



American Culinary Federation
The Standard of Excellence for Chefs

American Culinary Federation Practical Exam Candidate Guide

Certified Culinarian®

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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. *(check with Test Administrator)*
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. Items that require long marinating times may be brought in pre-marinated; however the candidate must demonstrate the entire marinating and/or fabrication process during the exam.
4. 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.
5. Candidates shall bring his/her own personal tools, including knives, small wares and china (plates, platters, bowls, etc.) to display the finished dishes. Exception would be made for test sites that choose to provide china. *(check with Test Administrator)*
6. Dry & wet garbage receptacles, as well as usable trim receptacles, must be maintained and presented to evaluators upon completion of the test.
7. In all exams other than CEC, the candidate has the option of:
 - a) Presenting their items when ready. This requires at least a 10 minute notice for each item presented to the evaluators for their approval.Or
 - b) Presenting the complete program at one time. All items must be presented within the time frame of the exam. No additional time will be allotted for presentation/ plating. For this option the candidate must state that they are choosing this option prior to the start of the program.
8. Basic nutritional balance in recipe development 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.
- All items presented will be evaluated based on cooking methodology, taste, presentation, degree of doneness, and measured to the acceptable industry standards.
- Execution of cooking fundamentals and kitchen management will generate the primary factors for evaluation; see the Score Sheets for a clear understanding of what will be evaluated.

Facility Requirements

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

At a minimum each test site shall 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, digital camera, copy of Le Guide de Culinare
- ample supply of appropriate cleaning equipment including brooms, mops, paper towels
- plastic wrap, foil, detergent, sanitizers, and buckets

Each station must be provided with 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. **The Test Administrator shall notify the candidate of this requirement upon registration.**

When ever possible recommend to candidate(s) to bring their own equipment/specific tool if required to properly perform their practical exam.

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. 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:

- Chinoise
- Food processors
- Grill
- Portion scales
- Fryer
- Measuring containers
- Microwave
- Proof Box
- Food blenders
- Food mixers
- Balance beam scales

*Immersion Circulators will not be allowed during the exam

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.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment for certification practical testing is divided into four general areas: Safety and Sanitation Skills; Organization; Craftsmanship Skills; Finished Product Skills.

The candidate's skills are evaluated during the examination period through frequent monitoring by the evaluators. Notes are made during the examination as references to the evaluation. The practical examination is scored overall as pass or fail. Points are calculated in various areas and a total numerical score is calculated. A total averaged score of 75% (75 points) or better is considered passing.

1. **Safety & Sanitation Skills** will be measured using required industry standards. The candidate is evaluated on their ability to work within established guidelines for safety and sanitation at all times.

Scoring: Safety and sanitation are 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. Evaluators are allowed to disqualify any candidate for infractions of these guidelines. Cleanliness of the equipment, both during and after the test, will be the responsibility of the candidate.

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

- a. **Safety and Sanitation Skills:** The prevention of time/temperature abuse and cross contamination are the two most important areas in which the candidate needs to demonstrate a thorough working knowledge. During the exam, if an examiner has seen a possible infraction of either of these two areas the candidate may be questioned as to their knowledge of these concepts. Infraction(s) of either time/temperature abuse or cross contamination could cause the candidate to fail the exam.

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

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

- Organizational skills (organization and work flow)
- Proper utilization of all ingredients
- Timing of service and follow-up

Scoring: Organizational skills for organization and work habits (0-10 points) and utilization of ingredients and use of allotted time (0-10 points), for a possible total of 20 points.

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 task at hand. 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 other equipment storage. Candidate understands how the useable waste is stored properly. 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.
- c. **Proper utilization of all ingredients** is evaluated on the candidate's efficient use of products. All food and non-food refuse will be kept at the station with the candidate until the completion of the test. Two separate containers are to be maintained: one for food refuse and the other for non-food refuse. The candidate may request to empty the non-food refuse during the test, only after the contents of the container have been reviewed by the evaluator. Upon the completion of the test, the evaluator shall review the food refuse container to determine efficiency of the candidate's work. Points may be deducted from the candidate's score if serious infractions concerning product usage are witnessed. In the case of cooked byproduct, such as roasted chicken, only an appropriate portion should be presented. The cooked by-product should be properly handled and stored as if it were to be intended for another use.
- d. **Timing of service and follow-up** is evaluated on the requisite time given to the candidate for the level of examination attempting. The candidate will be notified of his/her presentation time "window" upon the start of his or her preparation. If the candidate is not able to present the entire menu during the time frame allotted, points may be deducted.

Exceeding reasonable allotted time can result in loss of points and may or may not result in a failing grade.

3. **Craftsmanship Skills** will be measured using industry standards for the following:

- Creativity, skills, and craftsmanship are evaluated based on the candidate's ability to properly execute classical knife cuts and proper cooking techniques while utilizing the correct method of preparation for any given item. In addition, the variety of techniques properly executed shall be factored into this score.
- Serving and portion size is evaluated on the main item and complementary components in the correct size and amounts following the required nutritional standards. When the main item is not within prescribed limits, either under or over, then points may be deducted. Likewise, each accompanying item not within acceptable portion size could result in the loss of points.

Scoring: Proper cooking techniques, skills, and fundamentals are assessed as the following: creativity, skills, and craftsmanship (0-30 points) and serving and portion size (0-10 points), for a possible total of 40 points.

Here are two general guidelines on cooking skills and technique the candidate needs to follow:

- a) **Cooking techniques and skills:** The candidate should pay attention to detail as described by the fundamental 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. **Finished Product 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

Scoring: Flavor and texture (0-30 points), presentation and ingredient compatibility and nutritional balance (0-10 points), for a possible total of 40 points.

Here are four general guidelines on finished product skills the candidate needs to follow:

- a) **Serving methods and presentation: Hot Food Hot! And Cold Food Cold!** (including plates) Presentation is evaluated on correct temperatures of the items served including the dishware, visible seasonings and garnishes, arrangement of items, and overall esthetic appeal of the presented items. 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 placed closely together to help maintain temperature and to keep the plate from resembling a “smiling face” or “party-on-the-plate décor”. The use of white china is strongly suggested.
- 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 compatibility and nutritional balance is evaluated on the harmonious use of ingredients, cooking methods, and ingredient colors which follow guidelines for nutritional balance. 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:** Flavor and texture is evaluated on the proper use of flavors and seasonings in every menu item and/or component, with a variety of contrasting food textures as presented for judging. The flavors are 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.



ACF Practical Exam Passing Form

Test Date _____ ACF Member # _____

Name _____

Test Site _____

Test Administrator _____

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

- Certified Culinarian®
- Certified Pastry Culinarian®
- Certified Sous Chef®
- Certified Working Pastry Chef®
- Certified Chef De Cuisine®
- Certified Executive Chef®
- Certified Executive Pastry Chef®
- Personal Certified Chef™
- Personal Certified Executive Chef™

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the requirements for this exam. This form serves as your official record of participation in the ACF Practical Certification Examination. This practical exam score is valid for one year from the test date listed above. When you apply for certification, please send a copy of it with your certification application.

Signature of Test Administrator

Date _____

Practical Exam Guidelines

- Candidates are responsible for bringing 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 a clean apron and side towels.
- Candidates should submit a typed list of all items to be prepared to the examiners prior to starting the exam.
- Candidates should bring their own plates unless the test site has agreed to provide them.

Exam Time: 2.5 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:

- Julienne carrot, 2 ounces
- Batonnet carrot, 4 ounces (may also be cooked and used for the chicken course preparation below)
- Fine chopped parsley, 4 T (rinsed and readied for use)
- Standard mirepoix, 1 lb. (may be used to make chicken stock; reserve enough in a side plate to show the examiners as they grade your progress)
- Prepare and begin to cook 1.5 gallons chicken stock. (Bones need to be brought in. Do not use trimmed carcass from the main course chicken. Examiners will observe for use of proper techniques during the entire exam. Taste will not weigh high in the score. Over seasoning with salt, pepper or other season could result in a negative score.)
- Fabricate 1 whole chicken (2.5 – 3.5 pounds) into:
 - 2 drumsticks
 - 2 thighs
 - 1 wing
 - 1 chicken breast, first joint of the wing bone is attached. It is clean. Skin is on. Cartilage and rib bones are removed.
 - 1 skinless, boneless chicken breast. Tenderloin or filet is removed.
- Prepare chicken carcass for stock (to be presented, not for use in the chicken stock); carcass must be free of usable meat.
- Sauté one of the chicken breasts applying appropriate seasonings and methodology, and serve as a main course with appropriate vegetable and starch accompaniments. (Batonnet of carrots from above may be used.)

Notes:

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

Certified Culinarian® (CC®) Practical Exam Score Sheet

Candidate: _____ ACF Member #: _____

Facility/Site: _____ Date: _____

Certification level tested: _____

Exam Time 2 ½ Hours – Set Up Time _____ Start Time _____

Safety & Sanitation Skills

_____ Acceptable

_____ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Organizational Skills (20 Points)

Mise en Place/ Work Habits (0-10)

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

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Craftsmanship Skills (40 Points)

Cooking Skills and Culinary Techniques (0-30)

Serving & Portion Size (0-10)

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Finished Product Skills (40 Points)

Exhibit the following:

- Julienne carrot, 2 ounces _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable
- Batonnet carrot, 4 ounces _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable
- Fine chopped parsley, 4 Tablespoons _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable
- Standard Mirepox, 1 pound _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Prepare and begin to cook 1.5 gallons chicken stock _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Fabricate 1 whole chicken into: 2 drumsticks, 2 thighs, 1 wing, 1 French breast, and 1 supreme
_____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Prepare chicken carcass for stock _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Sauté one of the chicken breasts applying appropriate seasonings and methodology and serve as main course with appropriate vegetable and starch accompaniments.

COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS:

Flavor & Texture (0-30) _____

Presentation and Nutritional Balance (0-10) _____

Total Test Score (0-100) _____

Evaluator's Signature: _____

Evaluator's Printed Name: _____ ACF Member #: _____



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ACF Practical Exam Candidate Written Critique Form

Directions: Test Administrators will complete this form based on a summary of all three evaluators.

Candidate Name: _____

ACF# _____

Test Site: _____

Date: _____

Certification Level: _____

Domain 1- Safety and Sanitation:

Domain 2- Organizational Skills:

Domain 3- Craftsmanship Skills:

Domain 4- Finished Product Skills:

All candidates, regardless of the outcome of their exam, will receive a copy of this form prior to leaving the exam site.