



American Culinary Federation Student Pastry Chef of the Year 2027 Regional Qualifier Guidelines

Updated August 11, 2026

Preparing for the Competition

Students selected to compete at the 2027 Regional Qualifiers will follow the following guidelines:

SPCOY	Practical and Contemporary Patisserie, Student, Individual SP -3 - Modernization of Classical Pastry Classical Choice: Mille Feuille	Nine (9) Individual portions; each weigh not more than 90g. Three (3) for tasting, remaining for display/critique
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SP-3 Practical and Contemporary Patisserie, Student, Individual “Modernization of Classical Pastry”

While maintaining the integrity of the original version, Student Pastry Chefs are required to use the ingredients from the original recipe and are encouraged to use modern techniques, sensibilities and presentation combined with classical principles to create their new presentation.

General Guidelines

Classical Choice: Mille Feuille, France. Primary sources for this description are:

The New International Confectioner, editor Wilfred J. Fance F.INST.B.B., pg. 439 explains the construction.

Another acceptable source is: Eighth Edition of Professional Baking by Wayne Gisslen, published by Wiley. Recipes, construction, and visual information are on page 324.

A third acceptable source is Larousse Gastronomique, page 590-591

Any of these versions and their make-up are appropriate examples of this classical pastry. Further research is encouraged on the part of the student to learn the origin of this classic French Pastry.

- The student must make puff pastry dough during the competition and includes the following tasks:
 - Make from scratch the detrempe (dough portion)
 - Introduce the roll-in (fat) into the detrempe.
 - Perform at least one (1) additional lamination at some point in the production window.This part of the competition is to measure the students’ ability and familiarity with the makeup of puff pastry. The in-competition dough is intended for skill demonstration while the fully laminated dough is for final production.
- The student competitor will then bring in a finished, fully laminated piece of puff pastry dough. It should be in its bulk form and require being pinned out by the student competitor. It is expected that they have personally made this dough themselves.



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- Contemporary version **must** include, but not be limited to:
 - **3 Layers in its structure, 2 of which must be puff pastry, the 3rd being the student's choice.** Examples of this choice may include, but are not limited to, another layer of puff pastry, cake or sponge, or chocolate plaquette, to name a few. If this 3rd layer/component is cake or sponge, it may be brought in made and ready for assembly.
 - **At least 2 layers of a form of pastry cream.** Some examples may include, but are not limited to, classic crème patisserie, diplomat cream, dairy, chocolate, or fruit-based mousse, etc. **These creams or mousses must be made on-site during the competition. This cream may be made once and used in both layers.**
 - **A hand-crafted ornament made from chocolate.** This chocolate element must be made during the competition. Each individual portion must be garnished. White, milk or dark chocolate is acceptable. If the third layer is displayed on top of slice as a chocolate plaquette, perhaps marbled in the traditional fashion, this would satisfy this requirement.
- Other considerations for components **may** include fresh, cooked, or macerated fruits; nuts; ganache; caramel; feuilletine; and gianduja to name but a few. A combination of the above-mentioned components is encouraged **but not required**. These items may be brought in finished and ready for assembly.
- **Student Pastry Chefs must present this modernized pastry as:**
 - **Nine (9) individual portions (maximum 90 g each portion)** presented on a platter of the candidate's choice for buffet service. Judges will serve themselves three (3) of these portions using plates provided by the competitor.
 - **The competitor may be asked to carry the platter to a separate table for judges' evaluation.**
 - If desired, the competitor may provide a sauce to accompany the presentation for the judges.
- Competitors have ten (10) minutes for set-up, seventy-five (75) minutes for production, fifteen (15) additional minutes for plating and ten (10) minutes for clean-up.

Packets for the Judges

- Competitors must provide four (4) packets for the judges. The packets must be presented in packet form upon entering the kitchen at the designated competition start time. The packets should be prepared using 12pt, Times New Roman font and be stapled in the upper left-hand corner of the packet. Please do **not** use binders or report covers that may inhibit easy access and reference for the judges. At a minimum, each packet will include the following (in this order):
 - **A written menu**, as it would be presented to a guest or customer.
 - **A color photograph** of the dish (should be current and representative of what the judges will receive)
 - **A detailed sketch or drawing** of plated dessert or whole entremet, in color, identifying the materials used on the plated dessert or whole entremets. Computer-assisted drawings are accepted.
 - **All recipes, including ingredients, quantities, and procedures.**

Ingredient Guidelines

- Competitors must bring their own food ingredients.
- No advance preparation or cooking is allowed unless specified.
- Ingredients for the recipe are allowed to be pre-scaled and measured; however, no pre-mixing is allowed unless specified.
- Cleaned and peeled fruits are acceptable.
- Glazes may be brought in assembled, but from refrigerated state, not warmed and ready to apply.
- Dessert syrups may be brought in.
- Finished sauces are allowed to be brought in and may be served in side vessels upon presentation.
- The use of commercial purees for the dessert is allowed but the puree should be unaltered in any way from its original packaging.
- Sponges and cakes may be baked off and brought in ready for assembly.
- 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. flour for dusting, eggs for egg wash).
- Note: The following food colorings are not allowed for use:
 - Red Dye #3 (Erythrosine)
 - Red Dye #40 (Allura Red AC)
 - Yellow #5 (Tartrazine)
 - Blue #1 (Brilliant Blue FCF)
 - Blue #2 (Indigo Carmine)
 - Titanium Dioxide (White E171)

Competition Kitchen

- A kitchen diagram and a list of equipment provided will be sent to each competitor by the ACF National Office once the kitchen design has been established. This will include the refrigeration and freezer space available and the number of electrical outlets.
- Competitors must bring their own tools, cookware, small specialty equipment, and chinaware.
- Please keep in mind that you will be limited to the number of outlets provided, and the use of power strips will not be allowed.
- Competitors should choose equipment that can be supported by the number of outlets and wattage provided. Time will not be adjusted for equipment malfunctions that result from the provided wattage being overrun.
- The amount of space available is limited so only bring in the appropriate amount of equipment.
- Competitors are allowed to bring in an ice cream machine of reasonable size and electrical requirements.
- The careful and responsible use of dry ice in appropriate containers is permitted.

Timeline and Guidance

Window	Timing	Guidance
Set Up window	10 minutes	Students should move into their stations and set up for effective Execution; no cooking is to occur in this window. Water may be set to heat, ovens can be preheated, products may be unwrapped for initial preparations
Production Window	75 minutes	All production leading to service of the course must be done within this window, including all technical skills, knife cuts, and fabrication
Service Window	15 minutes	Students can begin service of their course immediately as this window opens and the menu must be completed in the allotted time
Clean Up Window	10 minutes	Students are to leave at the conclusion of this window with the kitchen in the same condition as it was when they entered their set-up window. All remaining food items should be displayed and labeled for judging

Clothing

Competitors must wear the following:

- White chef coat
- Black pants
- Kitchen-appropriate black shoes or clogs
- Competition toque
- Full apron

Judging Process

- Competitors will be evaluated by a panel of distinguished chefs who will serve as kitchen judges and tasting judges.
- After the “set-up window” time is complete, competitors will not be allowed to leave the competition kitchen. All dishes and equipment will need to remain in the kitchen until after the cooking window is closed. Any infractions of this rule will result in loss of points or disqualification at the discretion of the judges. In the event a competitor requires additional product or equipment they will need to make a request to the floor judge.
- The lead judge will have the discretionary right to clear a viewing area with the intention of maintaining the integrity of the overall competition.

Presidential Wildcard (Effective June 2026)

In order for a competitor to move forward to the ACF National Championship from any of the ACF Region Qualifiers, they must score a minimum of a 70 Bronze Medal. In the event that there is no competitor who scores a 70 Bronze Medal in any given category, the highest scoring non-winning competitor from the other regions will move forward. This applies to all Region Qualifier Competitions.