



FINE VINTAGE

ESTABLISHED 1995

WSET Level 3 Award in Spirits

*Course Length: 6 x 5-hour classroom sessions,
and approximately 51 1/2 hours of self study*



WSET
APPROVED
PROGRAMME PROVIDER

The 6 days of in-person instruction are focused on preparing you for the examination. The time in class is spent doing tastings, writing short answer questions and reviewing frequently asked multiple choice questions.

We do not review the entire course content during the 6 days in class. It is expected that you come to the course prepared. You should have read the study guide thoroughly, watched the pre-recorded videos by the instructor, and completed all learning checks associated with this material.

During the in-person session we focus on the tactics that ensure you have the highest possible chance of success in the exam.

Preparation sessions:

(1-hour videos provided for self-study)

- Principles of Spirits Production, part 1
- Principles of Spirits Production, part 2
- Grain Spirits and Asian Spirits
- Fruit Spirits
- Sugar Cane Spirits
- Agave Spirits
- Vodka, Flavoured Spirits and Aromatised Wines

In-person session 1:

- Tasting and Assessing Spirits
- Principles of Spirits Production

In-person session 2:

- Scotch Whisky
- Bourbon, Tennessee and Rye Whiskies
- Other Whiskies

In-person session 3:

- Cognac and Armagnac
- Other Fruit Spirits
- Asian Spirits

In-person session 4:

- Sugar Cane Spirits
- Tequila and Mezcal

In-person session 5:

- Vodka
- Flavoured Spirits and Gin
- Other Flavoured Spirits and Aromatised Wines

In-person session 6:

- Review of Tasting
- Review of Distillation Methods



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Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to describe:

- Key characteristics of the selected global spirits using the WSET Level 3 Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits®
- The quality level of a spirit, giving supporting reasons
- The four stages of production, the function of raw materials and the role of yeast and bacteria
- The key terminology and principles of distillation
- Pot stills and the simplified model of double pot still distillation, types of column stills
- Post-distillation operations
- The principles of starch formation and conversion
- Different states and sequences of alcoholic fermentation
- Scottish double pot still distillation and the use of beer stills in the USA
- Some of the unique features of Asian spirits distillation
- The laws that control the distillation and post-distillation operations for Scotch and American whiskies
- How fresh-fruit spirits and pomace spirits are made
- The method of double-pot distillation used in Cognac and the method of single-column distillation used in Armagnac
- Key production choices and the legal framework for Cognac and Armagnac
- How sugar cane is processed and fermented
- Pots with double retorts and how they can be used to make a spirit with a single distillation
- Key post-distillation choices
- The legal framework in the EU, USA, Jamaica, Cuba and Martinique
- How agave are processed and fermented
- Asian-style pot stills
- Key production choices and the legal framework for Tequila and Mezcal
- European traditions for processing potatoes
- Multiple-column stills
- Key production choices and the legal framework for vodka
- Common techniques for flavouring and colouring spirits
- Key production choices and the legal framework for gin
- How aromatised wines are made



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Study Guide

Within 24 hours of registration, you will be sent a link to access your digital textbook. Access is valid for 2 years from time of registration.

You will be given the option of purchasing an additional Online Preparation Course, which is fully aligned with the Specification and textbook, guiding you through the content and helping to structure your private study. Resources include:

- Interactive activities to review key concepts and provide checks on learning
- Animations for key production processes
- An interactive guide to exam technique which includes tips, strategies and guided practice activities to help students prepare for their tasting exam and the short answer questions part of their theory exam.
- Practice exam questions (50 multiple-choice and 10 short answer questions with sample answers).

Exam

The exam is made up of three sections that test the knowledge, understanding and skills you have developed throughout the course in different ways:

1. A blind tasting of two spirits (30 minutes): This tests your ability to accurately describe, identify and assess the quality of a spirit. The pass mark for this portion of the exam is 55%.

2. A theory exam made up of two parts: Part 1 is 50 multiple-choice questions and Part 2 is 10 short answer questions (2 hours and 10 minutes): This tests your overall knowledge of the world of spirits, and your knowledge, understanding and ability to describe and explain how spirits are made, and why they look, smell and taste the way they do.

The pass mark for the multiple-choice exam is 55%, and the pass mark for the short-answer questions is 55%. In order to pass the theory exam, you need to achieve a pass mark for both Part 1 (multiple-choice questions) and Part 2 (short answer questions). Failing either part results in a fail for the theory exam.

In order to achieve the Level 3 Award in Spirits qualification you must achieve a passing grade in both tasting and theory (including passing both Part 1 and Part 2 of the theory exam).

To calculate your final grade, the examiners add your percentages for Theory Part 1 (multiple-choice questions), Theory Part 2 (short answer questions) and Unit 2 Tasting, and divide the total by three to give a mean average. Passing grade is a mean average mark of at least 55%.