

**The following Policies have been adopted by The Texas Wine School specifically in its role as an approved provider (APP) of Certification Courses (courses that culminate in an exam which, if passed, will award the student an official certificate).**

## **Cancellation / Refund Policy**

All classes are subject to minimum attendance requirements. Classes may be cancelled due to insufficient interest. Email reminder or cancellation notices will be sent to the email address on file the night before class. In order to ensure you receive our emails, please check your SPAM folders / adjust your SPAM settings to allow emails from [information@thetexaswineschool.com](mailto:information@thetexaswineschool.com)

### **Refunds**

Cancellations initiated by The Texas Wine School are eligible for a refund. The cost of any books or wine delivered to the student and not returned in new condition may be deducted from the refund.

Customer-initiated cancellations made at least 48 hours in advance of the first day of class are eligible for a refund, subject to a deduction for materials not returned in new condition. These rules apply to all classes EXCEPT for the WSET Diploma D1 Course. The D1 Course includes a nonrefundable enrollment fee. While the customer may cancel the class, the enrollment fee is not eligible for a refund. Any other cancellations made 12-48 hours before class are eligible only for class credit. Cancellations less than 12 hours in advance are not eligible for refunds or class credit.

## **Policy for Candidates Requiring Reasonable Accommodations**

**A reasonable accommodation is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.**

The Texas Wine School seeks to provide testing environments that assess all certification exam candidates in a way that puts them at no disadvantage, or advantage, over other candidates.

Reasonable accommodations must be agreed upon with the Texas Wine School and then approved by the certifying entity (WSET Awards or The Wine Scholar Guild) and put in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the candidate access to the qualification. The use of a reasonable accommodation is not taken into consideration during the assessment of a candidate's work.

Reasonable accommodations must not give unfair advantage over candidates for whom reasonable accommodations are not being made, or affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes as detailed in the applicable Specification or Syllabus.

Reasonable accommodations may involve:

- Changing standard assessment arrangements, for example allowing candidates extra time to complete the assessment activity;
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in large text format;
- Providing access to facilitators during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or reader;
- Re-organizing the assessment room, such as removal of visual stimuli for an autistic candidate.

Candidates and their advisors should be aware that it is not appropriate to make requests for reasonable accommodations where the candidate's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the attributes that are the focus of the assessment.

Candidates requiring a reasonable accommodation on their exam must notify The Texas Wine School upon enrollment in any Certification Course. The Texas Wine School will submit a reasonable adjustment form to the certifying entity on behalf of the candidate **four weeks prior** to the candidate's planned exam date. This form may require documentation supplied by the candidate that will be subject to data privacy policies (The Texas Wine School's, WSET's, and The Wine Scholar Guild's). ***For students requesting reasonable adjustments on Diploma level exams, the request must come at least eight weeks prior to the exam.***

## Policy for Candidates Requiring Special Consideration

**Special consideration is an action taken after an assessment to allow candidates who have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment to avoid exam re-sit fees.**

A candidate may be eligible for special considerations if:

- Performance in an examination is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the candidate. This may include recent personal illness, accident, bereavement or examination room conditions;
- Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate;
- The application of special consideration would not mislead the end-user of the certificate.

Note that failure to attend an exam due to a work commitment is not sufficient for special consideration

The Texas Wine School must be notified in writing (email is sufficient) within seven days of the examination date where special consideration is being requested. Eligibility will only be considered if accompanied by supporting independent documentation, and please allow extra time for the school to pass your request to the certifying entity.

## **Malpractice, Maladministration and Sanctions Policy**

The Texas Wine School treats all cases of suspected malpractice and/or maladministration (hereinafter “malpractice”) very seriously and will investigate all suspected and reported incidents of possible malpractice. The purpose of this Policy is to set out how allegations of malpractice in relation to all Certification Courses are dealt with.

For purposes of this policy, Malpractice is defined as any act, or failure to act, that threatens or compromises the integrity of the assessment process or the validity of qualifications and their certification. This includes: maladministration and the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems; the deliberate falsification of records or documents for any reason connected to the award of qualifications; acts of plagiarism or other academic misconduct; and/or actions that compromise the reputation or authority of The Texas Wine School, or its satellites, officers and employees.

The Texas Wine School will report all relevant cases of malpractice to the certifying authority, but may also choose to take action on its own.

### **Reporting**

Any case of suspected malpractice should be reported to Walden Pemantle, Manager of the Texas Wine School ([walden@thetexaswineschool.com](mailto:walden@thetexaswineschool.com)) or Liz Palmer, Executive Director of The Texas Wine School ([liz@thetexaswineschool.com](mailto:liz@thetexaswineschool.com)). A written report should then be submitted (to the same person), clearly identifying the factual information, including statements from other individuals involved and / or affected, any evidence obtained, and the actions that have been taken in relation to the incident. Suspected malpractice should be reported within 2 days of its occurrence. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous may mail their written statement to The Texas Wine School, 2301 Portsmouth, Houston, TX 77098. The statement should include as much information as possible to allow The Texas Wine School to adequately investigate.

### **Investigation**

The Texas Wine School will investigate each case of suspected or reported malpractice relating to a qualification exam, to ascertain whether malpractice has occurred. The investigation will aim to establish the full facts and circumstances. We will promptly take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effect that may arise as a result of the malpractice, or to mitigate any adverse effect, as far as possible, and to correct it to make sure that any action necessary to maintain the integrity of the qualification and its reputation is taken.

The Texas Wine School will acknowledge all reports of suspected malpractice within five working days. All of the parties involved in the case will then be contacted within 10 working days of receipt of the report detailing the suspected malpractice. We may also contact other individuals who may be able to provide evidence relevant to the case. Depending on the

circumstances, The Texas Wine School may notify and involve the certifying entity at any stage in the investigation process.

### **Follow-Up**

The individual(s) concerned will be informed of the following:

- a) that an investigation is going to take place, and the grounds for that investigation;
- b) details of all the relevant timescales, and dates, where known;
- c) that they have a right to respond by providing a personal written response relating to the suspected malpractice (within 15 working days of the date of that letter);
- d) that, if malpractice is considered proven, sanctions may be imposed either by The Texas Wine School or by the certifying authority, reflecting the seriousness of the case;
- e) that, if they are found guilty, they have the right to appeal.

Where more than one individual is contacted regarding a case of suspected malpractice, for example in a case involving suspected collusion, we will contact each individual separately, and will not reveal personal data to any third party unless necessary for the purpose of the investigation.

The individual has a right to appeal against a malpractice outcome if they believe that the policy or procedure has not been followed properly or has been implemented to their detriment.

## **Conflicts of Interest Policy**

Protecting the integrity of the examination and assessment processes of Certification Courses is absolutely vital to the successful work of The Texas Wine School. It is therefore important that those involved in the assessment process avoid certain activities that could provide the opportunity for an actual conflict of interest of appearance thereof.

A Conflict of Interest exists where any member of staff who has access to privileged information, or is responsible for making decisions about assessment outcomes, could, potentially, use that information or their position, to give an unfair advantage to a certification candidate.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest in the context of an awarding organization include:

- The undertaking of any assessment of candidates by an individual who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment for any or all individuals concerned;
- The undertaking of any moderation of assessment of candidates by an individual who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment for any or all individuals concerned;

- The undertaking of a qualification by any individual employed by the testing center;
- The undertaking of a qualification by any individual employed by the entity that awards the qualification;
- The investigation of a non-compliance incident by someone who is unable to act impartially.

Some of these Conflicts of Interest can be managed and are therefore acceptable. For example, the marking of WSET Level 3 tasting assessments by Internal Assessors is verified by WSET Awards to mitigate the risk of a Conflict of Interest. Similarly, where an employee of the testing center undertakes a qualification, measures can be put in place to maintain the integrity of the assessment, provided this has been notified to the awarding entity in advance.

Some Conflicts of Interest cannot be managed and are not acceptable. For example, it would be inappropriate for an individual involved in the authoring of examination questions or the compilation of examination papers to teach or coach students.

### **Identification of Conflicts of Interest**

Any individual involved in the delivery of any qualification who becomes aware of a Conflict of Interest must inform the Executive Director of The Texas Wine School. Similarly, students who identify potential conflicts of interest should inform the Executive Director of The Texas Wine School. The school will notify the entity awarding the qualification, in writing, immediately.

### **Management of Conflicts of Interest**

Both WSET Awards and The Wine Scholar Guild have procedures in place to manage specific Conflicts of Interest. These include the exclusive involvement of their own staff in the creation of all assessment materials, moderation of all internal assessments conducted by approved program providers and moderation of all written examinations not marked by optical mark readers. Other Conflicts of Interest will be managed on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the student, the exam provider and the awarding entity.

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

The Texas Wine School fully supports the principles of Equal Opportunities. We strive to ensure that all candidates for our qualifications are treated fairly and on an equal basis.

## **Complaints Policy**

*A Fair Complaints Procedure - Our commitment to you*

At The Texas Wine School, each of our customers is important to us, and we believe you have the right to a fair, swift and courteous service at all times. Once we are in receipt of your complaint we will deal with it promptly, effectively and in a positive manner.

The School operates a complaints procedure through which it aims to resolve concerns as quickly as possible. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with impartially.

Informal complaints may be submitted via the feedback form emailed to students following the first night of class. To submit a formal complaint, please follow the procedure outlined below.

**Complaints Procedure:**

1. Your complaint should be submitted in writing by email to [information@thetexaswineschool.com](mailto:information@thetexaswineschool.com), or mailed to The Texas Wine School, 2301 Portsmouth, Houston, Texas 77098.
2. Please provide us with your contact details (address, email address, telephone number), specific details of the compliant and any supporting evidence you may have or details of any previous attempts you have made to resolve your complaint.
3. Your complaint will be dealt with by management. We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and endeavor to send a final response to you within 20 working days of the date you raised it with us. If we are unable to provide you with a final response within this time frame, we will send you an update explaining why and advice when you can expect a final response.
4. If the response you receive is not satisfactory, you may file a complaint with the awarding body, by contacting [ga@wsetglobal.com](mailto:ga@wsetglobal.com) (for WSET qualifications) or [ccamus@winescholarguild.org](mailto:ccamus@winescholarguild.org) (for Wine Scholar Guild qualifications).

## **Data Protection Policy**

The Texas Wine School is committed to protecting our customers from unauthorized access or use.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions, as provided in Tex. Bus. & Com. §521.002, apply:

“Personal Identifying Information” means information that alone, or in conjunction with other information identifies an individual, including an individual’s”

- (A) Name, social security number, date of birth, or government-issued identification number;

- (B) Mother's maiden name;
- (C) Unique biometric data, including the individual's fingerprint, voice print, and retina or iris image;
- (D) Unique electronic identification number, address or routing code; and
- (E) Telecommunication access device as defined by Section 32.51 of the Texas Penal Code.

"Sensitive personal information" means

- (A) An individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following items, if the name and the items are not encrypted:
  - a. Social security number
  - b. Driver's license number or government-issued identification number; or
  - c. Account number or credit or debit card number in combination with any required security code, access code or password that would permit access to an individual's financial account; or
- (B) Information that identifies an individual and relates to:
  - a. The physical or mental health or condition of the individual;
  - b. The provision of health care to the individual; or
  - c. Payment for the provision of health care to the individual

#### **What Information we collect about you and how it is used**

You may give us Personal Identifying Information by filling in forms or by corresponding with us by post, phone, email or otherwise. This includes:

- information that you provide by filling in forms on our website: when contacting us we request your name, telephone number, email address, and mailing address - this information is used to respond to your request for further information on our services
- Social Media: information that you provide to us on our Social Media pages, such as Facebook, Twitter and Linked-In.
- order details: information that you provide in relation to an order or a product or service you have purchased.
- WSET (Wines Sprits Education Trust): requires information if you sit their exams and courses, which we collect and pass to them – here is a link to their privacy policy: <https://www.wsetglobal.com/privacy-and-cookie-policy/>
- Wine Scholar Guild: requires information if you sit their exams and courses, which we collect and pass to them – here is a link to their privacy policy: <https://www.winescholarguild.org/privacy-policy.html>

You may give us Sensitive Personal Information, including a credit card number with a security code, when paying for a class or another service. Sensitive Personal Information, once a transaction is complete, is then rendered unreadable or indecipherable through our credit card processors' encryption technology.

#### **Withdrawal of consent, erasure, and information access**

Please email us at [information@thetexaswineschool.com](mailto:information@thetexaswineschool.com) to request either of the following:

- withdrawal of your consent for activities for which you have previously consented
- the deletion of information that we hold on you