



American Culinary Federation
The Standard of Excellence for Chefs



ACF Student Culinary Competition Manual

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Goals of ACF Approved Culinary Competitions

Primary

- To continually raise the standards of culinary excellence and professionalism
- Nurture the creativity of individual chefs
- Provide a showcase for individual skills, techniques and styles
- Provide a means of earning ACF certification points

Secondary

- Provide an arena to demonstrate the mutual link between taste and health
- Provide an example and inspiration for young professionals

All these goals notwithstanding, competitors should embrace the philosophy that the overriding intention of culinary competition, especially at the higher professional level, is to, not only to drive skill development but to demonstrate through the help of the professional chef, innovation, research & creativity while charting new territories in food and cuisine. Escoffier once said, that “like fashion, food and cuisine should evolve.” Through the vehicle of culinary competition, we embrace this mindset and encourage you to do the same in your professional competitive journey

These goals are accomplished by:

Primary

- Maintaining established culinary standards
- Promoting camaraderie and educational opportunities among culinary professionals
- Acting as a staging area for development of culinary concepts

Secondary

- Fostering the development of cutting-edge presentations
- Nurturing future leaders of culinary, baking and pastry
- Providing rewards of recognition

Purpose of the Culinary Competition Manual

- To ensure a nationwide, uniform standard and criteria for the judging of culinary competitions
- To clearly present the criteria for all categories of culinary, baking and pastry competition
- To provide general competition guidelines for competitors and judges

Chapter 2: **Traditional Competition Categories**

Category SA – Cooking, Student, Individual

- Show platters need to be a minimum of eight portions on the platter and one portion on a display plate as well as the appropriate sauce(s).
- The competitor must demonstrate at least two protein items, two garnishes, one salad and the appropriate sauce(s).
- Must have a description or menu of platter without a name or property affiliation.

[Select One – All items must be properly glazed]

SA-1 Cold platter of meat, beef, veal, lamb or pork

SA-2 Cold platter of fish and/or shellfish

SA-3 Cold platter of poultry

SA-4 Cold platter of game

SA-5 One cold hors d'oeuvres selection, with a minimum of four varieties, served with appropriate sauces and garnishes

SA-6 Four varieties of tapas or finger foods, hot or cold, or combination of hot and cold—must be presented cold

General Guidelines for Category SA

The following list provides a good beginning checklist of what is considered general guidelines for both competitors who are developing displays and judges who will evaluate them.

- 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.
- Competitors are encouraged to use a variety of cooking methods and ingredients.
- Use correct cooking, presentation and flavor combination.
- Dressing the rims of plates results in an unacceptable appearance.
- Meat should be carved properly and cleanly.
- Meat slices should be served with the carved surface upwards and arranged in order and size.
- Numerical harmonizing of meat portions and garnishes is required.
- Fruits and vegetables must be cut or turned uniformly.
- Binding agents may be used for creams.
- The amount of gelatin used in aspics may exceed normal quantities, but not to the extent that the style of presentation is dependent on the extra gelatin content.
- Avoid all non-edible items.
- Food prepared hot, but displayed cold, should not be served on a chemisé plate or platter.
- Dishes prepared hot, but displayed cold, should be glazed with aspic.
- Sauce boats should only be half full.
- Aspic used should refer to the product.
- Glazing work should be clean and free of defects.
- Use practical portion size. In general, portion weight should be in keeping with the norms of accepted practice and nutritional balance.
- Proper color, presentation and flavor combinations should be displayed.
- Demonstrate clean, crisp workmanship.
- No identification of personal or business affiliation is allowed with the exhibits until the judging is completed.
- The punctual presentation of each exhibit at the appointed time is urgent.

Chapter 2: **Traditional Competition Categories**

- The character of the showpiece should be respected.
- Although table decorations and lighting are not part of the actual judging, a well presented and attractive table will add to the high-quality image that the competitor attempts to project.

Category SB – Cooking, Student, Individual

- Must have a description or menu of platter, no name or property affiliation

[Select one – All items must be properly glazed]

SB-1 Three different cold appetizer plates

SB-2 Three different hot appetizer plates, presented cold

SB-3 One five-course menu gastronomique for one person, prepared hot and presented cold, comprising one appetizer, one consommé, one salad and one entrée and one dessert all within proper tasting portion size and contemporary presentations

SB-4 Three different main plates, each displaying one of the following cooking methods sauteing, roasting, braising, poaching and grilling.

General Guidelines for Category SB

The following list provides a good beginning checklist of what is considered general guidelines for both competitors who are developing displays and the judges who will evaluate them.

- 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.
- Competitors are encouraged to use a variety of cooking methods and ingredients.
- Use correct cooking, presentation and flavor combination.
- Dressing the rims of plates results in an unacceptable appearance.
- Meat should be carved properly and cleanly.
- Meat slices should be served with the carved surface upwards and arranged in order and size.
- Fruits and vegetables must be cut or turned uniformly.
- Binding agents may be used for creams.
- The amount of gelatin used in aspics may exceed normal quantities, but not to the extent that the style of presentation is dependent on the extra gelatin content.
- Avoid all non-edible items.
- Food prepared hot, but displayed cold, should not be served on a chemisé plate or platter.
- Dishes prepared hot, but displayed cold, should be glazed with aspic.
- Sauce boats should only be half full.
- Aspic used should refer to the product.
- Glazing work should be clean and free of defects.
- Use practical portion size. In general, portion weight should be in keeping with the norms of accepted practice and nutritional balance.
- Proper color, presentation and flavor combinations should be displayed.
- Demonstrate clean, crisp workmanship.
- No identification of personal or business affiliation is allowed with the exhibits until the judging is completed.
- The punctual presentation of each exhibit at the appointed time is urgent.
- The character of the showpiece should be respected.

Chapter 2: **Traditional Competition Categories**

- Although table decorations and lighting are not part of the actual judging, a well presented and attractive table will add to the high-quality image that the competitor attempts to project.

Category SC – Patisserie/Confectionery, Student, Individual

- All requirements must be displayed.
- All exhibited pieces must be made of edible materials. [Select one]
 - SC-1** Single-tier, decorated celebration cake–sugar paste, rolled fondant, royal icing, chocolate, marzipan or sugar.
 - Minimum of three techniques displayed.
 - Can be any shape with a maximum display area of 15" x 15".
 - No dummy cakes are permitted.
 - SC-2** One buffet platter of fancy cookies, chocolates, or petit fours (platter must be made up of Four varieties, six portions each) with one presentation plate.
 - SC-3** Three different individual hot or cold desserts (must be prepared as an individual-plated serving), all displayed cold.
 - SC-4** Wedding cake
 - Minimum of three tiers with a maximum display area of 36" x 36".
 - Non-edible materials can be used to support each tier and a limited amount of wires can be used for gum paste flowers only.
 - No dummy cakes are permitted.

General Guidelines for Category SC

The following list provides a good beginning checklist of what is considered general guidelines for both competitors who are developing displays and the judges who will evaluate them.

- Ingredients and garnishes should harmonize.
- Unnecessary ingredients should be avoided and practical, acceptable cooking methods should be applied.
- Proper techniques and accepted methods of preparation should be adhered to throughout the display.
- Competitors are encouraged to use a variety of cooking methods and ingredients.
- Use correct cooking, presentation and flavor combination.
- Dressing the rims of plates results in an unacceptable appearance.
- Fruits and vegetables must be cut or turned uniformly.
- Binding agents may be used for creams.
- The amount of gelatin used in aspics may exceed normal quantities, but not to the extent that the style of presentation is dependent on the extra gelatin content.
- Avoid all non-edible items.
- Glazing work should be clean and free of defects.
- Use practical portion size. In general, portion weight should be in keeping with the norms of accepted practice and nutritional balance.
- Proper color, presentation and flavor combinations should be displayed.
- Demonstrate clean, crisp workmanship.
- Numerical harmonizing of dessert portions, garnishes and accompaniments is required.
- Properly bake dough or crusts.
- Display proper thickness for various crusts.
- Cleanly apply icings and glazes of the correct thickness and proper shine.

Chapter 2: **Traditional Competition Categories**

- All chocolate work should be in the proper temperature and thickness.
- All piping work should be thin, delicate and show accurate workmanship.
- Coloring used should be soft, pastel and not excessive.
- No identification of personal or business affiliation is allowed with the exhibits until the judging is completed.
- The punctual presentation of each exhibit at the appointed time is urgent.
- Although table decorations and lighting are not part of the actual judging, a well presented and attractive table will add to the high-quality image that the competitor attempts to project.

Category SD – Showpieces, Student, Individual

Exhibits in this category should demonstrate the difference between cookery and culinary art.

- Acceptable mediums are: ice, vegetables, fruits, tallow, saltillage, pastillage, chocolate, marzipan and cooked sugar.
- Bases can not exceed 30" x 30", height is unrestricted.
- Use of commercial molds is not permitted.
- No external supports are allowed.
- Showpieces are eligible to be entered in only one ACF competition.

General Guidelines for Category SD

The following list provides a good beginning checklist of what is considered general guidelines for both competitors who are developing displays and the judges who will evaluate them.

- Ingredients and garnishes should harmonize.
- Proper techniques and accepted methods of preparation should be adhered to throughout the display.
- Avoid all non-edible items.
- Demonstrate clean, crisp workmanship.
- All chocolate work should be in the proper temperature and thickness.
- Present smooth, properly-sanded pastillage work, free of visible cracks and seams.
- Present sugar work having the proper shine, thickness and harmonious coloring.
- No identification of personal or business affiliation is allowed with the exhibits until the judging is completed.
- The punctual presentation of each exhibit at the appointed time is urgent.
- Although table decorations and lighting are not part of the actual judging, a well presented and attractive table will add to the high-quality image that the competitor attempts to project.

Category SG – Edible Cold Food, Student, Individual

The concept of an edible cold-food display demands, in essence, the same criteria as the market basket concept and can only be executed under a strictly controlled environment.

- Such a show can only be approved if the issuing of quality fresh foods is strictly controlled and proctored.
- The processing and handling of these foodstuffs is monitored from beginning to end to effectively verify that it conforms to all sanitation and health guidelines.
- All finished products are to be kept at 45°F or below, without interruption until tasted and evaluated.
- The facility must carry the approval and meet the requirements of the local health department.
- All requirements for kitchen setup are the same as in the hot-food kitchen.
- All procedures must be strictly monitored.
- Show organizers will need to allow two days, each with an eight-hour shift.

Chapter 2: **Traditional Competition Categories**

Competitor Requirements

Cooking – One cold buffet or hors d'oeuvres platter for eight to ten portions. The hors d'oeuvres must consist of minimum of six varieties. The platter must also present the appropriate salads and garnitures.

Pastry – One buffet platter, eight to ten portions of each variety with confectionery or desserts with theme. The platter must consist of a minimum of six varieties.

Day One Schedule

- Menu development
- Market basket issued
- Kitchen and station assignment
- Display time assignment
- Seven hours of proctored mise en place, preparation and cooking time

Day Two Schedule

- Allocated primarily for the competitor to complete the buffet requirements and display at the appropriate time

Chapter 3: Contemporary Cooking Categories (Student)

Category SK – Practical and Contemporary Hot-Food Cooking, Student, Individual

SK Category Options:

Competition organizers have the option to preselect a specific category from the choices below and that information should be available when the show categories are announced. Additional category/protein choices not on the list will also be allowed but the organizers must obtain prior approval from the Culinary Competition Committee. Student portions are two finished plates versus four finished plates for professional chef entries.

- Competitors will fabricate and prepare two (2) portions of a signature entrée one would find on a fine dining restaurant menu. This is differentiated from a gastronomique menu, tasting menu, wine menu or other such multi-course menus in both portion size and concept. The entrée should be focused on the selected protein with accompanying sauce(s) and/or relishes/condiments, balanced with starch and vegetable as appropriate to maintain a good nutritional balance.
- Competitors have 15 minutes for set-up, 60 minutes to fabricate and cook, 10 additional minutes for plating and 15 minutes for clean-up.
- Prepared items and products can be brought into the competition but the process must be fully demonstrated during the kitchen production period as stated in the recipe packet.
- Of the two portions prepared, one is for judges' tasting and one is for display/critique.

SKC: Practical and Contemporary Hot-Food Cooking, Student, Individual

SKC-1 Whole Bone-in Rock Cornish Game Hen–1-1½ pounds

SKC-2 Whole Bone-in Chicken–2½-3 pounds

SKC-3 Whole Bone-in Duck–5-6 pounds

SKC-4 Game Birds–1-1½ pound pheasant, quail(s), squab(s), partridge(s) or up to 2½ pound guinea fowl using the whole or part of the bird

SKC-5 Bone-In Pork Loin (chine bone may be removed before the competition).

SKC-6 Bone-In Veal Loin or Rack (chine bone may be removed before the competition).

SKC-7 Bone-In Lamb Loin or Rack (chine bone may be removed before the competition).

SKC-8 Bone-In Game (Venison rack, loin, chine bone may be removed before the competition).

SKC-9 Whole Rabbit–using the leg and at least one other cut.

SKC-10 1-2 pound Live Lobster. Other crustaceans/mollusks may be incorporated with this.

SKC-11 Whole Flat or Round Fish (2 ½ to 4 pounds). Fish can be eviscerated and scaled, but the head must remain on when brought in.

SKC-12 Escoffier's "Le Guide Culinaire" Savory

- While maintaining the integrity of the original version's flavor profile. Chefs are required to use the ingredients from the original recipe and are encouraged to use modern techniques, sensibilities and presentation combined with classical principals to create their new dish. Chefs may present their four individual portions on their choice of service wear in any style they see fit. Chefs will be required reference the classical dish number they intend to use and include an (100/150-word) explanation of the modernizations made as part of their recipe packet. Total of 2 finished plates, 1 for the judges to taste and 1 to present for critique.

SKS Student Skills Category

- SKS-1, Basic Skills Salon Demonstration,

Vegetables

Potato: Julienne (3 oz), Paysanne (3 oz any shape), Tourner 3 ea

2 each tomatoes; peel, seed and concassé

Peel and small dice one onion

- no pre-peeling of vegetables is permitted

Chapter 3: **Contemporary Cooking Categories (Student)**

Chicken Fabrication

Butchery to specification with a focus on yield (removing all flesh from the carcass), symmetry (both breasts should look the same, etc.) and conformity (parts should resemble the requirements)

- Two (2) each airline breast skin on, wing bone Frenched, marrow exposed.
 - Separate leg and thigh oyster attached to thigh
 - Carcass should be prepared for stock production
 - Sanitation
- Standard student skills salon timing: 10 min set up; 60 min production time; 10 min presentation window; 10 min clean-up. Scoring to be done on the SKS1 Score Sheet.

General Guidelines for all SK Categories

- Competitors must provide at least four judges packets that include: recipes, all ingredients and a complete diagram or a clear, close-up, color photograph of the signature dish. Packets are to be provided to judges on-site the day of the competition.
- Ingredients for the recipe are allowed to be pre-scaled and measured, however, no pre-mixing is allowed.
- No advance preparation or cooking is allowed.
- Cleaned and peeled mirepoix ingredients are acceptable. Chopped herbs, shallots and garlic are also acceptable.
- Vegetables can be peeled and sectioned but not shaped in any form. Leeks may be split for cleaning purposes. Salads may be cleaned and washed; beans may be pre-soaked.
- No finished soups or sauces are allowed. However, basic stocks may be brought in. No clarified consommés are allowed.
- The following ready-made dough may be brought in: brioche, puff pastry, pizza dough and filo dough.
- All combinations of ingredients must be completed during the competitors allotted competition time.
- Competitors may also bring proteins pre-marinated, but will be required to demonstrate fabrication of protein and making of marinade during allotted time frame.
- Competitors are allowed to bring in only the whole and raw materials in the amounts stated in their recipes. However, judges may allow variances in amounts for products that require further preparation (whole fish, meats, etc.).
- Competitors must bring their own food, tools, cookware and china.

ACF Contemporary Competition Category (SKW)

This Category is to be used for contract food service companies, restaurants, taverns, diners and educational operations. Earning medals by participating in this category of competition will earn CEH points to become a certified fundamentals' cook or a certified fundamentals' pastry cook.

Becoming a member of the ACF is invaluable in networking in the hospitality industry while increasing culinary skills and earning certifications will advance your career. ACF professional culinary Judges will give priceless critique and feedback to help you grow in your career. While companies and Restaurant Institutions sponsoring their Culinariums will benefit from the research and development of their recipes and professional growth.

This category can act as a great tool in developing strong relationships with Industry sponsors. This category can also give competitors an opportunity to work with an array of unique ingredients and equipment, highlighting the competitors' skills and the sponsor's products.

Competitors are encouraged to draw from Global cuisines around the world. Some examples are, but not limited to: Asian, Mexican, South American, European, Korean, Middle Eastern, and American regional.

Competitors will also be given the opportunity to create food highlighting industry trends not commonly seen in ACF competitions. Street foods, fast casual, modernist cooking, and nutritional cookery are just some examples of themes that can offer chefs endless possibilities to showcase and hone their culinary skills in diverse, unconventional and exciting ways.

Specific SKW guidelines require pre-approval from the Culinary Competition Committee and will be made available by the Show Chairperson.

Chapter 3: Contemporary Cooking Categories (Student)

Category SP - Practical and Contemporary Patisserie, student, Individual

SP-1 – Hot/Warm Dessert

- At least 66% (two-thirds) of the dessert should be hot or warm
- Competitors have 15 minutes for set-up, 60 minutes to cook, 10 additional minutes for plating and 15 minutes for clean-up.
- Of the two portions prepared, one is for judges' tasting and one is for display/critique.

SP-2 – Composed Cold Dessert

- At least 75% of the dessert should be presented cold (frozen elements included).
- Competitors have 15 minutes for set-up, 90 minutes to cook, 10 additional minutes for plating and 15 minutes for clean-up.
- Of the two portions prepared, one is for judges' tasting and one is for display/critique.

SKP-3 - Escoffier's "Le Guide Culinaire" Pastry

- While maintaining the integrity of the original version's flavor profile. Chefs are required to use the ingredients from the original recipe and are encouraged to use modern techniques, sensibilities and presentation combined with classical principals to create their new dish. Chefs may present their four individual portions on their choice of service wear in any style they see fit. Chefs will be required reference the classical dish number they intend to use and include an (100/150-word) explanation of the modernizations made as part of their recipe packet. Total of 2 finished plates, 1 for the judges to taste and 1 to present for critique.

SPS Student Pastry Skills Category

SPS-1 – Basic Skills Salon Demonstration

Students will arrive with their cake pre-frosted with a base layer of white buttercream. Buttercream for all piping must be supplied by the students competing. Students must mix color (of choice) into the buttercream during the competition time frame. The cookies are to be pre-measured but not mixed. The student is also responsible for bringing the orange.

Baking Skills

1. Bake a dozen of a drop cookie of choice (scored on appearance and taste)
2. Segment and zest on orange (Display appropriately with all by products)

Cake decorating

1. Three roses are piped evenly and attractively with piped leaves (15 points)
2. Write "Happy Birthday" (10 points)
3. Bottom border a must (top border optional)

Station Sanitation/Organization

- Standard student skills salon timing: 10 min set up; 60 min production time; 10 min presentation window; 10 min clean-up. Scoring to be done on the SPS1 Score Sheet.

General Guidelines for Category SP

- Competitors must provide at least four judges' packets that include: recipes, all ingredients and a complete diagram or a clear, close-up, color photograph of the signature dish. Packets are to be provided to judges on-site the day of the competition.
- Ingredients for the recipe are allowed to be pre-scaled and measured, however, no pre-mixing is allowed.
- No advance preparation or cooking is allowed.
- Cooked ice cream bases and/or sorbet bases may be brought in ready to freeze at the competition site.
- No finished sauces are allowed.
- The following ready-made dough may be brought in: bric, puff pastry and filo dough.
- All combinations of ingredients must be completed during the competitors allotted competition time.
- Competitors are allowed to bring in only the whole and raw materials in the amounts stated in their recipes. However, judges may allow variances in amounts for products that require further preparation (i.e., whole fruits).
- Competitors must bring their own food, tools, cookware and china.

Chapter 3: **Contemporary Cooking Categories (Student)**

- Competitors are allowed to bring in an ice cream machine of reasonable size and electrical requirements; however, freezers are not provided.
- The careful and responsible use of dry ice in appropriate containers is permitted.

Kitchen Station Requirements

While all competitors may be working in the same kitchen, each must be provided with his or her own workstation. Each station must include the following:

- Adequate work table
- Small oven; convection or conventional
- Cook top, minimum two burners, induction, electric, or gas
- Marble slab**
- Kitchen-Aid-type mixer**
- Cutting boards
- Sink with running water, may be shared
- Access to refrigeration, may be shared
- Power supply, four outlets per station
- Cubed ice, ice supply
- Garbage receptacles
- Hot and cold water sanitation station in immediate vicinity
- To maintain sanitation, brooms, mops, paper towels, plastic wrap, foil, bleach and buckets
- Competitors are allowed to bring in an additional burner-cooking unit
- Measuring scale to be available to competitors, measuring in ounces and pounds
- Large clock in competition area for accurate timekeeping

** This equipment applies to pastry kitchen only.

Judges' Table Requirements

Judges for Category K and P will taste and score competitors in the kitchen. They will need the following items:

- Silverware
- Napkins
- Water
- Clipboards
- Notepads
- Pencils/pens
- Calculator
- Stapler

Chapter 3: Contemporary Cooking Categories (Student)

Organizer Note

Sample Time Schedule for Category SK:

	Setup	Start	Window Opens	Window Closes	Cleanup Ends
Competitor 1	8:00 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	9:25 a.m.	9:40 a.m.
Competitor 2	8:15 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:40 a.m.	9:55 a.m.
Competitor 3	8:30 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	9:45 a.m.	9:55 a.m.	10:10 a.m.
Competitor 4	8:45 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	10:10 a.m.	10:25 a.m.
Competitor 5	9:00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	10:15 a.m.	10:25 a.m.	10:40 a.m.

Category SW – Customized Wildcard Category

Chapters wishing to host hot-food competitions that do not follow the standard category formats must apply for approval. Any changes or exceptions to standardized categories must have the approval of the Culinary Competition Committee chair prior to the competition and before ACF medals and CEH's are awarded.

The standard application must be supplemented with a detailed description of the proposed competition, and must be submitted a full four months before the competition. The description must include the following information:

- Indicate whether an individual or team category; if a team category, indicate how many team members
- Number of portions
- Number of courses
- Time frame
- Use of any special or required ingredients

Note: For a customized individual category, competitors are required to prepare at least four portions of a four course menu. For a customized team category, teams must prepare a minimum of eight portions of a four course menu.

Chapter 4: **Competition Scoring and Critiques**

In culinary competitions, there is preparation of the display and scoring, but it is the assessment of the work that lies at the heart of the purpose of competitions. There are two areas of assessment: the critique and the score.

Critiques in an ACF-sanctioned culinary competition are delivered by experienced, trained, approved culinary judges. In the learning process, there is no substitute for a professional, constructive critique, delivered in a manner of teacher-to-student and with the respect afforded a professional colleague.

Critique sessions are normally held immediately following the judging session and before the opening of the show for public viewing. This allows privacy for the judge and the competitor to discuss the display. Also, by having the critique as soon as possible after the viewing by the judges' panel, the display is still fresh in judges' minds and the critique can be more accurate and helpful.

The best critiques are to the point, note both the strong and weak points and are specific. In addition, the judge should offer guidance on what skills and techniques could be built on or further developed. If the competitor is a student, his or her instructor should be present during the critique.

The second area of assessment is the scoring. As the judges' panel reviews a display, points are awarded in several areas and averaged to yield a single score for the display. An ACF-sanctioned culinary competition jury panel will consist of no fewer than three (3) certified ACF judges (a minimum of four (4) for F category). Each judge will evaluate individually. All scoring differentials of more than 7 points are to be reviewed with the lead judge, justified and/or addressed. Then the ACF National Office will review each competitor's scores when they arrive and will verify this process was upheld, if there is any indication of mishandled scores the current competition committee will be notified and further actions will be taken. Based on a 100 point system, displays are awarded gold, silver or bronze medals.

The ACF scoring point scale is:

Gold medal with distinction	100 points
Gold medal	90-99.99 points
Silver medal	80-89.99 points
Bronze medal	70-79.99 points

Unlike most competitions that may have only one gold medal winner, in ACF-sanctioned competitions, the competitors compete against a standard and not each other. Since a competitor is judged on how his or her display measured up against the standard, there may be many competitors who win the same medal.

ACF medals are awarded to all competitors who score sufficient point levels. If the competitor is a member of the ACF, a permanent record of each medal awarded is maintained in the ACF national office.

Assessment for Categories SA, SB, SC2 & 3, SG

In a cold-food competition, the judging takes place in an empty hall, except for members of the judging panel. The competitors are absent, as are the public and the media.

Displays in these categories are scored in specific areas:

Presentation, Innovation and Glazing – 25 points

- Dishes should be appetizing and tastefully pleasing to the eye.
- They should show no beads or uneven aspic.
- Slices should be moderate, portions correctly calculated and easily accessible.
- Aspic used should refer to the product.
- Glazing work should be clean and free of defects.

Composition and Harmony of Ingredients – 25 points

- Displays must be nutritionally well-balanced and in keeping with modern trends.
- Taste and colors should enhance each other.
- Displays must demonstrate practical craftsmanship, and should be practical, digestible and light.

Chapter 4: Competition Scoring and Critiques

Professional Preparation and Craftsmanship – 25 points

- Classical names should correspond to original recipes and methods of preparation.
- Preparations must display mastery of basic skills, chosen jellies and application of cooking methods.

Serving Methods and Portions – 25 points

- Simple and practical, clean and careful serving with no fuss, no over-elaborate or impractical garnishing, and plate and platter arrangement that makes for practical serving while maintaining a strong sense of the elegant.

Assessment for Category SD

Category D entries (showpieces) should display more creativity than practically, but must also conform to certain standards. Showpieces are judged in three areas:

- Scale/size/proportion – 15 points
- Artistic achievement/detail – 35 points
- Craftsmanship/quality of work – 50 points

Assessment for Category SG

The dynamics of judging category G, edible cold food competition, are quite different from those when judging other categories.

The assessment for category G is divided into two areas: kitchen/floor evaluation (40 points) and service/tasting evaluation (60 points). Each of these areas are further divided into five specific areas, which are scored individually.

Kitchen Production – 25 possible points

- Sanitation/Work habits/Safety – 0-15 points
- Utilization of ingredients/Cooking Techniques – 0-10 points

Floor judges evaluate the following:

Sanitation – Cutting boards should be scrupulously clean. Knives should be sharp. The toolbox/knife bag must be clean and sanitary inside. Sanitizing solution is at the right strength, not over or under-powered, and whether it's being used as a washing solution instead of sanitizing a pre-washed area. Are the competitors using towels correctly? For example, they should not be wiping debris off a table and then wiping a knife or a plate with the same towel. Consider whether or not competitors are using their aprons as hand wipes. Products should be stored at the correct temperature. Gloves must be used when the last contact with food is occurring, for example, plating up. Areas are required to be kept sanitized, particularly during fish-to-meat to vegetable or dairy transitions. Frequent hand sanitizing is encouraged.

Organization – Table should be kept clear of nonessentials. For example, a mixer that may not be needed for the next 30 minutes should not be displayed. Work systematically on one job at a time. Use correct cutting motions and the correct knife for the job.

Storing of products – Use an organized refrigerator, rack cart, knife and equipment storage. Waste storage—is it useable or not? Useable waste is properly stored for future use. The table should be free from debris. Floor spills must be attended to quickly. The dish area should not be used as a storage dump. Competitors should have an organized withdrawal from the kitchen, leaving it as clean as it was found.

Butchery and Boning Skills – Efficient and profitable removal of muscle or fish from a bone is encouraged. Sinew and/or fat removal and correct tying methods will be evaluated.

Cooking techniques and skills – Follow classical cooking techniques. The competitor should use the technique as stated in the recipe. For example, pan frying instead of sautéing, or braising with a lid on. Demonstrate proper technique when deglazing a pan rather than simply adding wine or a liquid. Mirepoix should be browned properly, not just heated. Product should be roasted correctly and basted as needed, not just placed in the oven. Poached items should not be simmered. Follow correct method when preparing a forcemeat. Consider how many different techniques have been displayed.

Timing – Menu items should not be held too long. Consider whether or not meats have the time to rest. Serve within the five-minute window.

Chapter 4: Competition Scoring and Critiques

Work flow – Crossover duties should show teamwork. There should be smooth transitions from one job to another. A logical progression of jobs is admired. For example, avoid chopping herbs or mincing garlic on several occasions. Use proper timing of the menu items.

Service/Tasting Evaluation – 75 possible points

- Serving methods and presentation – 10 points
- Portion size and nutritional balance – 5 points
- Creativity, menu and ingredient compatibility – 20 points
- Flavor, taste, texture and doneness – 40 points

Tasting judges evaluate the following:

Serving methods and presentation – Hot food should be hot, and cold food should be cold (including plates). Food should be fresh and colorful, visibly seasoned, presented with some height, easy to eat and pleasing to the eye. Meat/fish slices must be even, straight and evenly shingled. Items should be closely placed together to help maintain temperature and to keep the plate from resembling a smiling face.

Portion size and nutritional balance – Components of the meal must be balanced so that the main item is complemented in size/amount by the accompanying garnish(es) and/or sauce. The necessary nutritional standards should be adhered to. The protein weight must be within the set limits.

Creativity – Dishes should show a degree of difficulty and creative flair rather than something copied and overused. If competitor's use an old or classical idea, new, creative ideas should be used to transform the dish.

Menu composition and progression of courses – The menu must have a thread or a theme running throughout. For example, it is a regional, seasonal or celebration menu. No courses should be out of sync with the menu, such as an Asian-type dish inserted into an American-type menu. In the progression of courses, there should be no erratic or over-dominant flavors that disrupt the flow of the theme. The dishes should portray a high level of skill and exactness. The number of different skills employed throughout the menu must distinguish the caliber of the cook(s).

Ingredient Compatibility – Ingredient colors should harmonize. Ingredient amounts should be correctly portioned to demonstrate a perfect harmony. Have any of the ingredients been duplicated?

Flavor, taste, texture and doneness – The stated flavor in the menu and recipe should be profound. For example, the duck broth should taste like duck. Doneness temperatures must be correct. Stated vegetable cuts should be correct. The stated cooking techniques must be applied correctly. The textures should correspond to what was implied in the recipe. The flavor of the sauce or vinaigrette should reflect what the recipe stated and should be the correct consistency. Competitors must demonstrate the correct degrees of caramelization. The dishes should taste great.

Assessment for Categories SK, SP, SW and SPW Categories

The assessment for all SK, SP and SW categories is divided into two areas: kitchen production and taste and final presentation.

Each of these areas is further divided into two or three specific areas, which are scored individually. The total possible points are 100, on a 100-point scale.

Kitchen Production – 25 possible points

- Sanitation/Work habits/Safety - 0-15 points
- Utilization of ingredients/Cooking Techniques - 0-10 points

Taste & Final Presentation – 75 possible points

- Flavor and texture, ingredient compatibility - 0-40 points
- Craftsmanship and creativity - 0-20 points
- Presentation and portion size - 0-15 points

Assessment for Categories SKS and SPS Categories

Butchery and Knife Skills

- Chicken Fabrication - 0-40 points
- Sanitation - 0-10 points
- Vegetable skills 0-50

Pastry Skills

- Pastry Skills - 0-75 points
- Taste of Cookies- 0-15 points
- Sanitation - 0-10 points

Student Cold Food Score Sheet

Categories SA, SB, SC2 and SC3

Show: _____ Exhibit/Competitor #: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
Presentation, Innovation and Glazing	0-25	
Composition and Harmony of Ingredients	0-25	
Professional Preparation and Craftsmanship	0-25	
Serving Methods and Portion	0-25	
Total	100	

Comments:

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Student Cold Food Score Sheet

Categories SC1 and SC4 Decorated Cakes

Show: _____ Exhibit/Competitor #: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
Presentation and General Impression	0-25	
Evenness of Icing, Glaze or Fondant	0-15	
Use of Various Techniques	0-15	
Exactness of Skills Displayed	0-20	
Knowledge of Skills Displayed	0-25	
Total	100	

Comments:

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Student Show Piece Score Sheet

Category SD

Show: _____ Exhibit/Competitor #: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Show piece description (if necessary): _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
Scale/Size/Proportion (Is the showpiece in proper scale for what it is? Is the piece in proportion and realistic for use as a functional showpiece? Does the piece fit within size restrictions? Essentially, is the piece in proper balance?)	0-15	
Artistic Achievement/Detail (Is the piece artistic in nature, does it seem life like and/or have a feel of reality, depth, contrast, beauty and artistic appeal?)	0-35	
Craftsmanship/Quality of Work (Does the showpiece demonstrate quality workmanship and skill in the quality of the work presented. Is there demonstrated precision in the work? Is there a level of excellence that is evident in viewing the piece just at first glance?)	0-50	
Total	100	

Comments:

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Student Edible Cold Kitchen Production Score Sheet

Category SG

Show: _____ Exhibit/Competitor #: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Kitchen Production (0-25 Points)

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
Sanitation/Work Habits/Safety	0-15	
Utilization of ingredients/Cooking Techniques	0-10	
Total	25	
Timing/Work Flow (1 point deduction for each minute late max of 5 points)	0-5	
Final Total	25	

Comments:

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
22.5 - 25 points	Gold
20 - 22.49 points	Silver
1.5 - 19.99 points	Bronze

Student Edible Cold Taste and Final Presentation Score Sheet

Category SG

Show: _____ Exhibit/Competitor #: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
Serving Methods and Presentation (Fresh and colorful, easy to eat, closely placed items for maintaining temperature, hot/cold serving plate, stylistic but practical)	0-10	
Portion Size and Nutritional Balance (35:65 balance of protein and carbohydrate. Weight boundary within the tolerance of total meal. Nutritional breakdown supplied)	0-5	
Creativity, Menu and Ingredient Compatibility (Do the recipe ingredients complement each other in color, flavor, and texture? Are the ingredients balanced in size and amounts?)	0-20	
Flavor, Taste, Texture and Doneness (Do the specified major ingredients carry the dominant flavors? Do the components fit together? Are the temperatures correct? Do the textures reflect the cooking technique? Is the sauce the correct flavor for the meat/fish and is it the correct consistency and smooth?)	0-40	
Total	75	

Subtotal: _____

== Service/Tasting Score: _____

Comments:

Platter

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
67.5 - 75 points	Gold
60 - 67.49 points	Silver
52.5 - 59.99 points	Bronze

Student Edible Cold Food Tally Score Sheet

Category SG

Competitor: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Kitchen Production		
Judge 1	0-25	
Judge 2	0-25	
Judge 3	0-25	
Judge 4	0-25	
Judge 5	0-25	
Subtotal		

Taste and Final Presentation Scores		
Judge 1	0-75	
Judge 2	0-75	
Judge 3	0-75	
Judge 4	0-75	
Judge 5	0-75	
Subtotal		

÷ Number of Judges: _____

= Kitchen Production Score: _____

Final Kitchen Production Score: _____

+ Final Taste and Final Presentation Score: _____

= Final Score (0-100 points): _____

Award/Medal: _____

÷ Number of Judges: _____

= Final Taste and Final Presentation Score: _____

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Scores Compiled by: _____

Scores Reviewed by Lead Judge: _____

Printed Name: _____

Student Score Sheet

All SK, SP and SW Categories

Competitor: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Menu/Item: _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Actual Points
Kitchen Production <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sanitation/Work habits/Safety - 0-10 pointsUtilization of ingredients/Cooking Techniques - 0-10 pointsUse of allotted time 0-5 points	0-25	
Taste and Final Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Flavor and texture, ingredient compatibility - 0-40 pointsCraftsmanship and creativity - 0-20 pointsPresentation and portion size - 0-15 points	0-75	
Total	100	

Comments:

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Student Score Sheet

SPS - Pastry Skills

Student: _____ Date: _____

Pastry Skills

Baking Skills	Maximum Points	Received
Methodology and Craftsmanship of Cookies	15	
Taste, Texture and Doneness	15	
Segmentation and display of orange	10	
Sanitation and Organization	10	
Total Baking Skills Score	50	

Decorator Skills	Maximum Points	Received
Three (3) roses piped evenly and displayed attractively with piped leaves	15	
"Happy Birthday" piped evenly and proportionately	10	
Bottom border piped evenly without breaks or seams	15	
Sanitation and Organization	10	
Total Decorator Skills Score	50	

Pastry Skills Total	100	
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Total Baking Skills: _____

Total Decorator Skills: _____

Total score possible: 100

Received: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Student Score Sheet

SKS-Knife Skills

Student: _____ Date: _____

Knife Skills

Chicken	Maximum Points	Received
Butchery to specification Two (2) each airline breast skin on, wing bone Frenched, marrow exposed. Separate leg and thigh oyster attached to thigh	20	
Carcass made ready for stock preparation	20	
Sanitation	10	
Total Chicken Score	50	

Vegetables	Maximum Points	Received
Julienne (3 oz)	10	
2 each tomatoes, peeled, seeded, concassé	10	
Peel and dice one onion	10	
Paysanne (3 oz any shape)	10	
Tourner (3 each)	10	
Total Vegetable Score	50	

Knife Skills Total	100	
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Total Chicken Butchery: _____

Total Knife Cuts: _____

Total score possible: 100

Received: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

Judge's Printed Name: _____

Award Guidelines	
100 points	Gold with Distinction
90 - 99.99 points	Gold
80 - 89.99 points	Silver
70 - 79.99 points	Bronze
60 - 69.99 points	Diploma
Below 59.99 points	Certificate

Student Score Sheet Judge's Summary

Show: _____ Exhibit/Competitor #: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Competitor's Name	Category	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Judge 4	Judge 5	Total Points	Average Points	Medal

Judge's Verification Signatures

Lead Judge's Signature: _____ Lead Judge's Printed Name: _____

Judge's Signature: _____ Judge's Printed Name: _____

Judge's Signature: _____ Judge's Printed Name: _____

Judge's Signature: _____ Judge's Printed Name: _____

Judge's Signature: _____ Judge's Printed Name: _____

ACF Student Culinary Competition Manual



American Culinary Federation
The Standard of Excellence for Chefs

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