



# Barista Skills

## Foundation

### Practical Examination

#### Trainer Version

Name:

Exam Date:

Course Trainer:

Email Address:

Learner Number:

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Please answer all questions.  
This is a closed-book exam. No conferring is allowed.  
The maximum allowable time for this examination is 30 minutes.  
If the exam is given in a language that is not your first language,  
an extra 15 minutes is available upon request of the examiner.

**Results**

Assessment One: ☐ Pass ☐ Fail

Assessment Two: ☐ Pass ☐ Fail

Assessment Three: ☐ Pass ☐ Fail



## EXAMINER INSTRUCTIONS:

Before the test the examiner must ensure that all equipment is in appropriate working order and that it is cleaned in preparation for each candidate.

The examiner should check that they are familiar with this particular model of espresso machine and grinder. They can advise of the operation of this particular model prior to the start of the test. This includes instructions on the operation of this model, not coaching on standard procedures that will be tested.

**The exam should take approximately 15 minutes to prepare (make sure stations are clean and grinder appropriately adjusted) and about 25 minutes to execute.**

Please note: A candidate must pass all sections of the exam, in order to pass the entire exam. However, if a candidate should fail a section, the candidate should be encouraged to continue with the exam. If a candidate fails a section, they need only retake the failed section. Do not share with the candidate whether he/she has passed a section at the conclusion of each section. Share these results only upon the conclusion of the entire exam.

The examiner should point out the following to the candidate (The trainer is encouraged to read the following to candidate):

- *Please be aware that each section includes specific instructions, which I will share with you at the beginning of each section. Failure to follow instructions will result in disqualification.*
- *Each section is timed. I will tell you how much time you have at the beginning of each section. When you are ready to begin working, I will start the timer. At any point in the exam, if you want to know how much time is left, **please ask**. Otherwise, I will only give you a 60 second and a 30 second warning. **You are responsible for indicating you have finished (calling time) when you feel you have completed the required tasks and I will stop the timer. If you go over the allotted time in each task by 1 minute (or part of), you will lose 2 points. If you go over the allotted time by two minutes (or part of), you will lose a further 2 points (4 points in total).***
- *During the exam, I will not be able to answer any questions for you or give you any assistance.*
- *If you believe the equipment is not functioning correctly please inform the examiner, who may stop the time, or possibly re-start the test as appropriate.*

## 1. Grinder Calibration Examiner Script

Please calibrate the grinder, using \*\* \_\_\_\_ grams of coffee to produce a double shot of espresso to SCA test standards, with a shot time of 20 -30 seconds. **You have 10 minutes to complete the task. If you go over the allotted time in each task by 1 minute (or part of), you will lose 2 points. If you go over the allotted time by two minutes (or part of), you will lose a further 2 points (4 points in total).**

When you have produced your espresso to the required standard please taste it with your examiner, and choose three specific descriptors from the SCA Flavor Wheel to describe the aroma, flavor, and/or body. This part of the exam is not included within the timed element.

**\*\* The examiner is to choose a dose appropriate to the machine/filter basket size/coffee**

1. GRINDER CALIBRATION SCORE SHEET				
<b>Grinder calibration</b>	1.1 Make a minor adjustment to the grind texture to produce a double espresso, with a 20-30 second shot time		8 pts.	
	Time Taken:		<b>Time penalty points – over 10 minutes (if applicable):</b>	
	1.2 Did the candidate <b>move the grind adjustment in the appropriate direction</b> at all times?		2 pts.	
	1.3 Did the candidate use <b>appropriate methods to ensure a consistent dose</b> while making espresso to test the appropriate grind texture?		2 pts.	
	1.4 Did the candidate purge the grinder when an adjustment was made to remove all coffee at the previous setting?		2 pts.	
	1.5 The candidate tastes the espresso and can use appropriate terms to describe: (SCA Flavor wheel can be referred to by candidates)	Descriptor 1:	1 pt.	
		Descriptor 2:	1 pt.	
		Descriptor 3:	1 pt.	
	1.6 Workspace clean at end of task; splashes cleared down, loose coffee grounds cleared etc. Three cloths used appropriately (for steam wand / filter / counter)		1 pt.	
	<b>To pass a minimum of 12 points should be achieved</b>		<b>Total Points:</b>	

## 1: Grinder Calibration Notes for Examiner

**1.1/** This section of the exam assesses whether a candidate can make a minor adjustment to the grind texture. Using a standard double filter/basket they should produce two 25-35ml (or 10.5g – 25g beverage weight if preferred) espressos taking 20 - 30 seconds (filter size should be appropriate to dose used [e.g 14-20g]). The examiner should ensure that the grinder is un-calibrated before the session to a maximum of 5 seconds faster or slower than the target shot time (15-19 seconds or 31-35 seconds).

Candidates should use the free flow button to complete this task and judge the correct water quantity used to make their espresso using either weight (scales) or volume (shot glasses or similar).

**Changes in dose are not required** but steps should be taken to keep the advised dose consistent (scales / using volume measures). Candidates should be made familiar of the specific workings of the grinder model used for the test before their time, if that model is unfamiliar to them.

If the 10 minutes elapses, and the additional 2 penalty minutes (12 minutes in total), then the very next shot must be assessed without any further calibration. If this is within 20-30 seconds then it scores the 8 points, with the -4 points time penalty taken off.

If the grinder is familiar to them, the candidate may have remembered the position of the correct setting. The examiner should take steps to avoid this happening e.g. use a different coffee, suggest a different dose is used etc.

Only 8 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**1.2/** The candidate should clearly recognize the direction the grinder should be adjusted to make it coarser or finer. If the shot time is faster than required then it is expected that the candidate will adjust the grind finer, unless reasons other than texture have been identified to cause this, and vice versa. Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**1.3/** Candidates should take steps to ensure that a change in the dose of the coffee does not affect the correct calibration of the grind texture. To ensure this they should demonstrate techniques to keep the dose **consistent**. Such steps may include volumetric guides, such as leveling the coffee in the filter, or they may weigh the coffee using appropriate scales.

**Minor** adjustments on a “grind on demand” grinder, measuring the dose given in a set time, may not give significant changes in dose and so allow the candidate to pass this section. But larger adjustments may mean significantly more or less coffee is ground in a set time as the space between the burrs is widened or narrowed. Candidates using a “grind on demand” grinder should be vigilant if this does start to become a problem and take appropriate steps.

Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**1.4/** The candidate should ensure that coffee at a previous grind texture is purged from the grinder so as not to influence the shot time of the espresso made at the new setting.

Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**1.5/** The candidate should be encouraged to start their understanding of sensory assessment. The description only needs to be broadly correct and the candidate can refer to the SCA flavor wheel to aid their answer. Encourage the candidate to use descriptions of aroma and body as well as flavor.

**1.6/** To receive points, counter and grinder tray should be free of all coffee grinds. Counter should be free of all water or coffee splashes/spills. Steam wands should be clean. Clean cloths should have only been used for the appropriate task for the (portafilter/counter/steam wand).

## 2. Espresso Script

Please produce a **double** espresso to SCA test standards using correct procedural steps throughout. **You will have 3 minutes to complete the task. If you go over the allotted time in each task by 1 minute (or part of), you will lose 2 points. If you go over the allotted time by two minutes (or part of), you will lose a further 2 points (4 points in total).**

2. ESPRESSO SCORE SHEET			
Notes:	Steps	Points	Score
	2.1. Remove portafilter from group head and flush group	1 pt.	
	2.2. Wipe basket clean and dry	1 pt.	
	2.3. Dose and distribute desired grams of coffee	2 pts.	
	2.4. Tamp consistently, level & ergonomically	2 pts.	
	2.5. Clean loose grounds from portafilter surfaces	1 pt.	
	2.6. Insert portafilter into the group head and start the pump immediately, as one continuous motion	1 pt.	
	2.7. Observe the flow and stop pump appropriately	1 pt.	
	2.8. Espresso served appropriately	1 pt.	
	2.9. Remove portafilter and knockout spent grounds	1 pt.	
	2.10. Wipe basket clean and flush group (rinse optional)	1 pt.	
	2.11. Return portafilter to group head to keep preheated	1 pt.	

Comment:				
Appearance Build		Steps	Points	Score
	Shot time:	2.12 Espresso shot time correct (20-30 secs)	3 pts.	
		2.13 Double espresso measurement is correct (21-50g / 50-70ml)	2 pts.	
	Time taken:	2.14 Crème covers whole espresso	1 pt.	
		2.15 The workspace was kept appropriately clean and tidy during the process. Spills and excessive grinds were cleared. Filter handle/portafilter spouts were cleaned as required.	1 pt.	
	<b>To pass this section a minimum of 16 points out of 20 should be scored (Time penalties, as specified above, are in place and should be deducted if over 3 minutes)</b>		<b>Total points</b>	

## **2: Espresso Notes for Examiner**

**2.1/** The group head should be flushed at any time from the portafilter being removed to being reinserted.

**2.2/** The filter basket should be wiped with an appropriate dry cloth removing all spend grounds.

**2.3/** Appropriate methods should be used to ensure that the grams of coffee used are accurate. Clear steps should be made to ensure that the coffee is evenly distributed over the filter to avoid channeling.

Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**2.4/** Clear steps should be observed to tamp the coffee flat and level. The technique used should minimize the risk of repetitive strain injury. The handle should not be knocked after tamping that may cause channeling.

Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**2.5/** The top of the filter should be wiped before insertion.

**2.6/** When the portafilter is inserted the next motion to be made should be to engage the pump. The coffee should not be left dry sat against the hot shower surface.

**2.7/** If using the free flow button then appropriate methods (scales/volume measures) should be used to ensure the espresso is the correct size. A pre-set button can be used but it is the candidate's responsibility to check that it is set at an appropriate level. If a button is used that gives an incorrect volume then it is the candidate's responsibility and they would lose the points.

**2.8/** The espresso should be served with a saucer (if the cup used requires this), with a spoon.

**2.9/** The old coffee should be disposed of from the group handle.

**2.10/** The filter basket should be wiped with an appropriate cloth removing all spend grounds.

**2.11/** Handle returned securely to group head.

**2.12/** Shot time between 20-30 seconds, from the press of the button to stopping.

Only 3 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**2.13/** Espresso length correct (volume or gram)

Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**2.14/** Crema should fully cover the drink and be appropriate to the coffee used.

**2.15/** Workspace should be left clean and tidy. Work surfaces wiped down. No excessive grinds around the grinder.

### 3. Cappuccino Script

Please produce a cappuccino to SCA test standards using correct procedural steps throughout. A cup size of 6 – 8 oz (180ml – 240ml) is recommended. A single or double espresso may be used. **You have 5 minutes to complete the task. If you go over the allotted time in each task by 1 minute (or part of), you will lose 2 points. If you go over the allotted time by two minutes (or part of), you will lose a further 2 points (4 points in total).**

3. CAPPUCCINO SCORE SHEET			
Notes:	Steps	Points	Score
	3.1. Remove portafilter from group head and flush group	1 pt.	
	3.2. Wipe basket clean and dry	1 pt.	
	3.3. Dose and distribute desired grams of coffee	2 pt.	
	3.4. Tamp consistently, level & ergonomically	2 pt.	
	3.5. Clean loose grounds from portafilter surfaces	1 pt.	
	3.6. Insert portafilter into the group head and start the pump immediately, as one continuous motion	1 pt.	
	3.7. Observe the flow and stop pump appropriately	1 pt.	
	3.8. Serve or use to make espresso-based drink	1 pt.	
	3.9. Remove portafilter and knockout spent grounds	1 pt.	
	3.10. Wipe basket clean and flush group (rinse optional)	1 pt.	
	3.11. Return portafilter to group head to keep preheated	1 pt.	

Milk	Notes:	3.12. Fills jug/pitcher with cold milk to the correct level.	1 pt.	
		3.13. Purges steam wand just prior to use.	1 pt.	
		3.14. Wipes steam wand immediately after use using wet hygienic cloth	1 pt.	
		Shot time:	3.15. Purges steam wand immediately after wiping	1 pt.
Appearance / Build	Time taken:	3.16. Espresso shot time is within 20-30 seconds.	2 pts.	
		3.17. Espresso measurement is correct (10.5-25 grams or 25-35 ml)	2 pts.	
		3.18. Pours milk into espresso, to achieve foam depth of 5-15 mm	2 pts.	
		3.19. Foam quality is level 1, 2 or 3 (using the SCA Foam Standards)	5 pts.	



		3.20. Foam surface reaches to ( $\leq$ 5mm) from rim of the cup.	1 pt.	
		3.21. Temperature of drink is within 55-65°C. (131 - 149°F.)	2 pts.	
		3.22. The workspace was kept appropriately clean and tidy during the process. Spills and excessive grinds were cleared. Filter handle spouts were cleaned as required.	1 pt.	
	<b>To pass this section a minimum of 27 points out of 32 should be scored (Time penalties, as specified above, are in place and should be deducted if over 3 minutes)</b>		<b>Total points:</b>	

### **3: Cappuccino Notes**

**3.1 - 3.11** as per 2.1 – 2.11 in the previous section. Espresso details remain the same standard for this section.

**3.12/** Pitcher/Jug should not be pre filled. Enough cold milk should be used to produce the drink without excessive waste (over 100ml of waste after drink is made).

**3.13/** The steam wand should be purged into the drip tray before insertion into the milk.

**3.14/** All milk residue should be wiped from the steam wand using a wet cloth dedicated for this purpose only.

**3.15/** The steam wand should be purged after it has been wiped to sterilize it.

**3.16/** Shot time between 20-30 seconds, from the press of the button to stopping.  
Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**3.17/** Espresso length correct (volume or gram)  
Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**3.18/** Foam depth should measure between 5 – 15ml only.  
Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**3.19/** Foam quality should reach level 1, 2 or 3 on the SCA Foam Standards.  
Only 5 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

**3.20/** Foam should be level with the rim of the cup with a tolerance of a maximum of 5mm below.

**3.21/** Temperature of the drink (in cup immediately as served) should be between 55c-65c (131-149F).  
Only 2 points or 0 is scored (no mid points allowed)

The wide temperature range included here represents wide cultural differences across the world. During training, you could advise candidates of the temperature range that is most suitable for your culture (Maximum temperature 70c/158F, Minimum of 50c/122F).

**3.22/** Workspace should be left clean and tidy. Work surfaces wiped down. No excessive grinds around the grinder.

**ALL 3 SECTIONS NEED TO BE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY TO PASS THE OVERALL PRACTICAL TEST**

**END OF EXAM**