



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: USA

### **1. *How do I apply for International Sommelier Guild courses?***

Application for all International Sommelier Guild courses is done through the ISG's secure website. Prospective students should visit [www.internationalsommelier.com](http://www.internationalsommelier.com) and follow the online application instructions.

### **2. *What courses does the International Sommelier Guild offer?***

The International Sommelier Guild offers four courses: Wine Fundamentals Certificate Levels 1&2, the Sommelier Diploma Program, and the International Master Sommelier Certificate.

**Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 1** is a 24-hour course designed to introduce students to the world's major grape varieties as well as the primary hospitality-related themes of the wine industry.

**Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 2** is a 48-hour course designed to introduce students to major wine producing regions. The course explores regional wine, beer, spirits, and food styles and builds on the foundation of major hospitality-related themes of the wine industry established in Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 1.

The **Sommelier Diploma Program** is the ISG's 248-hour professional certification course. The course includes complete coverage of the world's major beverage alcohol producing regions and includes in-depth study of the professional responsibilities of the Sommelier. The Sommelier Diploma Program's global focus is designed to prepare students to assume the duties of a Sommelier at any property in the world.

The **International Master Sommelier Certificate** offers certified sommeliers to develop areas of professional specialization. Using a guided learning approach coupled with hosted seminars, the program supports original research on the relationship between beverage alcohol industries and the Sommelier profession.

### **3. *How are the courses related to each other?***

International Sommelier Guild courses are inter-related and progressive. Each level of study builds on knowledge foundations laid in earlier courses.

### **4. *How are students evaluated by the International Sommelier Guild?***

Students in International Sommelier Guild courses are evaluated through examination in certificate-level courses and through a mixture of examination and graded assignments in the diploma-level course.



**Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 1** includes a 60-question multiple choice examination. One wine is offered in a blind tasting for bonus grades. Students are required to achieve a grade of 60% to pass the course.

**Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 2** includes a 100 multiple choice questions, 6 essay questions, and a 4-wine blind tasting. Students are required to achieve a grade of 60% in each section to pass the course. Students who wish to enter the Sommelier Diploma Program are required to achieve a grade of 70% in each section.

The **Sommelier Diploma Program** includes five separate sections and a major assignment. The examination includes 200 multiple choice questions, 10 essays, 2 essays on cellar management, food and wine pairing menus, a blind tasting of 22 products, and a service component. Students are also required to complete a major assignment in which they are asked to design a beverage program for a restaurant. Elements of the assignment include designing staff training programs, wine lists, inventory documents, and food and wine pairing menus. Students are required to achieve a grade of 70% in each section in order to receive Sommelier certification.

Requirements for **International Master Sommelier Certificate** courses are variable, but in most cases will involve the creation of original research on the Sommelier profession.

**5. *What if I fail some of the individual examination sections? Do I have to retake the whole course? Do I have to rewrite the whole examination?***

Students who have failed to achieve passing grades in individual sections do not have to retake the whole course, nor are they required to retake the whole examination provided they rewrite their examinations within three years of the date of their failed examination. Students are only required to rewrite examination sections in which they have failed to achieve passing grades.

**6. *I already have some wine training. Do I have to start my International Sommelier Guild education with Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 1?***

Though the International Sommelier Guild permits students to challenge examinations without sitting through the class, the practice is strongly discouraged. International Sommelier Guild classes are inter-related and progressive and knowledge foundations achieved with other training organizations may not be consistent with International Sommelier Guild standards.

**7. *Will we taste wine in class?***

Absolutely. All International Sommelier Guild classes include a tasting component at each meeting. Typically, we taste wine at the rate of about 6 wines/3 hours of class time.

**8. *Does the International Sommelier Guild supply all necessary educational material?***

To this question, we give a qualified , “Yes.” The ISG has prepared dedicated electronic textbooks for both of the certificate level courses. *The Beginning Sommelier* (WFCL1)



and *This Place, That Wine* (WFCL2), both written by ISG Vice President Wayne Gotts are made available to students once classes begin and fees have been paid.

A textbook is currently being prepared for The Sommelier Diploma Program. In the interim, students are provided with *The New Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia* by Tom Stevenson.

In addition to assigned textbook readings, the ISG encourages all students to read as much as possible and attend as many tastings as possible. Sommelier is an information-based vocation and students should make use of the many excellent opportunities for study that already exist. For Sommelier Diploma Program students, we strongly recommend the following texts: *The Oxford Companion to Wine* by Jancis Robinson, *Wine with Food* by Joanna Simon, *Larousse Gastronomique* by Jennifer Lang and *The World Encyclopedia of Cheese* by Juliet Harbutt.

**9. *Is the International Sommelier Guild curriculum standardized? If I enroll in the Sommelier Diploma Program in Chicago and my friend enrolls in Hong Kong, will we study the same things?***

Yes and Yes. The development of globally recognized standards for the sommelier profession is one of the goals of the ISG and this is reflected in our standardized curriculum.

**10. *When do International Sommelier classes begin and where are they offered?***

A complete list of host schools, application deadlines, and course start dates can be found at [www.international-sommelier.com](http://www.international-sommelier.com). Typically, the certificate-level courses are offered three times per year in each city, while the Sommelier Diploma Program is offered once per year (starting in either fall or winter). International Master Sommelier Certificate courses are offered once per year in the summer at the location of the ISG's annual education conference, which changes each year.

**11. *What makes International Sommelier Guild courses different from other national Sommelier programs?***

Most national Sommelier organizations (French, Italian, etc.) strictly teach students about their own country's wines. In contrast, the ISG takes a global outlook and provides coverage of all of the world's wine producing regions. We feel that our global focus better prepares our students for the challenges of the profession and also allows our graduates significantly greater professional mobility.

**12. *What makes this program different from the Court of Master Sommeliers programs?***

The Court of Master Sommeliers is a British-based organization which operates in several countries and which provides several levels of examination culminating in the Master Sommelier (MS) examinations (entry into which is by invitation only). The Court



of Master Sommeliers is not a Board of Education certified entity, nor does it provide direct, classroom-based instruction to its candidates for each level of study.

In contrast, the International Sommelier provides students with a Board of Education certified curriculum in a direct classroom instruction format.