

Diplomas in Professional Cookery (7100)

Version 3-1
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Frequently Asked Questions

This is a working document; please regularly check the City & Guilds website www.cityandguilds.com for updated versions.

Planning to run the VRQ

Q. What are the guided learning hours for the Diplomas in Professional Cookery?

A. The GLH is 450 for levels 1 and 2. At level 3 there are different routes ranging from 555 to 785 GLH

Q. How are the Diplomas in Professional Cookery different from the NVQs in Hospitality?

A. The Diplomas are VRQs that promote teaching and assess knowledge and practical skills whereas the NVQs are competency based qualifications suitable for use in the industry.

Q. Are the levels comparable to NVQ levels?

A. Though the levels may be the same, the requirements of the VRQ is very different from that of the NVQs and is generally thought to be a more demanding qualification than the NVQ.

Q. What do I need to do to become an approved centre?

A. You need to apply by completing a Qualification Approval Application (QAP) including details of all of your assessment team, the quality assurance process and a detailed scheme of work.

Q. What physical resources are required to deliver the qualification?

A. The qualification is aimed at developing skills for the catering industry and the type of kitchen that is required should be appropriate to the type of equipment found in industry. Details of the equipment requirements can be found in the qualification handbook.

Q. What initial screening should be undertaken by centres to recruit candidates of the correct calibre for the qualification?

A. There are a number of options that centres can consider for screening potential candidates. There are no recommended entry qualifications but the following should be considered:

- setting a minimum number of GCSE passes
- conducting a skills test in the kitchen
- carry out a basic test to determine the candidates' literacy and numeracy levels.

Q. Are centres required to produce a scheme of work?

A. Yes, centres must clearly identify how the guided learning hours will be covered. Decisions will need to be made on how both the practical and theory parts of the qualification are addressed.

Q What should the scheme of work contain?

A. The scheme of work should be based on the unit outcomes and must detail how the practical and theory skills will be covered. It should

- be clear how many hours are to be spent on each outcome
- indicate when the practical assessments are going to take place
- be planned in terms of delivery so that the skills and knowledge for the practical assessments are delivered prior to the assessment
- outline the week date, unit content, method of delivery and indicate any comments or special requirements
- identify when the non-craft assignment will be issued and handed in.

The layout can vary and some centres have separate schemes for theory and practical sessions whilst other have combined them into one scheme of work.

Q. How should the hours be allocated to the practical and theory lessons?

A. The balance of hours between the practical and theory is not specified. Many centres have allocated about 60% of the timetable to practical input, the remainder being allocated to theory, key skills and tutorials. Some centres have also delivered some theory in a practical environment and allowed time in the RWE as well.

Q. How much time should be allocated for the theory sessions?

A. Individual centres will wish to plan their scheme of work according to their needs or the available hours. However, it is recommended that approximately three hours per week throughout the year is appropriate to cover the delivery of the theory content. The theory sessions need to underpin the practical content, support the short-answer questions as well as provide the knowledge for the theory based units and the assignments.

Q. Can centres that do not have access to GOLLA still offer this qualification?

A. Centres that are unable to assess the food safety units through GOLLA are able to use the paper versions of the test that are available to download from the City & Guilds website. Further information about the tests can be found on the 202 page of the 7100 assessment pack. Centres are able to RPL this unit against other similar freestanding units offered by other awarding bodies, for example Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH), Royal Institute of Public Health (RIPH). A copy of the certificate must be kept on file as evidence.

Q. Can we have some guidance on the practical recording forms?

A. The practical recording forms have been developed for you to record your observations and comments. As you will probably be observing 6 to 8 students at one time, comments can be recorded throughout the assessment, using one record for each student. In this way all comments will have been recorded throughout, making it easier to moderate grades when the students have completed their assessment

Q. Are the GLH flexible?

A. The hours attributed to each unit and the overall qualification are only guided and are flexible for each centre to deliver them as required and to the need of the learner.

Q. What is the maximum number of resits a learner can take?

A. This is at the discretion of the centre, there is neither a minimum or maximum number of resits a learner can do. Some centres charge candidates for additional resits

Q. Are we able to proxy Health & Safety qualifications?

A. No, the learner must achieve the specific unit at each level, in order to achieve the full qualification.

Q. Do we have to do the dishes identified in the guidance for tasks?

A. The 7100 tests allow for flexibility in the dishes that centres choose for candidates to make. For example meat based stew from unprepared meat allows for centres/candidates to choose the type of stew and meat; for example a curry, Irish stew or goulash. The skills tested by the tasks are listed in the appendix of the assessment pack; dishes selected must allow candidates to evidence each of the skills listed

Q. How can I reduce the cost of the test dishes?

A. The new assessment pack from July 2011 has reduced the requirement of most dishes to a minimum of two portions. Additional suggestions are as follows:-

- The Level 1 B2 poultry dish may be served whole, which means this may be chilled appropriately and used for re-sale, or in other dishes.
- The Level 1 B5 Deep Fried Fish dish needs only to be one portion and there is additional guidance in the assessment pack clarifying the use of smaller portions and cheaper cuts of fish.
- With many of the dishes it is possible for candidates to serve one individual portion and the remainder may be re-sold through outlets or to staff / students.
- Some centres charge learners for ingredients
- Some centres charge for resits
- Some centres set up food clubs to advertise food for sale to staff on the intranet

Q. Where can I find out about how other centres deliver this programme?

A. Smartscreen provides a useful resource to new centres with examples of schemes of works, tutor notes etc. Your EV may be able to put you in touch with other similar colleges for networking.

Q. I am a centre in Scotland can we proxy in any food safety qualifications?

A. Yes, you will be able to proxy in the REHIS Elementary qualification for level 1 and 2 and the intermediate qualification for level 3.

Non-craft assessments

Q. When should the non-craft assignments be set?

A. The non-craft assignments can be set at any time throughout the programme. However, it is important to try to space these out and not leave them all to the end. In reality, it is best to set them as soon after the knowledge delivery as possible. Submission dates should allow an opportunity for a draft to be submitted to the assessor. Units do not have to be delivered in order. Some centres deliver Food Safety and Health and Safety units during induction.

Q. Which non craft units match with the 7103 VRQ in Food and Beverage Service?

A. At Level 1 units 601,202,603,606 may be RPLed across to the 7103-01, and at Level 2 701,202,703 and 706 may be RPLed across. Either assignment may be used, depending on what works best for the centre.

Q How should the short-answer questions be assessed?

A. The short-answer questions should be set in a closed book environment and in controlled conditions. The questions can be set at any point once the theory has been delivered. Some centres combine the tests and have matched these to the synoptic test content and conduct the short-answer questions at the same time. The pass marks for the short answer questions can be found in the answer pack that is available to download from the City & Guilds website

Q. How should the test information be stored after the assignments?

A. All of the information regarding the assessments should be stored securely both before and after the assessment. As there is currently only one set of all assessments, the centre should retain these.

Q. Must candidates' responses to the short-answer questions for the craft units match the answers provided in the answer pack to award marks?

A. The answers provided in the answer pack should be used as a guide, where a candidates responses differ the tutor/assessor should use their professional judgement.

Q. What happens if a candidate does not pass the short-answer questions?

A. They must re-sit the questions they got incorrect until they achieve the number of marks specified for a pass.

Q. Can task A from Level 1 unit 606 be RPLed to task A in Level 2 unit 706?

A. Yes if a candidate has demonstrated the requirements at level 1 it does not have to be reassessed at level 2 as the same evidence can be used

Practical assessments

Q. Can centres do the practical assessments in any order?

A. Yes, it is entirely up to the centres which order the practical assessments are conducted. It is recommended that the order of the practical tests should be reflected in the scheme of work and delivery

Q. Do all candidates have to prepare and cook the same food items?

A. No, it is up to the centre how they plan what the candidates prepare and cook as long as it follows the criteria of the assessment. If they all prepare the same food items centres must ensure candidates will have access to a distinction grade. See assessment pack for guidance.

Q. Can centres stretch candidates by specifying dishes that go beyond the skills laid down in the assessment guidelines?

A. It would not be recommended to assess above the skill level in the synoptic test. Specifically, care will need to be taken that the dish and / or accompaniments chosen do not overstretch the candidate. The standard laid out in the qualification is appropriate to the level being assessed.

Q. Do the individual practical tasks have time limits?

A. Yes, these are specified in the assessment pack.

Q. How much time should I allow if combining B tasks together?

A. Up to 3 B tasks may be combined to form a larger test. Dishes must be presented within the original time constraints. All dishes must be started at the same time but completed according to the original timings. For example if a puree soup (75 mins) and Bread Rolls (120mins) are combined and the test starts at 9.00am, candidates must produce the soup by 10.15am and the bread rolls by 11.00am. No preparation time is allowed

Q. Are the individual practical tasks graded?

A. Yes, these are graded in a similar way to the synoptic practical assessments.

Q. How can I complete the B tests if my college doesn't have enough specialised equipment, such as pasta machines for Level 2 test B5 and Deep Fat fryers for Level 1 B5?

A. It is perfectly acceptable to stagger the start time of the tests to allow candidates the opportunity to share equipment without having to wait.

Q. Why must centres advise EVs when the synoptic tests are to be conducted?

A. The external verifier or consultant must attend one of the synoptic tests, in order to do this they will need to agree a date with the centre in advance. The external verifier or consultant only has to attend one synoptic test, they will alternate the levels depending on the assessment timings

Q. When should the synoptic practical assessments take place?

A. The scheduling of the synoptic tests is entirely up to the centre; however consideration will need to be made as to when candidates are likely to be ready. The scheme of work must show that the skills and knowledge required in the synoptic have been delivered, prior to the assessment.

Q. Can the synoptic tests take place in the final term?

A. There is no reason why the two synoptic tests cannot be end loaded. However, this may cause operational difficulties for your Realistic Working Environment and for any re-sits.

Q. Do candidates need to work in the Realistic Working Environment?

A. No, but candidates will benefit from the experience of working in the RWE when taking the practical assessments.

Q. When do I provide the grades to the candidates?

Grades are provided at the end of the synoptic test, once moderated, within an agreed time at the discretion of the college.

Preparing for assessment

Q. Is it a good idea to carry out practice tests (a run through of the test) prior to each synoptic test?

A. It is useful to carry out a practice test before the very first assessment but it is not a requirement and the evidence for this cannot be used should the candidate fail one of the dishes on the actual test. The synoptic test can only be given out 3 weeks before the synoptic test date so any practice test would need to take place within this time, or use different dishes. Therefore, it is important not to provide candidates with the assessment pack in advance. It is recommended that any practice test be guided using the mark sheet provided by City & Guilds. This will allow the candidate to get use to the marking sheet and reinforces to candidates what they are being graded on.

Q. How should candidates be prepared prior to the individual B tasks?

A. The candidate should be given the individual practical task one week prior to the assessment date along with the grading criteria.

Q. How should candidates be prepared prior to the synoptic practical assessment?

A. The candidates should be given the synoptic test 3 weeks before the test along with the grading criteria. It is useful to spend time talking through potential issues and explaining contingency plans with the candidates. The candidate should prepare a time plan with the recipes. They may also want to complete an equipment list for each recipe as well.

Conducting the practical test

Q. If a centre is struggling to staff a practical assessment, can other people provide support?

A. At least one assessor must be assessing the whole time. However, it may be possible to use a candidate from another course to act as runner or inviting a guest chef from industry to help observe the synoptic test. The person from industry would need to be adequately briefed and should use the same grading criteria and complete the same documentation as the assessor. There is also a requirement for a person to perform the quality assurance role during assessment. All synoptic test grades should be agreed by at least two people.

Q. Can dishes be served throughout the synoptic test at any time?

A. The idea of the synoptic test is to demonstrate the candidates' ability to produce dishes within a timeframe. It is therefore important to ensure candidates serve the dishes in sequence, when they are ready. The dishes should also be served at the right time to mirror the idea of a mealtime; to this end, some centres have been setting time slots for service. It is therefore essential that guidance be given to candidates on how/when the dishes are to be presented.

Q. Is it acceptable for an assessor to leave the assessment room?

A. One assessor must be present at all times. To be certain that this happens many centres are using a second assessor, a guest from industry and/ or a runner (sometimes a higher-level candidate) who can locate for example, equipment or commodities if required.

Q. If centres use a guest chef from industry, what should the selection criteria be?

A. The chef must be vocationally competent, be fully conversant with the current Level 2 Food Safety Award and must be fully briefed about the process of assessment and grading. It may be useful to provide a pack and carry out a briefing prior to assessment starting.

Q. Do the times stated for the practical assessments include setting up time?

A. Setting up time is included in the times specified for the individual practical tasks. There is an additional 30 minutes setting up time permitted prior to the synoptic practical assessments when candidates can check commodities and equipment, weigh ingredients and organise the workstation.

Q. Can students work together on a dish or part of a dish?

A. No, the candidate must work completely alone in all practical assessments as they are designed to test the skill level of the candidate.

Q. If the candidate needs some assistance and asks a question is it acceptable to respond?

A. No, the assessor must not help the candidate during the assessment. They should show their own initiative. This should be clearly explained to the candidate before the assessment takes place.

Q. What should happen if a candidate asks if they can remake a dish that is not to standard?

A. It should be made clear during the briefing that the candidate could redo a dish as long as they have the time and it does not prevent them from completing the other dishes. It is important to remember the assessment must be taken under test conditions. During the assessment assessors should not help candidates or advise them unless there are issues around safety in which case the assessment should be stopped. If the candidate presents a dish for grading then they cannot re-do that dish, they can only re-do the dish if they have made the decision themselves that it is not suitable to present.

Q. If an assessor sees a candidate making a serious error can they give help?

A. No, this is a test situation, if a candidate makes a serious Health and Safety error then the assessor must intervene and stop the assessment – the candidate will automatically fail this assessment. Otherwise, the assessor may only advise candidates of the time remaining or service times.

Q. How can an assessor watch candidates and mark them against the grading sheet?

A. It is advisable for the assessor to make notes throughout the assessment and of course when tasting the food and judge the presentation on the grading sheet. At the end of the synoptic test, these notes can then be used to determine a grade using the grading criteria provided.

Q. What happens if a candidate does not complete an individual practical task or synoptic practical assessment on time?

A. If a candidate does not complete on time, this should be taken into consideration when grading. However, if the candidate is late by 15 minutes or more the candidate will receive a fail.

Q. What happens if a candidate fails one dish within the synoptic test?

A. The candidate can retake that particular dish again but will only achieve a pass for the dish. They could still potentially gain a pass, merit or distinction for the overall synoptic.

Q. What happens if a candidate fails two or more dishes within a synoptic test?

A. The candidate must retake the whole synoptic test and can only achieve a maximum of a pass.

Q. How can candidates set the bavarois for the Level 2 test B8 within the 90 minute time limit?

A. Candidates may produce individual bavarois, which speeds up the setting time. It is recommended to use a 2 egg yolk recipe with 10gm gelatine. Using individual moulds means that only one needs to be presented and it is possible to re-sell the remaining ones.

Q. Is a souffle a level 3 dish rather than level 2?

A. The C test at Level 2 specifies that candidates should produce a hot pudding soufflé. This is a pudding soufflé which is baked in a bain-marie and served outside of the baking dish / mould with an appropriate sauce. This is more stable than the traditional soufflé which is baked and served immediately in the ramekin it is cooked in and forms part of the Level 3 requirements.

Q. Do my candidates have to carve the roast poultry dish for the Level 1 task B2?

A. This is not a requirement. It is up to the centre as to what poultry they use and how they ask for it to be served.

Unit route option

Q. What if a candidate does not perform well in a synoptic test situation, can they take the unit route?

A. Yes, but the candidate will need to be registered for the unit route separately. They cannot achieve the full award unless they take the synoptic tests.

Q. Where can I find the assessments for candidates attempting the unit route of the qualification?

A. Non-craft assessments eg 601 to 606 and 701 to 706 are the same as those completing the full route and can be found in the 'Assessment pack'. The under-pinning knowledge tests for the craft units (eg 607 to 612 and 707 to 716) can be found in the 'Assessment pack' with the practical tasks for each unit in the 'Unit route assessment supplement'. These documents are available to download from the City & Guilds website.

Quality Assurance

Q. When should quality assurance take place?

A. Quality assurance needs to take place throughout the assessment process. The non-craft assignment and short-answer questions can be assessed throughout the course and quality assured on an on-going basis. Practical tasks must also be sampled to support standardisation of assessment.

Q. Does the quality assurance person need to be qualified to V1/TAQA?

A. No, the quality assurance person and the assessor both need to be occupationally competent, know the standards and the assessment criteria. However, it would be seen as good practice if the quality assurance person has achieved the V1/TAQA.

Q. How should the qualification be quality assured?

A. The qualification should be quality assured taking into account the following.

- Each non-craft unit needs to be sampled.
- A range of grades should be sampled to make sure the grading is appropriate.
- Each assessor needs to be observed.
- Each full synoptic test needs to be observed.
- A selection of practical test should be sampled by observation too.
- All candidates should have some part of their work quality assured.

This can then be used as the basis of a sampling strategy and plan.

Q. How much sampling should take place in order to ensure quality?

A. There is no set amount, however, it is important to sample across different

- methods of assessment to include observation of synoptic tests, assignments and the short-answer questions
- groups and candidates
- Assessors.
- The pass, merit and distinction graded assignments and practical tasks

Q. What documentation does the quality assurance person complete?

A. The quality assurance person should plan the sampling process and complete some form of report so that there is a clear audit trail of the process and summarise any action points to improve.

Q. Do the tariff of sanctions in the Code of Practice still apply in the same way to the VRQ 7100?

A. Yes, the tariff of sanctions still applies to the VRQ. For specific guidance, please refer to the following documents which can be found on the City and Guilds website under centre documentation library

- Supporting Customer Excellence centre Manual
- Centre Quality Assurance requirements

Q. Is there still a need to hold standardisation meetings?

A. Yes, it is good practice to make sure that the team of assessors and quality assurance practice is standardised. The best method to do this is to hold standardisation exercises where the team can share good practice by sampling each other's assessments. In particular, it is important to check that assessors are grading consistently across all of the grades and assignments.

Candidate support

Q. What support if, any, can I provide for the candidate when I set the non-craft assignments?

A. The candidate should work independently when producing their assignment. Non-craft units should be handed out with a deadline date given for submission. Candidates may submit a draft for comment before this deadline, but once they hand in the final version no further assistance should be given to them. See qualification handbook for further guidance.

Q. Can a candidate have extra time in the practical if they have a particular assessment requirement?

A. Any requests for extra time or particular assessment requirements need to be referred to the City and Guilds policy unit – policy@cityandguilds.com

Other information

Q. Do the Diplomas in Professional Cookery have equivalent GCSE point's value?

A. Yes, see table below.

City & Guilds Professional Cookery (7100) Qualifications / GCSE equivalent

	Grade	Contribution to the level 2 threshold	Point score
Level 1 Diploma in Introduction to Professional Cookery	Pass	100%	95
	Credit	100%	140
	Distinction	100%	170
Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery	Pass	100%	200
	Credit	100%	245
	Distinction	100%	275