

Applied Ability Awards - Appraisal Criteria

Guidance Notes for Mentors and Examiners

INTRODUCTION

The underlying aim of the Triple A is to establish a common and consistent, nationwide standard against which to measure the skills and knowledge required of a professional cook.

It is essential therefore to establish a 'working consensus' amongst chef themselves – be they Triple A examiners, mentors or candidates – as to the measures that define the standard so that there is a shared understanding of what constitutes, for example, a 'poor', 'fair' or 'good' level of ability.

Moreover, it is important that those concerned with the Triple A but working outside the profession have confidence that the professional judgements being made reflect not only individual expertise but also the collective viewpoint.

THE AWARD

The Applied Ability Award will be presented to chefs who, under test conditions, can demonstrate their ability to work to the professional standard expected of EITHER *a capable Kitchen & Larder Chef working under supervision* – the AAA Foundation Chef, OR *an accomplished Kitchen & Larder Chef working without supervision* – the AAA Chef.

[Note, a third level to the Award is in preparation, the AAA Senior Chef, which will denote chefs who can demonstrate, under test conditions, the ability to work to the professional standard expected of *a proficient Kitchen & Larder Chef (or Pastry Chef) with supervisory responsibilities.*]

The Triple A is decided on the basis of a one-day examination with the assessors being chefs and employers with first-hand experience of workplace needs. The exam entails the appraisal of practical skills and associated theoretical knowledge, together with spoken and computer-based assessments.

The aim of the Triple A is for its assessors, acting on behalf of fellow chefs and employers, to define and establish the benchmark that denotes professional cooks who have acquired the fit-for-purpose, job-ready skills that are immediately suited to entering into or advancing within craft-based kitchens in the commercial world.

Regardless of the training or experience that the individual might previously have gained, the Triple A exam measures the candidate by his or her performance on the day against skills and attributes selected from the Triple A syllabus, which is set and regularly reviewed by the combined chefs' bodies of the UK and Ireland.

In this way, the Triple A aims to both maintain and promote craft skills whilst also establishing a working consensus across the profession as to where its benchmarks are and how they can best be developed.

KEY CRITERIA

The candidate skills and knowledge that Mentors, initially, and Chef Examiners, ultimately, are required to assess should be considered under the following headings:

AAA Foundation Chef

Practical Skills:

- ability to weigh and measure
- preparation methods including hygiene and safety
- cooking methods
- correct use of ingredients

Professional Knowledge:

- ability to follow instruction, written and/or verbal
- time management in the execution of tasks or dishes
- finished product as regards – flavour, texture, presentation
- tasting
- problem solving

AAA Chef

Practical Skills:

- as above

Professional Knowledge:

- as above
- planning ability

THE EXAM

The pass rate for Triple A exams is 70%, with a Distinction awarded at 90%. Marks are apportioned: 70% for the practical component (3.5 hours); 20% for the knowledge test (1 hour); 10% for the aptitude interview (20 to 30 mins).

In the practical exam, each task or dish prepared for presentation will be assessed independently using the principle of adding to or subtracting from the required pass mark, which in each case is 7 marks out of 10, with a set difficulty multiplier then applied to certain categories. In addition candidates are expected to consistently display an awareness of health, hygiene and safety matters, including regular maintenance of a clean and tidy workstation; this ability too will be marked out of 10.

Chef Examiners' appraisals are to reflect the Skill Scan ratings i.e. each task or dish should be considered as being either Poor, Fair (but below standard), Good (the benchmark), Very Good (above standard) or Excellent (Distinction). Candidates will either Fail or Pass or Pass with Distinction. See the RATINGS GUIDE below for further information.

NB The ultimate measure of the practical exam lies in the professional judgement of experienced, senior chefs, who spend over three hours observing and tasting the candidates' work. Chef Examiners will not be overly concerned with the finer detail of a dish or technique, which are the means to an end and not the end in itself. That end is to reach the benchmark set and maintained by the profession and thereby to achieve, in effect, a 'licence to practice' at the given level.

RATINGS GUIDE - FOR SKILL SCANS OR EXAMS

The listing below is a guide to the different levels of ability applicable to both the initial Skill Scan appraisal conducted by the Chef Mentor, and also to the marking of the exam conducted by the Chef Examiners.

AAA Foundation Chef – capable under supervision

FAIL – has not demonstrated the applied ability required to achieve the Award viz:

Poor 1 – very limited evidence of relevant ability demonstrated

Poor 2 – limited evidence of relevant ability demonstrated

Poor 3 – some evidence of relevant ability indicated but only in parts

Fair 4 – evidence of potential ability shown but in need of further practice

Fair 5 – evidence of ability, acceptable in a minority of components

Fair 6 – evidence of ability, acceptable in a majority of components but insufficient overall

PASS – viz. has demonstrated the applied ability in both preparation and results that meets the AAA standard viz:

Good 7 – has amply demonstrated the skills and knowledge to work to the professional standard expected of a Kitchen and Larder Chef under supervision

Very Good 8 – has shown, in addition, the awareness and understanding to ensure this quality of work can be maintained

DISTINCTION – has shown a level of skill in both preparation and result that exceeds the standard denoted by this level of the Award viz:

Excellent 9 - faultless demonstration in preparation and result

10 – faultless demonstration in preparation and result, with an assurance that convinces this quality can be maintained and developed

AAA Chef – accomplished without supervision

FAIL – has not demonstrated the applied ability required to achieve the Award viz:

Poor 1 – very limited evidence of relevant ability demonstrated

Poor 2 – limited evidence of relevant ability demonstrated

Poor 3 – some evidence of relevant ability indicated but only in parts

Fair 4 – evidence of potential ability shown but in need of further practice

Fair 5 – evidence of ability, acceptable in a minority of components

Fair 6 – evidence of ability, acceptable in a majority of components but insufficient overall

PASS – viz. has demonstrated the applied ability in both preparation and results that meets the AAA standard viz:

Good 7 – has amply demonstrated the skills and knowledge to work to the professional standard expected of a Kitchen and Larder Chef without supervision

Very Good 8 – has shown, in addition, the awareness and understanding to ensure this quality of work can be maintained

DISTINCTION – has shown a level of skill in both preparation and result that exceeds the standard denoted by this level of the Award viz:

Excellent 9 - outstanding demonstration in preparation and result

10 – outstanding demonstration in preparation and result, with an assurance that convinces this quality can be maintained and developed