



# **American Culinary Federation Practical Exam Candidate Guide**

American Culinary Federation  
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# General Savory and Pastry Guidelines

## General Guidelines

1. Candidates must provide all ingredients for use during their certification practical exam as outlined in the exam components for each level. Exception would be allowed for test sites that choose to provide ingredients.
2. No advance preparation or cooking is allowed with the exception of the following: vegetables can be peeled; salads may be cleaned and washed, but not cut or shaped in any form; and beans may be pre-soaked.
3. Candidates are allowed to bring in only the whole and raw materials. No finished sauces are allowed; however, basic stocks (beef, veal, chicken, vegetable, or fish) may be brought in as necessary for the assignment. No commercially produced stocks or bases are permitted. No clarified consommés are allowed.
4. Candidates shall bring his/her own personal tools, including knives, small wares and plain white china (plates, platters, bowls, etc.) to display the finished dishes. Exception would be made for test sites that choose to provide china.
5. Dry & wet garbage receptacles, as well as usable trim receptacles, must be maintained and presented to evaluators upon completion of the test.
6. Dishes or test components should be presented to evaluators at any time during the testing period for tests where no service windows are designated at the end of the cooking time. For tests with designated service windows, dishes should be presented at that time.
7. Basic nutritional balance in recipe development in the simplest form means the candidate should use the following guidelines in formulating a balanced, nutritionally sound recipe.

Daily caloric intake should range between 1300 to 3000 calories *per day* with:

- 45% - 65% of calories from carbohydrates
- 20% - 35% of calories from fat with less than 10% from saturated fat
- 10% - 35% of calories from protein
- 300 mg or less of cholesterol
- 2400 mg or less of sodium

## Savory Guidelines

- Ingredients and garnishes should harmonize with the main part of the dish and conform to contemporary standards of nutritional values.
- Unnecessary ingredients should be avoided and practical, acceptable cooking methods should be applied.
- Dressing the rims of the plate results in an unacceptable appearance.
- Meat and vegetable juices should not make a dish look unappetizing.
- Vegetables must be cut or turned uniformly.
- Plate arrangement and decoration should be practical yet appealing and should comply with daily standards.
- In general, portion weight should be in keeping with the norms of accepted practice and nutritional balance.
- Plated portions must be proportional to the dish itself and the number of persons specified.
- A type-written menu describing each dish to be prepared must be given to the evaluators.

## Pastry Guidelines

The following list should provide a good checklist of what is considered the most general guidelines for candidates who are preparing to take the practical test:

- Prepare various icings and flavors (butter cream, white cream, and royal icing) from scratch. The icing will be used during the test.
- For items involving cake, prepare cakes and tiers that are level on top with straight sides, logical height, and proportional.
- For each test item, cover cakes with an icing that is smooth, flawless, with no air bubbles, water spots, knife marks, sanding, patches, or crumbs.
- Prepare colored icings that are of consistent shading and use color that is balanced, harmonized, and appropriate to the theme or decorative motif.
- Apply borders, writing, central decorations, and trims that are uniform, free of air bubbles, smooth, free of small drying cracks, precise, and neat.
- Apply flowers and leaves that have definite shaped petals with proper form, correct number of petals, coloring, and detail as close to nature as possible.
- For each item, create a decorative design that is balanced, proportioned, appropriate to techniques or theme, not over-decorated, and structurally stable.
- Decorations for cakes can not be brought in; only the raw materials necessary to make them.
- Ingredients for recipes can be pre-scaled and measured; however no pre-mixing is allowed.
- Only the raw ingredients and materials in the amounts needed to execute the assignment may be brought in.
- No finished sauces are allowed.

## Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for certification practical testing is divided into four general areas: Food Safety and Sanitation; Organization; Cooking Skills and Culinary Techniques; Taste and Presentation.

1. **Food Safety & Sanitation** will be measured using required industry standards.

- a) Food Safety and Sanitation is assessed as acceptable or unacceptable. An unacceptable score in this area by two or more evaluators is considered an overall failure regardless of the total points achieved by the candidate.

Here is a general guideline on food safety and sanitation the candidate needs to follow:

- b) Food Safety and Sanitation. The cutting boards are scrupulously clean. Knives are sharp. The toolbox/knife bag is clean and sanitary inside. Sanitizing solution is at the right strength, not over- or under-powered, and is being used properly to sanitize hands and equipment in-between uses. Candidates are using towels correctly and not wiping debris off a table and then wiping a knife or a plate with the same towel. Candidates are not using their aprons as hand wipes. Products are stored at the correct temperature. Gloves are being used when the last contact with food is occurring, for example, plating up. Sores and cuts are properly treated and covered. Areas are kept sanitized, particularly during fish to meat to vegetable or dairy transitions. Frequent hand washing and sanitizing is taking place.

2. **Organization Skills** will be measured using industry standards for the following:

- Mise en place/organization
- Proper utilization of all ingredients
- Timing of service and follow-up

Here are two general guidelines on organization and work flow the candidate needs to follow:

- a) **Organization**. Table is kept clear of nonessentials, such as equipment not needed for the next 30 minutes. Candidate is working systematically on one job at a time, using correct cutting motions and the correct knife for the job, organizing products properly in a refrigerator, rack cart, knife, or equipment storage. Candidate understands how the useable waste is stored for future uses. Floor spills are attended to quickly. The candidate is not using the dish area as a storage dump. The candidate has an organized withdrawal from the kitchen, leaving it as clean as it was found.
- b) **Work flow**. The candidate practices smooth transitions from one job to another. The candidate has a logical progression of jobs; for example, chops herbs or minces garlic at the same time. The candidate maintains proper timing of the menu items.

3. **Cooking Skills and Culinary Techniques** will be measured using industry standards for the following:

- Proper cooking techniques, skills, and fundamentals
- Creativity, skills, and craftsmanship
- Portion size

Here are two general guidelines on cooking skills and technique the candidates need to follow:

- a) Cooking Techniques and Skills. The candidate should pay attention to detail as described by the classical cooking technique specified. The candidate should use the proper technique as stated in the test criteria, such as properly deglazing a pan rather than simply adding wine or a liquid; properly browning the mirepoix, not just heating it; correctly roasting and basting the product as needed, not just placing the product in the oven; or poaching items rather than simmering them. The candidate uses correct methodology and techniques in preparing forcemeat and demonstrates a variety of different techniques.
- b) Butchery and Boning Skills. The candidate is efficient and profitable in the removal of muscle from meat or poultry carcasses or fish from a bone. Sinew and/or fat removal and correct tying methods will be evaluated.

4. Taste and Presentation Skills will be measured using industry standards for the following:

- Overall presentation including the use of appropriate garnishes
- Overall nutritional balance
- Ingredient compatibility
- Flavor, taste, texture, and doneness

Here are four general guidelines on taste and presentation the candidate needs to follow:

- a) Serving Methods and Presentation. **Hot Food Hot!** and **Cold Food Cold!** (including plates) Food is fresh and colorful, visibly seasoned, presented with some height, easy to eat, and pleasing to the eye. Meat/fish slices are even, straight, and evenly shingled. Items are closely placed together to help maintain temperature and keep the plate from resembling a “smiling face” and no “party-on-the-plate décor”.
- b) Portion Size and Nutritional Balance. Components of the meal are balanced so that the main item is complemented in size/amount by the accompanying garnish(es) and/or sauce. The necessary nutritional standards are being adhered to. The protein weight is within the set limits.
- c) Ingredient Compatibility. Ingredient colors harmonize. Ingredient amounts are correctly portioned to give a perfect harmonization. Have any of the ingredients been duplicated?
- d) Flavor, Taste, Texture, and Doneness. The flavors typically associated with the specific food ingredients in the menu and recipes are profound. For example, the duck broth tastes like duck. Doneness temperatures are correct. Stated vegetable cuts are correct. The stated cooking techniques have been applied correctly. The textures correspond to what was implied in the recipe. The flavor of the sauce or vinaigrette reflects what the recipe states and is of the correct consistency. The correct degrees of caramelization have been shown.

## The Kitchen, Work Space and Equipment

To ensure consistency throughout the certification testing program, all testing facilities will offer candidates a high-level testing venue which includes appropriate equipment and space configurations as specified in the guidelines below.

The test site will provide ample space to include refrigeration, work area, sinks, ranges and oven space for each candidate. Sufficient access to fryers and grills will be provided, although candidates may share this equipment. A large clock will be visible in the examination area for accurate time keeping. There will be a candidate staging area for ingredient check-in by the evaluators. First aid equipment and materials will be available if needed.

At a minimum each test site will provide the following:

- 4-burner stove with standard oven *per candidate* (portable burners are not acceptable)
- 45 sq. ft. usable table/counter working space *per candidate*
- 4 cubic feet refrigeration space *per candidate*, at a close proximity to the station
- adequate cubed ice supply
- one hot and cold hand sink *per three candidates*
- one hot and cold ware washing sink *per four candidates*
- 2 power outlets *per candidate*, located at their work station
- ample garbage receptacles placed at every station, and a community receptacle within the testing facility
- portion/measuring scales to be available for candidates, balance scale for pastry, measuring in ounces and pounds
- marble slab and microwave oven required for pastry candidates
- one five quart mixer *per pastry candidate*
- cutting boards
- evaluator's table should include: silverware, napkins, water glasses, clipboards, pads, pencils, calculator, and stapler
- ample supply of appropriate cleaning equipment including brooms, mops, paper towels, plastic wrap, foil, detergent, sanitizers, and buckets

Each station will provide a basic set of pots, pans, and hand tools (see list). Additional kitchen equipment is to be supplied in a common area. In the event that a test site is unable to supply all the stations with a full set of station equipment, the candidate may be asked to bring along some of the items needed to complete the set.

**Individual Equipment:**

2	3 qt. mixing bowls	1	rubber spatula
2	small sauce pans	1	solid spoon
1	medium sauce pan	1	slotted spoon
1	large sauté pan	1	2 oz. ladle
1	medium sauté pan	1	6 oz. ladle
2	small sauté pans	1	small whisk
2	small bain marie inserts	1	wooden spoon

**The Community Kitchen:**

The community kitchen should include small appliances which can be shared by all candidates. Food safety and sanitation supplies must be furnished by the test site. Candidates are expected to bring their own plastic gloves, if needed, for production or service. At a minimum, each test site shall provide the following in the community kitchen:

butchers twine	chinoise	grill
food processors	portion scales	fryer
measuring containers	microwave	proof box
food blenders	food mixers	
balance beam scales		

**Ingredients:**

Exam candidates are required to bring all of their own ingredients. However, a test site may choose to provide common staples and optional items to the candidates. This list of common staple and optional items is to be made available to all registered candidates at the time of registration.



## ACF Practical Exam Passing Form

Test Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Test Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

ACF Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Test Site \_\_\_\_\_

Test Administrator \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Certification for which this candidate **passed**:

- Certified Culinarian
- Certified Pastry Culinarian
- Personal Certified Chef
- Certified Working Pastry Chef
- Certified Sous Chef
- Certified Chef De Cuisine
- Certified Secondary Culinary Educator
- Certified Culinary Educator
- Personal Certified Executive Chef
- Certified Executive Pastry Chef
- Certified Executive Chef

This form serves as your official record of participation in the ACF Practical Certification Examination. Congratulations! You have successfully completed the requirements for this exam. This is the only record of test completion that you will receive for certification. When you apply for certification, please send a copy of it with your certification application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Test Administrator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Certified Secondary Culinary Educator**

### **Practical Exam Guidelines, Exam Time and Requirements:**

Same as either CCC or CWPC depending on the concentration of subjects taught.

## **Certified Culinary Educator**

### **Practical Exam Guidelines, Exam Time and Requirements:**

Same as either CCC or CWPC depending on the concentration of subjects taught.

# Certified Chef de Cuisine

## Practical Exam Guidelines

- Candidates are responsible to bring all ingredients for the exam.
- Sanitation skills will be monitored at all times for compliance with standard rules.
- Sanitation infractions could lead to a failing grade.
- Professional Uniform: All Candidates must wear white chef coat, white toque, black or black and white checkered pants, leather shoes or clogs and have clean apron and side towels.
- Candidates must submit a typed list of all items to be prepared to the examiners prior to the start of the exam.
- Candidates must bring their own plates unless the test site has agreed to provide them.

## Exam Time: 3 hours

During the time allotted for your exam, prepare the following items finished and served according to industry standards. As items are completed, you may present them at that time to the evaluators either by setting them on finished plates at the end of your work station or by approaching the evaluators directly.

### The candidate shall exhibit the following:

- Prepare 60 ounces of chicken consommé, using ground chicken for the raft, to be served with a garnish of the candidate's choice, derived from a classical preparation (un-clarified stocks may be brought in)
- Prepare 1 quart of velouté sauce; strain for final presentation (un-clarified stock may be brought in)
- Prepare 1 quart of espagnole sauce; cook as long as time allows, and strain for presentation (un-clarified stock may be brought in).
- Prepare 2 portions of one chicken (2.5 – 3.5 pounds) for main course using at least 2 cuts of the bird (whole chicken pounds must be used at the start, assuming chicken is cut into 8 pieces) with appropriate accompaniments
- Prepare 2 portions of one first course using part of the Dover Sole or flounder (whole fish butchery must be demonstrated) and one of the other seafood basket components

### Seafood Basket:

- 1 each 1.5 lb. live whole lobster
- 2 each live crabs (any edible variety)
- 12 each live oysters
- 12 each live clams
- 12 each rope cultivated mussels
- 1 pound live crawfish
- 1 pound green shrimp
- 1 each 16-20 ounce Dover sole or flounder

### Notes:

- Candidates should inform examiners 10 minutes before they begin plating foods for final presentations.
- Appropriate organization, safety, and sanitation skill contribute greatly to each candidate's success
- The candidate may add any supporting or "common kitchen" ingredients to the groceries which are needed.
- Candidates are encouraged to pre-marinate any proteins and serve those proteins at the exam, as long as the butchering and pre-marinating process is demonstrated during the exam. For example, the day before the exam, butcher a chicken and marinate it for the following day. During the exam, demonstrate the process on another whole chicken and then properly store the item "for future use".

**ACF Certification Practical Exam Score Sheet**  
**Certified Chef de Cuisine (CCC)/Certified Secondary Culinary Educator (CSCE)/**  
**Certified Culinary Educator (CCE) (Cooking Instructors)**

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ ACF Member #: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility/Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Certification level tested: \_\_\_\_\_

**Food Safety & Sanitation** \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

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**Mise en Place (20 Points)**

Organization/ Work Habits (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

Utilization of Ingredients & Use of Allotted Time (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

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**Cooking Skills and Culinary Techniques (40 Points)**

Skills and Craftsmanship (0-30) \_\_\_\_\_

Serving & Portion Size (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

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**Taste and Presentation Skills (40 Points)**

Prepare 60 ounces of chicken consommé \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Prepare 1 quart of veloute sauce \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Prepare 1 quart of espagnole sauce \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:  
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Prepare 2 portions of one chicken for main course using at least 2 cuts of the bird with appropriate accompaniments \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:  
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Prepare 2 portions of one first course using part of the Dover Sole or Flounder and one of the other seafood basket components \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

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Flavor & Texture (0-30) \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation and Nutritional Balance (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Test Score (0-100)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exam Time 3 Hours – Set up Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start Time** \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ACF Member #: \_\_\_\_\_

# Certified Working Pastry Chef

## Practical Exam Guidelines

- Candidates are responsible to bring all ingredients for the exam. They may be pre-scaled or measured, but not combined in any manner.
- Sanitation skills will be monitored at all times for compliance with standards rules.
- Sanitation infractions could lead to a failing grade.
- Professional Uniform: All Candidates must wear white chef coat, white toque, black or black and white checkered pants, leather shoes or clogs and have clean apron and side towels.
- Candidates should bring in plates and/or platters unless the test site has agreed to provide them.
- Candidates should present a typed list of all items to be prepared to the examiners prior to the start of the exam.

## Exam Time: 4 hours

During the time allotted for your exam, prepare the following list of items, finish each according to industry standards, and present final products to the evaluators. As items are completed you may present them at that time, either by setting them on finished plates at the end of your work station, or by approaching the evaluators directly.

### The candidate shall exhibit the following:

- Choux Pastry – Prepare three different variations of Choux pastry products and fill with pastry cream and finish appropriately. Present 4 portions of each variation arranged for buffet service on a suitable platter.
- Fruit Flan – Prepare Pate' Sucree and produce an 8" round fruit flan. Dough and filling (pastry cream) must be made and fruit prepared during the exam time. Present on a suitable platter.
- Torte or Gateau – Prepare and decorate one 8" Torte or Gateau of candidate's choice demonstrating flat icing and a minimum of two piping techniques. Base may be brought in already cooked, however, fillings, icing and decorations must be made during the allotted exam time. Present on a suitable platter.
- Chemical Leavened Product – Prepare 12 portions of Banana Nut Quickbread arranged for buffet service on a suitable platter.

### Notes:

- Candidates should inform examiners 10 minutes before they begin plating foods for final presentations.
- Appropriate organization, safety, and sanitation skills contribute greatly to each candidate's success.

**ACF Certification Practical Exam Score Sheet**  
**Certified Working Pastry Chef (CWPC)/Certified Secondary Culinary Educator (CSCE)/Certified Culinary Educator (CCE) (Baking Instructors)**

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ ACF Member #: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility/Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Certification level tested: \_\_\_\_\_

**Food Safety & Sanitation** \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Mise en Place (20 Points)**

Organization/ Work Habits (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

Utilization of Ingredients & Use of Allotted Time (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Cooking Skills and Culinary Techniques (40 Points)**

Skills and Craftsmanship (0-30) \_\_\_\_\_

Serving & Portion Size (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Taste and Presentation Skills (40 Points)

Prepare three different variations of Choux pastry products and fill with pastry cream and finish appropriately. Present 4 portions of each.

\_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prepare Pate' Sucree and produce an 8" round fruit flan. Dough and filling (pastry cream) must be made and fruit prepared during the exam time. Present on a suitable platter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Prepare and decorate one 8" torte or gateau of your choice demonstrating two different piping techniques (base may be brought in, but filling, icing, and decorations must be made during the allotted time for the exam).

\_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Present 12 portions of Banana Nut Quickbread arranged for buffet service on a suitable platter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Flavor & Texture (0-30) \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation and Nutritional Balance (0-10) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Test Score (0-100)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exam Time 4 Hours – Set Up Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Start Time** \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ACF Member #: \_\_\_\_\_