



American Culinary Federation
The Standard of Excellence for Chefs

Practical Exam Candidate Guide Certified Pastry Culinarian® (CPC®)

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Pastry Practical Examination: At-A-Glance

Description of Exam

The test site selects the date and schedules the test flight. Candidates are responsible for registering with ACF and contacting the host site regarding additional fees (if applicable). The Test Administrator is responsible for selecting three Approved Certification Evaluators (ACEs) from a list of current evaluators posted on the website. Three ACF Approved Certification Evaluators are required per every nine candidates. Of the three evaluators, two must be unaffiliated with the exam candidate.

ACF defines affiliation as a relationship that consists of a vested interest; an employment direct report, a monetary benefit or any relationship which could personally benefit the evaluator as a result of a candidate passing the exam.

Evaluators Training/Credentials

An Approved Certification Evaluator (ACE) has placed him or her in a position to fairly evaluate candidates taking the practical exam through certification level, experience, approved application and have completed required training and apprenticeships. ACF confirms that an individual has attained the highest level of trust, professionalism, respect, and ethical confidence from his/her peers.

Practical Exam Scoring:

- Score of 75% or higher is required to pass.
- Score is valid for one year.

Exam Registration/Fee

To facilitate the certification process, the American Culinary Federation (ACF) has exam sites throughout the country. You must contact the test administration to confirm test time, host site fee, and specific details about the testing facility. ACF approved test sites can be located on our website by state or chronological order.

Practical exam registration is required for both the test site and the ACF National Office. The test site administrator may collect appropriate examination fees from candidates to cover direct expenses related to the exam. Membership status can be verified through the Certification Department at ACF. The host site fee is established at the discretion of the approved examination site. Candidates are required to register with ACF and pay a practical exam fee of \$50 for member or \$100 for non-member. The host site may also require a

cancellation fee at their discretion. Candidates will receive a testing voucher from ACF National office either by mail or email after payment is processed.

Prior to the exam date, the test site administrator will contact candidates about testing time and other exam details.

Practical Exam Retake Policy

There is no waiting period required for the practical exam and retakes are unlimited. However testing fees are assessed for each attempt and must be paid to both ACF National Office and the host site (if applicable).

Appeal Procedure

Candidates and certificants are entitled to appeal determinations made by the Certification Commission regarding: 1) the Commission's interpretation of standards, including candidate eligibility determinations and certificant recertification determinations; 2) content of the exam and/or keyed responses to items, 3) alleged inappropriate exam administration procedures, and 4) alleged testing conditions severe enough to cause a major disruption of the examination process.

Appeals procedures are detailed in the Policies and Procedures document which are available on the ACF website or can be requested from the ACF National Office.

Confidentiality

The nature, format, content and results of examinations administered by the Certification Commission and all application materials are considered confidential information and shall be treated as such in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the Certification Commission, unless appropriate permission is obtained or where otherwise mandated by valid and lawful court or government order or by an authorized administrative body. The full confidentiality policy can be found on the ACF website or requested from the ACF National Office. Due to ACF confidentiality policy, only a certificant's current status can be verified. This can be done by the certification verification tool available on the ACF website under Resources or by calling the ACF National Office.

Practical Exam 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, to include a 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, stapler, digital camera, and copy of Le Guide de Culinare
- ample supply of appropriate cleaning equipment including brooms, mops, and 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.**

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	grill	fryer
food processors	portion scales	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.

What to Expect

The practical exam can be a rewarding experience if properly prepared. ACF wants to let you know “what to expect.” We wish you much success!

On the Day of Your Exam

You will have up to ½ hour to set up before your designated start time or before the pre-exam meeting time if you are starting first.

Pre-Exam Orientation Meeting

- The 15 minute pre-exam meeting will be held before the morning exams. The meeting will include:
 - Filling out paper work
 - Making final payment (paying necessary fees: Host Site and ACF)
 - Presenting menus to examiners
 - Examiners will be available to answer last minute questions

The Exam

- Wait in the designated area until your assigned set-up/start time in which you may begin cooking.
- Expect to see evaluators and apprentice evaluators walking around with clipboards and taking notes. Also, expect them to be talking to each other, asking you questions, looking at your food, and looking deep in thought. This is not meant to be a distraction or an intimidation tactic, but what is involved in the evaluation process.
- Remember, you will not be alone in the kitchen while you are preparing your food for the exam. Expect up to three other participants with you in the same kitchen preparing their food, as well as working in close proximity while you are preparing your food.
- A kitchen helper’s role is to assist in keeping the kitchen clean, clearing dishes, etc. They report directly to the Test Administrator. They may at times be able to get something for you. Only authorized helpers will be allowed in the kitchen during the exam. If in doubt, ask. The test site may assign 1 pot washer and 1 runner per 4 test candidate or per kitchen, but is not required to offer this assistance.
 - Candidate’s assistant can only assist with **load in** and **breakdown**. They may not be in communication with the candidate during the exam and are not allowed in kitchen until all candidates have completed testing.
- Do not forget food safety! Remember: no bare-hand contact with ready to eat foods. This means using the proper utensils for the right job at every opportunity. Remember the preventive measures for time temperature abuse and cross-contamination.
- You will *present your food* to the evaluators at your designated time.
- Be courteous, calm, and collective.

When You Are Done in the Kitchen

- Expect to wash your own equipment, utensils, and china when you are through with your exam.
- You must clean up and be out of your cooking area within ½ hour of completion. There may be another participant waiting to set-up for his or her exam.

Evaluation and Critique

At the completion of the exam, candidates will be given a verbal explanation of their scores and performance which is used to document the results of the exam. The Test Administrator will give any candidate who **successfully** completed the exam an ACF Practical Exam Passing Form for their records. The original individual Score Sheets, the Summary Score Sheet and the Candidate Questionnaires are to be sent to the Certification Department at the ACF National Office.

Any candidate who fails the exam is welcome to take it again, but he/she must submit a new registration form and payment.

Study 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 advanced preparation or cooking is allowed unless otherwise stated.
3. Candidates are allowed to bring in only the whole and raw materials. No finished sauces are allowed. No commercially produced bases are permitted. Phyllo dough may be brought in.
4. Candidates shall bring his/her 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)*
5. Dry & wet garbage receptacles, as well as usable trim receptacles, must be maintained and presented to evaluators upon completion of the test.

Pastry Guidelines

The following checklist should provide a good basis considered general guidelines for candidates who are preparing to take the practical test:

- Candidate's choice of decorating medium to be prepared during the test are as follows: Buttercream, frosting, whipped cream, icing, Ganache, unless otherwise stated.
- 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 a decorating medium that is smooth and flawless, with no air bubbles, water spots, knife marks, sanding, patches, or crumbs.

- Prepare colored decorating mediums that are of consistent shading, using color that is balanced, harmonized, and appropriate to the theme or decorative motif.
- Apply borders, writing, central decorations, and trims that are uniform, smooth, precise and neat, free of air bubbles, and small drying cracks.
- 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 cannot be brought in and should be created from the raw materials available.
- Ingredients for recipes can be pre-scaled and measured; however, no pre-mixing is allowed.
- No finished sauces are allowed.
- Immersion Circulators are not allowed during the exam.
- Piping technique can be writing.

Study Tips and Helpful Hints

- Develop a plan and write a timeline and stick to your plan.
- Study applicable written material for the:
 - Processes mandated
 - Processes you decide to do
- Practice ten times (Remember sanitation practices).
- See guidelines for what you can and cannot bring
- Remember, you are in control of selecting your ingredients, so make sure they meet your needs and the needs of the exam.
- The basic equipment will be provided as described in the ACF Practical Exam Administration Guide. However, if you have been practicing with your own pots and pans, small wares, etc. then you will want to bring those with you and use them. This way you know the nuances already and do not have to deal with any last minute surprises.
- Bring your own china (*check with the test administrator*).
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Sanitation skills will be monitored at all times for compliance with standard rules and that sanitation infractions could lead to a failing exam.
- 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.
- Ask questions prior to the exam, be prepared! When in doubt, ask. Contact ACF National Office Certification Department at 1-800-624-9458 or check out www.acfchefs.org and contact an Approved Certification Evaluator or Trainer in your region.

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 (Pass/Fail)** 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. Cleanliness of the equipment, both during and after the test, will be the responsibility of the candidate. Evaluators are allowed to disqualify any candidate for infractions of these guidelines.

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 use towels correctly and not wipe debris off a table and then wipe a knife or a plate with the same towel. Candidates must not use 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 20%** will be measured using industry standards for the following:

- Organizational skills (organization and work flow)
- Assessing formulations

- Selecting ingredients and equipment
- Management of ingredients and product inventories

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

- Organization:** Table is kept clear of nonessentials, such as equipment not needed for the task. 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 does not use the dish area as a storage dump. The candidate has an organized withdrawal from the kitchen, leaving it as clean as it was found.
- Work flow:** The candidate practices smooth transitions from one job to another. The candidate has a logical progression of jobs. The candidate maintains proper timing of the menu items.
- 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. The cooked by-product should be properly handled and stored as if it were to be intended for another use.
- 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.

3. Craftsmanship Skills 40% will be measured using industry standards for the following:

- Use of production guidelines
- Execution of mixing, baking and cooking methods
- Handling and storage of ingredients
- Production of baked products, pastry products and desserts
- Production of decorative elements and other garnishes

- a. 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.
 - b. 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. The candidate uses correct methodology and techniques in preparing forcemeat and demonstrates a variety of different techniques.
4. **Finished Product Skills 40%** will be measured using industry standards for the following:
- Overall presentation including design
 - Assembly and decoration of cakes and desserts
 - Selection of serveware, finishing and garnishing elements
 - Flavor, texture and doneness

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

Serving methods and presentation: Presentation is evaluated on correct temperatures of the items served including the dishware, visible garnishes, arrangement of items, and overall esthetic appeal of the presented items. The use of white china is strongly suggested.

Flavor, taste, texture, and doneness: Flavor and texture is evaluated on the proper use of flavors in every menu item and/or component. The flavors are typically associated with the specific food ingredients in the menu and recipes are profound. The stated cooking techniques have been applied correctly.

Exam Results

At the conclusion of a practical exam, candidates will receive both a verbal and written critique of their performance in each of the exam content areas. The lead evaluator for the exam will facilitate the review and will make written comments on the Practical Exam Review Form. This will be provided to the all candidates, both passing and failing. This will allow the candidate to review areas for development in the event they choose to retest. Candidates who do not pass the practical exam are allowed to retest per the retesting policy.

In addition to the Practical Exam Review Form which all candidates receive, those candidates who pass will receive an ACF Practical Exam Passing form which they will include in with their final application form to ACF.

Certified Pastry Culinarian®

Practical Exam Guidelines

- Candidates are responsible to bring all ingredients for the exam. Ingredients should be pre-scaled or measured, but not combined in any manner.
- No finished sauces may be brought in. All sauces must be completely prepared on site.
- 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 must have clean apron and side towels.
- Candidates should bring plates and/or platters unless the test site has agreed to provide them.
- Candidates should submit a typed menu of items to be prepared to the examiners prior to starting the exam.

Exam Time: 3 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:

- Genoise – Prepare and bake one 8” Genoise cake. Do not fill, ice, or finish the cake. Score will be based on the quality of the Genoise itself. Present on suitable platter, cut and plate a portion for tasting.
- Cookies – Prepare and bake the following:
 - 1 dozen - chocolate chips cookie utilizing the drop method.
 - Display on a suitable platter for tasting.
 - 1 dozen - butter cookie utilizing the piped method.
 - Display on a suitable platter for tasting.
- Bavarian Cream – Prepare four portions of molded Bavarian cream and invert on to a suitable platter for evaluation based on texture, flavor and consistency (no garnishes or sauces are required).



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 _____

ACF Certification Practical Exam Score Sheet
Certified Pastry Culinarian® (CPC®)

Candidate: _____ ACF Member #: _____

Facility/Site: _____ Date: _____

Exam Time: 3 Hours **Set Up Time** _____ **Start Time** _____

Food Safety & Sanitation _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: _____

Mise en Place (20 Points)

Organization/ Work Habits (0-10) _____

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

Comments/Explanations: _____

Cooking Skills and Culinary Techniques (40 Points)

Skills and Craftsmanship (0-30) _____

Serving & Portion Size (0-10) _____

Comments/Explanations: _____

Taste and Presentation Skills (40 Points)

Prepare and bake one 8" Genoise cake. Do not fill, ice, or finish the cake. Score will be based on the quality of the Genoise itself. Present on suitable platter, cut and plate a portion for tasting

_____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: _____

Prepare and bake the following: A dozen chocolate chips cookie utilizing the drop method and a dozen butter cookie utilizing the piped method. Present one dozen of each on a suitable platter for tasting.

_____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

Comments/Explanations: _____

Prepare four portions of molded Bavarian cream and invert on to a suitable platter for evaluation based on texture, flavor and consistency (no garnishes or sauces are required).

_____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

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.