

WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits



Specification

WSET® Level 1 Award in Spirits

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Introduction

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

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of the learning outcomes of the Level 1 Award in Spirits. 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 also find information on the other WSET qualifications and WSET's qualification division WSET Awards.

Introduction to the WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits

Qualification Aims

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

Successful candidates will be able to list the principal spirits categories, state their defining characteristics, and know the key principles involved in the storage and service of spirits. They will consequently be in a position to answer customer queries and provide recommendations for spirits service.

Qualification Structure

Learning Outcomes

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

Learning Outcome 1	List and state the purpose of the main production processes and stills commonly used in the production of spirits.
Learning Outcome 2	Name the principal categories and types of spirit and state their defining characteristics.
Learning Outcome 3	Know and recognise the common equipment and principles involved in the storage and service of spirits.

Enrolment

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits. 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 Spirits is 6 hours, all as GLH, this includes the 45 minutes for the examination.

Recommended Progression Routes

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

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome 1

List and state the purpose of the main production processes and stills commonly used in the production of spirits.

Assessment Criteria

- 1 List and state the purpose of the four key steps used in spirits production.
- 2 Identify the two types of still and state how they are used and what style of spirit they can produce.
- 3 Identify the production processes that affect the flavour, sweetness and colour of a spirit.

Range 1: Four key steps	
Four key steps	1 Process the raw material
	2 Fermentation
	3 Distillation
	4 After distillation

Range 2: Types of still	
Pot still	Batch distillation Lower strength spirits = pronounced flavour intensity
Column still	Continuous distillation Lower strength = pronounced flavour intensity Higher strength spirits = light or neutral flavour intensity

Range 3: Production processes that affect flavour, sweetness and colour	
Flavour	Raw material, fermentation, distillation strength, unaged, oak ageing (new and old oak), blending (consistency and complexity), redistillation, maceration, adding natural/artificial flavourings, dilution with pure water
Sweetness	Added sugar
Colour	Oak, caramel, other natural and artificial colours

Learning Outcome 2

Name the principal categories and types of spirit and state their defining characteristics.

Assessment Criteria

- 1 Name the principal categories and types of spirit and state the key flavour characteristics of these spirits.
- 2 State the raw materials used for the principal categories and types of spirit.
- **3** Identify key production processes that can have a defining influence on the characteristics of the principal categories and types of spirit.
- 4 State the meaning of key labelling terms for the principal categories and types of spirit.

Ranges 1, 2, 3 and 4: Pr	incipal categories and types of spirit
BRANDY	
Туре	Cognac
Raw material	Grapes
Key production processes	Grapes must come from a defined area, double pot still distillation, minimum ageing two years, often sweetened
Key labelling terms	VS (minimum age two years), VSOP (minimum age four years), XO
VODKA	
Raw material	Any raw material (grains and potato are traditional)
Key production processes	Distilled to 95 or 96% abv, unaged
WHISKY/WHISKEY	
Key production processes	Conversion of barley, malting
Scotland	
Type	Single Malt Scotch Whisky
Raw material	Barley
Key production processes	Pot still distillation, minimum ageing three years, must be distilled and aged in Scotland, peat (optional)
Key labelling terms	Single, Malt Whisky
Туре	Blended Scotch Whisky
Raw material	Barley and other grains
Key production processes	Blend of malt and grain whisky, minimum ageing three years, must be distilled and aged in Scotland
Key labelling terms	Blended Whisky

USA	
Туре	Bourbon
Raw material	At least 51% corn and other grains
Key production processes	New oak barrels, can be made anywhere in the USA, Kentucky number one state for production
Key labelling terms	Bourbon
Туре	Tennessee
Raw material	At least 51% corn and other grains
Key production processes	Can only be distilled and aged in Tennessee, new oak barrels, charcoal filtering
Key labelling terms	Tennessee
Туре	Rye
Raw material	At least 51% rye and other grains
Key production processes	New oak barrels, can be made anywhere in the USA
Key labelling terms	Rye
Other Whiskies	
Types	Ireland, Canada, Japan
CARIBBEAN RUM	
Types	White, golden, dark
Raw materials	Sugar cane juice, molasses
Key production processes	Fermentation, pot still rums, column still rums, blending, colouring, sweetening
TEQUILA	
Raw material	Blue agave
Key production processes	Blue agave must come from a defined area, conversion by cooking, typically distilled to a low strength
Key labelling terms	Tequila, Tequila 100% agave
	Blanco/silver, oro/joven/gold, reposado, añejo
FLAVOURED SPIRITS	
Types	Spiced rum, flavoured vodka, gin, liqueurs
Key production	Juniper must be the predominant flavour in gin
processes	Liqueurs must be sweetened, often coloured
	Liqueurs can be made from neutral or characterful spirits

Learning Outcome 3

Know and recognise the common equipment and principles involved in the storage and service of spirits.

Assessment Criteria

- **1** Know the correct procedures for the storage of spirits.
- 2 Name the important ingredients used to make cocktails.
- **3** Identify the common equipment and glassware used in the service of spirits.
- 4 State the four factors to consider when making a balanced cocktail.

Range 1: Storage	
Storage	Optimum conditions, effects of poor storage

Range 2: Important cocktail ingredients	
Important cocktail ingredients	Fresh fruit juices, simple syrups, cocktail bitters

Range 3: Common equipment and glassware	
Equipment	Jigger, bottle pourer, muddler, Boston shaker, hawthorne strainer, fine sieve, mixing glass, bar spoon, julep strainer
Glassware	Cocktail or Martini, Margarita, tumbler or Old Fashioned, highball or Collins, shot

Range 4: Balanced cocktail	
Four factors	Strong, weak, sour/bitter, sweet

Recommended Tasting Samples

It is recommended that candidates try a minimum of nine samples during the course of their studies. All samples should be benchmark expression of their category and style. The following list has been arranged in the order of the classroom session.

- Vodka
- VS Cognac
- VSOP Cognac (well-aged for the category) or XO Cognac
- Blended Scotch Whisky
- Straight Bourbon
- White Rum
- Golden Rum
- Blanco Tequila 100% agave
- London Dry Gin (a second gin optional)
- A Liqueur (optional)

WSET Level 1 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits®

APPEARANCE	
Colour	colourless – lemon – gold – amber – brown pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – black
NOSE	
Intensity	neutral – light – medium – pronounced
Aroma characteristics	e.g. fruity, floral, vegetable, grain, spice, herb, oak
PALATE	
Flavour characteristics	e.g. fruity, floral, vegetable, grain, spice, herb, oak
Other observations	e.g. sugar level, texture
Finish	short – medium – long neutral – simple – some complexity – very complex

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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 Spirits 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 Spirits Examination

The WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits 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 Spirits 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	5
2	20
3	5
	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 APPs so that they can communicate
 results to their candidates. This grade list will be issued within two weeks of the receipt of completed
 scripts by WSET Awards.
- Subsequently, WSET Awards posts candidates' letters and certificates to APPs, who are responsible for forwarding these documents to their candidates.

Sample Examination Questions

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust does not release past paper for the WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits. 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 of the following processes is used to create alcohol?
 - a Distillation
 - **b** Fermentation
 - **c** Conversion
 - d Oak ageing
- 2 What is the minimum age of a Cognac?
 - a 2 years
 - **b** 4 Years
 - c 6 years
 - d 8 years
- 3 What is the raw material used to make Tequila?
 - a Potatoes
 - **b** Barley
 - c Agave
 - d Sugar cane

- 4 Which of the following countries/regions has a well-established reputation for whisky production?
 - a Mexico
 - **b** France
 - **c** Caribbean
 - **d** Japan
- 5 What is the name of the strainer shown in the picture below?
 - a Hawthorne
 - **b** Fine
 - **c** Julep
 - **d** Jigger



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 Spirits 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 Spirits assessment is a closed-book examination of 45 minutes duration and consists of 30 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each.
- **2.2** Results for successful candidates will be issued to APPs within two weeks from receipt of completed scripts.
- 2.3 Results are graded as follows:

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

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.
 - For all examinations, responses must be written in the same language as the examination paper.
 - 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.
 - 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. The form must be completed and submitted to WSET Awards along with the appropriate fee within six weeks of the date of the examination. Any request received outside this time-frame will not be reviewed. Enquiries and feedback will be issued within two weeks of receipt by WSET Awards.
- **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. Appeals will be issued within two weeks of receipt by WSET Awards.

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 APP Administration Team, appadmin@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

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

WSET Qualifications

WSET Qualifications

The WSET has a range of qualifications that cover wine and spirits as well as sake. 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 Wine Service

WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits

WSET Level 1 Award in Sake

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

WSET Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits (600/1508/1)

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

WSET Level 3 Award in Sake

WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits

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

Who can offer a WSET Qualification?

WSET 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 APP Administration Team, appadmin@wset.co.uk.

WSET Awards

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 accredited 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 qualifications are accredited by OfQual; the accreditation numbers are listed in Chapter 7.

WSET Awards operates a Quality Management System that 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.



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 APP Administration Team, appadmin@wset.co.uk.

Customer Service Statement

The quality and scope of service that customers can expect from WSET Awards is published in our Customer Service Statement. A copy can be obtained from the APP Administration Team, appadmin@wset.co.uk.

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 APP Administration Team, appadmin@wset.co.uk.

Scholarship Scheme

Scholarships are awarded for each academic year, which runs from 1 August to 31 July. Candidates who achieve outstanding marks in their examinations *may* be eligible for a scholarship. The scholarships are managed by WSET Awards, and eligible candidates will be contacted by WSET Awards after the end of each academic year once all the results for qualifying examinations have been collated.

There are many scholarships on offer; please go to the scholarships page on the WSET website for more details: wsetglobal.com/about-us/awards-bursaries.

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



A world of knowledge



WSET® Level 2 Award in Spirits



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Introduction

This Specification contains necessary information for both candidates and Approved Programme Providers (APPs) about the WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits.

The main part of the document is a detailed statement of the learning outcomes of the Level 2 Award in Spirits. 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 also find information on the other WSET qualifications and WSET's qualification division, WSET Awards.

Introduction to the WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits

Qualification Aims

The WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits is intended for people who have little or no prior knowledge of spirits. It is intended to provide a comprehensive level of focused product knowledge required to underpin job skills and competencies – for example, in bar service, and for staff requiring focused product knowledge in retail and wholesaling businesses.

Successful candidates will be able to give information on the characteristics of the principal spirits and aromatised wines as well as their methods of production. They will confidently provide guidance on the use and service of spirits and make informed recommendations to customers when selecting spirits and liqueurs to meet their taste and price requirements.

Qualification Structure

Learning Outcomes

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

Learning Outcome 1	Understand the main production factors that determine types of spirits.
Learning Outcome 2	Understand how the principal types of spirits are produced and labelled, and describe their key characteristics.
Learning Outcome 3	Understand how the principal types of flavoured spirits, liqueurs and aromatised wines are produced and labelled, and describe their key characteristics.
Learning Outcome 4	Know the common equipment used and the principles involved in the service of spirits.

Enrolment

There are no restrictions on entry to the WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits. 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 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)

The 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 includes all tutor supervised learning and supervised assessments.

The TQT for the Level 2 Award in Spirits is 26 hours. There are 15 GLH (including the 1 hour examination) and 11 hours private study.

Learning Outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOME 1

Understand the main production factors that determine types of spirits.

Assessment Criteria

- 1. Outline the key stages of spirits production.
- 2. State what raw materials provide for the distiller and identify which carbohydrates need to be converted to sugar before fermentation.
- 3. Outline the process involved in alcoholic fermentation and state what is produced.
- 4. Name the outcomes that are common to the distillation process and describe how they are achieved.
- 5. For a pot still name and describe the parts, the typical double distillation process and the type of spirit produced.
- 6. For a column still name and describe the parts, the typical continuous distillation process and the types of spirit produced.
- 7. Name, describe and state the purpose of post-distillation processes.

Range 1: Key stage	es of spirits production
Key stages	Processing the raw material, fermentation, distillation, post-distillation operations
Range 2: Raw mat	erial
Products provided	Carbohydrates, congeners
Carbohydrates needing conversion	Starch, inulin
Range 3: Fermenta	ation
Process	Sugar + yeast → alcohol + carbon dioxide
Produces	Alcohols, congeners
Range 4: Distillation	on
Common Factors	
Outcome of distillation	Concentrate ethanol, select and concentrate congeners
Processes used to achieve outcomes	Heating, condensing, separating (heads, hearts, tails, liquid waste) Impact of distillation strength on aroma intensity
Range 5: Pot stills	

Range 5: Pot still	ls
Parts	Heat source, pot, drain, swan neck, still head, lyne arm, condenser
Typical double pot still distillation	1st distillation Distil fermented alcoholic liquid Low wines Discard watery waste
	2nd distillation Distil low wines with heads and tails from previous batch Separation of heads, hearts, tails Discard watery waste
Types of spirit produced	Medium or pronounced aroma intensity

Range 6: Column stills		
Parts	Heat source, plates, downcomers, bubble cap	
Typical continuous distillation	Process of multiple, simultaneous distillations in column stills Process of running a column still continuously, separation into heads, hearts, tails and liquid waste	
Types of spirit produced	Neutral to pronounced aroma intensity	

Range 7: Post-distillation		
Maturation	Impact of oak or inert vessel on a spirit's character	
	Key choices for vessels	
	Oak – age, previous content, warehouse temperature	
	Inert – stainless steel, glass	
Adding other flavours	Re-distillation, maceration, adding natural/artificial flavourings	
Purpose of blending	Consistency and complexity	
Finishing	Dilution with water, add or remove colour, add sweetness, filtration	

LEARNING OUTCOME 2

Understand how the principal types of spirits are produced and labelled, and describe their key characteristics.

Assessment Criteria

- 1. Identify the raw materials used to produce the principal types of spirits.
- 2. State the legal requirements for the production of the principal types of spirits.
- 3. State the production processes used to make the principal types of spirits.
- 4. State the meaning of the most important labelling terms that are used with the principal types of spirits.
- 5. Describe the key characteristics of the principal types of spirits.

Range 1:	Fruit spirits	
Processing materials	the raw	Grapes, apples, pears, pomace Grapes, apples, pears – crush, press, ferment White grape skins – mixed with water to dissolve sugar in skins, fermentation Black grape skins – alcohol present in skins, distil immediately
France		
Cognac	Production options	Grapes from a specified area in France (Ugni Blanc) Double pot still distillation Minimum two years maturation in oak Add sugar (optional) Add colour (optional)
	Labelling terms	Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Fine Champagne, Borderies VS, VSOP, XO, <i>Hors d'âge</i>
Armagnac	Production options	Grapes from a specified area in France (Ugni Blanc, Folle Blanche, Baco) Continuous column still distillation or double pot still distillation Minimum one year oak maturation or minimum three months maturation in inert vessels Add sugar (optional) Add colour (optional)
	Labelling terms	Bas-Armagnac, Ténarèze Blanche, VS, VSOP, XO, Hors d'âge, Vintage
Calvados	Production options	Apples and pears from a specified area in France Double pot distilled or continuous column distillation Oak maturation
Italy		
Grappa	Production options	Black or white grape skin pomace from Italy Typically unaged
Chile and	Peru	
Pisco	Production options	Aromatic grape varieties Typically unaged

Range 2:	Whisky/whi	iskey
Processing the raw materials		Barley (unmalted/malted), rye, wheat, corn Methods used to convert starch to sugar Barley – malt, crush, mix with warm water, ferment Other grains – crush, mix with water, cook, mix with malted barley, ferment
USA		
Bourbon	Production options	Made throughout USA, Kentucky main centre of production Minimum 51% corn, barley, wheat, rye Low strength distillation Matured in charred new oak barrels
Tennessee Whiskey	Production options	Made in Tennessee Minimum 51% corn Low strength distillation Lincoln County Process, aged in charred new oak barrels
Rye Whiskey	Production options	Made throughout USA Minimum 51% rye Low strength distillation Matured in charred new oak barrels
Common lak	pelling terms	Straight, proof Sour mash, single barrel, small batch
Scotland		
Common proprocesses	oduction	Whisky must be distilled and aged in Scotland in oak barrels for a minimum of three years
Malt Whisky	Production options	100% malted barley, peat (optional) Pot still distillation Matured in oak barrels, ex-Bourbon barrels, ex-Sherry barrels, wood finishing Add colour (optional)
Blended Scotch Whisky	Production options	Blend of malt whisky and grain whisky Grain whisky – malted barley, other grains, column distillation, matured in oak barrels, add colour (optional)
Common labelling terms		Single, age statement, non-chill filtered, cask strength Islay, Campbeltown, Highland, Speyside, Lowland
Other Cou	ntries	
Canada		Blends of corn whiskies and flavouring whiskies Canadian Rye Whisky, Rye Whisky
Ireland		Blended whiskies, malt whiskies Triple pot still distillation
Japan		Malt whiskies (pot still distillation) Grain whiskies (column still distillation) Blended whiskies

Range 3: Rum		
Processing materials	the raw	Sugar cane Processing options Sugar cane juice – crush sugar cane, ferment Molasses – dilute with water, ferment
Common production options		Pot still distillation, column still distillation, light marks, heavy marks Oak maturation, unaged Blending Add colour (optional) Activated charcoal filtration (optional) Add sugar (optional)
Rum styles	Colour	White, Golden or Amber, Dark
	Production tradition	Spanish (Cuban) — Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, Venezuela French — Martinique and Guadeloupe British — Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana Brazil
Labelling terms		Age statements, <i>rhum agricole</i> , <i>cachaça</i> , overproof

Range 4	Range 4: Agave spirits		
Processing Agave		Agave Methods used to convert inulin to sugar Steam cook piña crush, dilute with water, ferment Roasting piña	
Tequila	Production options	Agave tequilana Weber (var. azul), Blue Agave from specified states in Mexico, Jalisco Steam cooking Ferment with piña fibres (optional) Pot or column still distillation Oak maturation, unaged Abocado (optional)	
	Labelling terms	Tequila, Tequila 100% Agave Blanco (Silver), Joven / Oro (Gold), Reposado, Añejo, Extra Añejo	
Mezcal	Production options	Agave angustifolia Haw (var. espadín), Agave espadín, and other agave species from specified states in Mexico, Oaxaca Steam cooking or roasting Ferment with piña fibres (optional) Pot or column still distillation Distil with piña fibres (optional) Oak maturation, unaged	
	Labelling terms	100% Agave Blanco, Reposado, Añejo Mezcal, Artisanal Mezcal, Ancestral Mezcal	

Range 5: Vodka	
Processing the raw material	Any raw material can be used Methods used to convert starch to sugar Barley, wheat, rye – convert starch using of bought-in enzymes or malted barley, ferment Potatoes – crush, cook, convert starch using bought-in enzymes, ferment
Common production processes	Spirit distilled to 95% abv (USA) or 96% abv (EU) in column still (neutral spirit) Activated charcoal filtration (optional) Additives (optional)
Key styles	Neutral, characterful
Traditional vodka producing countries	Poland, Russia, Sweden, Finland

LEARNING OUTCOME 3

Understand how the principal types of flavoured spirits, liqueurs and aromatised wines are produced and labelled, and describe their key characteristics.

Assessment Criteria

- 1. Identify the principal types of flavoured spirits and aromatised wines and describe their key characteristics.
- 2. Describe the production processes used to make the principal types of flavoured spirits, liqueurs and aromatised wines.
- 3. State the meaning of the most important labelling terms that are used with Gin.

Ranges

Range 1: F	lavoured s	pirits			
Common production processes		Flavouring Natural – maceration, re-distillation, adding bought-in flavouring Artificial – added bought in flavouring Colouring Natural – maceration Artificial – add bought-in colour			
Spiced rum	Production options	Maceration, addition of flavourings, colouring			
Flavoured vodka	Production options	Maceration, re-distillation, addition of flavourings			
	Key styles	Traditional, modern			
Gin	Production options	Common botanicals – juniper (predominant flavour), coriander seeds, citrus peel, angelica root, orris root Base spirit EU – neutral spirit USA – any distilled spirit or fermented liquid Options for adding flavours by re-distillation 1. mix all the botanicals with diluted base spirit 2. place all the botanicals in basket above the diluted base liquid 3. distil botanicals individually, and blend			
	Labelling terms	EU – London Dry Gin (Dry Gin), Distilled Gin USA – Distilled Gin Other – Old Tom			
Aniseed spirits	Production options	Key botanicals containing anethole — aniseed, star anise or fennel Other botanicals — liquorice, wormwood Add flavour by re-distillation and/or maceration Add sugar (option depending on law)			
	Key styles	Pastis, absinthe			
Bitters	Production	Key bitter botanicals – quinine, gentian, bitter orange			
	Key styles	Aperitif, digestif, cocktail			
Liqueurs Production options Base spirit — neutral spirit, characterful spirit Flavourings — no restriction, cream Sweetening — liqueurs must be sweetened Add flavour (any method) Add colour (optional) Add sugar		Flavourings – no restriction, cream Sweetening – liqueurs must be sweetened Add flavour (any method) Add colour (optional)			

Range 2: Aromatised wines					
Common production processes	Ingredients – dry base wine, distilled alcohol, distillates and/or tinctures, sugar, caramel colouring (optional) Blend ingredients				
Key styles	Vermouth				

LEARNING OUTCOME 4

Know the common equipment used and the principles involved in the service of spirits.

Assessment Criteria

- 1. Name and state the purpose of the common equipment and glassware used in the service of spirits.
- 2. Name the important ingredients used to make cocktails.
- 3. State the four factors to consider when making a balanced cocktail.
- 4. Name key cocktail families and where appropriate state notable examples.

Ranges

Range 1: Common equipment and glassware					
Bar workstation	Ice well, speed rail, sink, drip mat				
Equipment	Muddler, bar spoon, channel knife, knife, peeler, cutting board, jigger, mixing glass, ice scoop, ice tongs, lighter, Hawthorne strainer, Julep strainer, fine sieve, waiter's friend, shaker, juicer, bar blade, bottle pourer				
Glassware	Balloon, tumbler/Old Fashioned, shot, Martini, coupe, Margarita, sling, highball/Collins, hurricane Mule mug, Julep cup, toddy, tiki mug, champagne glass				
Range 2: Import	ant cocktail ingredients				
Important cocktail ingredients	Fresh fruit juices, simple syrups, flavoured syrups, cocktail bitters, garnishes, cubed ice, crushed ice				
Range 3: Balanc	ed cocktail				
Four factors	Strong, weak, sour/bitter, sweet				
Range 4: Cockta	il families				
Highball	Examples – Cuba Libre, Moscow Mule				
Sour	Examples – Pisco Sour, Whisky Sour, Daiquiri, Tommy's (simplified Margarita) Variations – Sidecar, Margarita, Cosmopolitan				
Collins	Examples – Tom Collins, Vodka Collins, Pierre Collins Variations – Mojito, Paloma				
Spirit-forward	Examples – Manhattan, Martini, Vodka Martini, Old Fashioned, Sazerac, Negroni Variations – Rob Roy, Wet Martini, Dirty Martini				

Recommended Tasting Samples

It is recommended that candidates try a minimum of 29 samples during the course of their studies. The following list has been arranged by classroom session.

Fruit Spirits

Three Cognacs (ideally from the same producer)

- VS
- VSOP
- XO

A choice of two from:

- Armagnac
- Grappa
- Pisco

Whisky/Whiskey

USA

- · Tennessee Whiskey
- Bourbon
- · Rye Whiskey

Scotland

- Two Single Malt Whiskies
- · Blended Scotch Whisky

At least one from

- · A second Bourbon
- · A third Scottish Single Malt Whisky
- · Irish whiskey
- Canadian whisky
- · Japanese whisky

Rum

- · Cuban style of white rum
- · Characterful style of white rum (British or French)
- Inexpensive, highly coloured dark rum (e.g. a buyers own brand)
- · Aged Spanish style rum
- Aged British style (one of the aged styles must show rancio)

Tequila and Mezcal

Two Tequilas 100% agave

- Blanco
- Reposado or añejo

Mezcal

· Blanco Artisanal Mezcal

Vodka

- Neutral style of vodka
- Two characterful styles of vodka

Flavoured Spirits and Vermouth

At least two gins

- Classic London Dry Gin
- Modern style of gin or Old Tom

A choice of two from:

- A third gin
- · Aniseed flavoured spirit
- Bitter
- Vermouth

Two liqueurs

• A comparison of a simple and a complex liqueur with a common ingredient.

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 2 Award in Spirits is assessed by a closed-book examination that consists of 50 multiple-choice questions, to be completed in one hour.

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 55 per cent.

About the WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits Examination

The WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits examination paper consists of 50 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 2 Award in Spirits 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			
2	23		
3	7		
4	6		
	50 marks		

Issuing of Results

Results of examinations are issued by WSET Awards as follows:

- WSET Awards issues an electronic all-candidate grade list to APPs so that they can communicate
 results to their candidates. This grade list will be issued within two weeks of the receipt of
 completed scripts by WSET Awards.
- Subsequently, WSET Awards posts candidates' letters and certificates to APPs, who are responsible for forwarding these documents to their candidates.

Sample Examination Questions

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust does not release past paper for the WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits. 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 50 questions similar to these.

1. The product of the first distillation in a pot still is typically

- a. 10-15% abv
- b. 25-30% abv
- c. 35-40% abv
- d. 45-50% abv

2. Which one of the following statements is true?

- a. The plate at the bottom of a column still has the highest concentration of ethanol.
- b. Liquid flows up a column still.
- c. It is possible to have three simultaneous collection points from a column still.
- d. Fermented alcoholic liquid enters the still at room temperature.

3. Colourless with pronounced floral and grape aromas best describes

- a. Pisco
- b. VS Cognac
- c. Calvados
- d. VSOP Armagnac

4. 'Aged for a minimum of two years in charred new oak barrels' is the definition of which labelling term?

- a. Reposado
- b. Straight
- c. VSOP
- d. Single

5. Which one of the following is an example of a sour?

- a. Mojito
- b. Daiquiri
- c. Manhattan
- d. Rob Roy

Answers

1b, 2c, 3a, 4b, 5b

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 2 Award in Spirits 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 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 2 of the UK basic skills national standards, or equivalent level of literacy in the language used for the examination.

Numeracy: Level 2 of the UK basic skills national standards, or equivalent.

2 Format and Results

- **2.1** The WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits assessment is a closed-book examination of 60 minutes' duration and consists of 50 multiple-choice questions worth one mark each.
- **2.2** Results will be issued to APPs within two weeks from receipt of completed scripts.
- 2.3 Results are graded as follows:

Mark of 85% and above	Pass with distinction		
Mark of between 70% and 84%	Pass with merit		
Mark of between 55% and 69%	Pass		
Mark of between 45% and 54%	Fail		
Mark of 44% or below	Fail unclassified		

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 one hour.
- 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.
- 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 an examination paper 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. The form must be completed and submitted to WSET Awards along with the appropriate fee within six weeks of the date of the examination. Any request received outside this time frame will not be reviewed. Enquiries and feedback will be issued within two weeks of receipt by WSET Awards.

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. Appeals will be issued within two weeks of receipt by WSET Awards.

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.

WSET Qualifications

WSET Qualifications

The WSET has a range of qualifications that cover wine and spirits as well as sake. These are developed and maintained by WSET Awards (see the section on WSET Awards 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

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

WSET® Level 2 Award in Wines and Spirits (600/1508/1)

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

WSET® Level 3 Award in Sake

WSET® Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits

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

Who can offer a WSET Qualification?

WSET 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.

WSET Awards

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. 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.

Customer Service Statement

The quality and scope of service that customers can expect from WSET Awards is published in our Customer Service Statement. A copy can be obtained from the Quality Assurance Team, qa@wsetglobal.com.

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 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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