20% of the BJCP population advances to National or higher, the need for the full exam was reconsidered.

Q: Why did you increase the number of beers in the Beer Judging Exam?

A: Since this will be the only exam given to most judges, we wanted to get a better sample of your work. It demonstrates the type of skills we expect you to use in competitions.

Q: Why did you reduce the number of questions on the Written Proficiency Exam?

A: Since we no longer use the exam to screen lower-ranked judges, we are able to focus more closely on depth of knowledge demonstrated on the written questions. Written questions allow us to hear the examinee's voice, and experienced graders can tell fairly quickly whether the examinee knows the material.

Q: Will you remove the exam site quotas?

A: Once the backlog of exams is cleared, we will assess the current exam structure and limits. We would like to accommodate more examinees, but we need to assess actual data from the new program before adjusting the limits. Please bear with us as we roll out the new program and assess how well it's working. We do plan on regular evaluations of the process with an eye towards continuous improvement.

Q: Why don't you publish the online question pool?

A: Since testing is anonymous, unsupervised and online, we are concerned about people being able to quickly look up published answers to questions. Using a private question pool allows us to maintain the integrity of the exam. It also allows us to make changes frequently without having to republish the list.