



THE INSTITUTE OF  
MASTERS *of* WINE

STUDY PROGRAMME 2011/12

# Syllabus

## **Working with the Syllabus**

The syllabus describes what you need to study to prepare for the MW Examination. It is important to read the syllabus very carefully before planning your study programme. The syllabus indicates the entire content you need to know and understand and you must be careful to avoid imposing your own interpretation and making assumptions about areas which are not covered.

What the syllabus does not do is to itemise topical issues (many of which will arise after it was written) nor does it supply examples to support theoretical concepts whether in the sections on Production of Wine, the Business of Wine or Contemporary Issues. It is, therefore, very much in the interests of students to read widely, to keep informed of topical debates and to build up a stock of examples to support all elements of the syllabus.

It is recommended that you systematically take each syllabus section in an order which makes sense to you and, for each section, prepare notes, references (accurate sources of information), examples and critical observations e.g. is this a contentious area? Are there different points of view? Do you agree with what you have read about the subject? Although it can be hard work, active critical study will pay dividends in the long run.

## **Purpose and Objectives of the Examination**

- The purpose of the examination is to provide the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate a professional, international and general knowledge and understanding of the wine industry as defined in the following terms:-
  - i) the wine industry includes “the production of wine, commercialisation of wine (to include storage, distribution, sales and marketing, investment and management) and education concerning wine (to include dissemination of information about wine).”
  - ii) wine is defined as “the alcoholic beverage obtained from the fermentation of freshly gathered grapes.”

The objectives of the examination are to ensure that candidates can demonstrate their competence in:-

- i) sensory evaluation and understanding of the world’s wines;
- ii) gathering, understanding, interpreting and communicating knowledge of and insights about the world’s wines and the wine industry.

## **Theory Papers 1 and 2: The Production of Wine**

### **Unit Purpose**

Paper 1 will examine candidates' knowledge and understanding of 'Characteristics of the vine and wine' up to and including 'alcoholic and malolactic fermentation'.

Paper 2 will examine candidates' knowledge and understanding of 'Wine maturation, blending and bottling' up to and including 'quality assurance and quality control'.

- The purpose of this unit is to assess candidates' knowledge and understanding of wine production. An understanding of the processes of grape growing and wine making should be complemented by knowledge of the science which underlies the practical issues. Candidates should be aware of the implications for wine style, quality and costs of decisions taken at each stage of wine production. An awareness of areas of active research in topics relevant to wine production will be necessary. Whilst region specific questions are unlikely, candidates will require a broad background knowledge of the world's wine regions and wine styles. The examples given in answers should demonstrate a familiarity with a variety of wine regions. Candidates should know how issues such as finance, economics, law, general management, quality assurance/quality control and the environment bear on wine production.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following:-
- Characteristics of the vine.
- Vine species. Vine varieties. Clones. Development of new vine varieties. Vine propagation. Rootstocks and grafting. Growth cycle of the vine. Life cycle of the vine.
- Establishment, re-planting and acquisition of vineyards.
- Practical and economic issues of planting, or re-planting, vineyards. Issues concerning the acquisition of vineyards through purchase or inheritance.
- Factors affecting grape growing.  
Climate. Weather. Soil. Aspect. Effect of these factors on wine style, quality, yield and cost. The concept of "terroir".
- Cultivation of the vine.
- Types and methods of pruning and training. Underlying principles and practical applications of canopy management. Irrigation. Application of fertilisers. Use of herbicides. Green harvesting. Implications for yield of

all of the above. Bio-dynamic, organic, and other alternative cultivation methods.

- Maladies of the vine and their control.
- Vine pests. Vine diseases. Physiological disorders. Prevention and control of the above.
- Structure and composition of grapes.
- Grape structure. Chemical composition of grapes, e.g. sugars, acids, anthocyanins, tannins etc.. Analytical techniques. Fruit ripeness. Noble rot.
- Harvesting of grapes. Timing of the harvest. Picking options. Grape transportation. Quality and cost implications.
- Processing of grapes. Grape reception. Grape handling strategies eg. destalking, crushing, pressing and skin contact. Must treatments. Temperature control.
- Fermentation.
- Alcoholic fermentation. Role of yeast, enzymes, temperature and fermentation vessels. Strategies for the extraction of colour, aroma, flavour and tannin. Carbonic maceration, whole bunch fermentation and thermovinification. Theory and practice of malolactic fermentation.
- Maturation and blending. Maturation options for the wine maker. Types of maturation vessel. Inert storage. Blending options. Timing of bottling.
- Stabilisation, clarification, packing and labelling. Movement of wine in bulk. Methods of stabilisation and clarification eg. fining, filtration, centrifugation, cold stabilisation etc. Use of chemicals in wine making and wine handling – their function, action and application. International regulations governing the use of chemicals. Packing into bottles and other containers. Ingredient labelling. Closures.
- Production of sparkling wines. Production techniques for sparkling wines. Grape selection and pressing. Temperature control. Selection and blending of base wines. The second fermentation. Maturation. Finishing.
- Production of fortified wines.
- Production techniques for fortified wines. Selection of base wines. Timing of fortification. Practice and significance of blending and maturation. Finishing.
- Quality assurance and quality control.
- Composition of wine and its faults. Analysis of wine, its purpose, use and limitations. QA and QC systems and structures for wine and dry goods.

Practical issues of QA and QC. Compliance with statutory regulations.  
Effects of storage and transport on wine after packing.

## **Method of assessment**

Two written examination papers, each of three hours duration. Both papers will require a maximum of three answers and will be structured in such a way that candidates will have to answer questions across the spectrum of topics included in wine production. This may be achieved by having a compulsory question, dividing the papers into parts or in the structure of the questions themselves.

## **Theory Paper 3: The Business of Wine**

### **Unit Purpose**

- The purpose of this unit is to assess candidates' current knowledge and understanding of financial, commercial and marketing aspects of the international wine industry. Candidates should demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge to a range of business situations including marketing and investment strategies, financial decision making, supplier – customer relationships and strategies for identifying and meeting consumer demand. Candidates will require a broad background knowledge of wine industry structures around the world and how these relate to one another.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following:

- **Theory and practice of marketing wine.**
- Marketing strategy applied to growers, producers, exporters/importers, buyers and sellers.

Market research, applied to existing and potential wine purchasers with clear understanding of techniques of information gathering and analysis as well as awareness of consumption trends nationally and internationally.

Product marketing applied to different sectors of the market for wine. Factors influencing market segmentation. Theory and practical application of product positioning and branding in relation to the market and product range.

Promotional and sales techniques relevant to the wine industry. Understanding of the role of advertising and public relations and use of communications media.

Pricing trends nationally and internationally eg. producer, *en primeur*, wholesale, retail and at auction.

- **Financial and commercial awareness.**

Candidates will be expected to have a broad understanding of the financial and commercial structures affecting all sectors of the wine industry eg *negociants*, agents, brand owners, brokers, grape growers and co-operatives, wineries, large multinational producers, marketing co-operatives, merchants, consultants, specialists, supermarkets, wine chains and mail order operators. Factors to be considered when appraising investment decisions in different industry sectors. Influences on business decisions including strategic planning, national and international laws, taxation and currency fluctuations. Whilst candidates are not assumed to be specialists in finance they may be expected to demonstrate a broad understanding of balance sheets, profit and loss accounts and how costing and pricing decisions are made in the wine industry.

- **Trends and challenges facing wine producing countries and regions.**

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of export shares and trends for significant producing countries and regions and should use specific examples to support their answers. Broad knowledge of industry structures world-wide is essential and this may be supplemented by specific examples from regions with which candidates are most familiar.

### **Method of Assessment**

- One written examination paper of three hours duration. This paper will require three answers and will be structured in such a way that candidates will have to answer questions across the spectrum of topics included in the business of wine. This may be achieved by having a compulsory question, dividing the paper into parts, or in the structure of the questions themselves.

### **Theory Paper 4: Contemporary Issues**

#### **Unit Purpose**

The purpose of this unit is to assess candidates' ability to demonstrate communication skills, individual insights and knowledge by writing in depth on subjects which are of relevance to today's wine industry.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Successful candidates will demonstrate:

- Ability to write persuasively, authoritatively, imaginatively and fluently, showing a breadth of understanding of contemporary wine issues.
- Knowledge and analysis of social, historical, cultural, health, ethical, educational, communication and media issues relevant to the wine industry.

## **Method of Assessment**

One written examination paper of three hours duration. The paper will require two answers and will be constructed in such a way that candidates will have to answer questions across a spectrum of contemporary issues. This may be achieved by having a compulsory question, dividing the paper into parts, or in the structure of the questions themselves.

## **Practical (Tasting)**

### **Unit Purpose**

The purpose of the Practical units are to assess candidates' organoleptic competencies and knowledge of wine through tasting. Candidates should be able to demonstrate wide knowledge of the world's wines using analysis and evaluation.

### **General Requirements**

The MW examination is conducted over the course of three and a half days with the Practical papers in the mornings and Theory Papers in the afternoon, except for Theory paper 4 which is in the morning of the last examination day. Candidates have to write all the papers under examination conditions, without the use of any sort of reference material in any format.

Candidates must write the Practical papers in English and by hand on the pro-forma answer sheets provided. Candidates may write the Theory part of the examination in any language. They may choose to write one essay in English and another in their mother tongue, but are strongly advised to use one language throughout single essay. Candidates whose first language is not English may use general language dictionaries, but the Institute retains the right to check while the exam is in progress. Computer dictionaries are not permitted.

Essays not written in English will be translated and marked in English. The Institute recognises the financial disadvantage imposed by the extra costs of translations on candidates. Therefore, we offer to cover 50%, or up to a maximum of £500, of the translation costs.

In 2006, for the first time, candidates had the option to use laptops for the Theory part of the examination in Napa. The Institute is committed to the application of contemporary educational technology and hopes to be able to offer the option to use computer in the Theory part of the exam at all locations from 2007.

Candidates are advised that legible handwriting is required at the MW examination regardless of the language in which the candidate is writing. Examiners cannot mark anything they cannot read, which will result in lower or, in some cases, no marks.

## Assessment and Marking Band Descriptions

	%	<u>Theory Papers</u>	<u>Practical Papers</u>
<p><b>Very high Pass</b></p> <p><u>A+ Grade</u></p>	80 plus	Provides an excellent answer to the question, drawing on a very wide range of examples and relevant literatures from a multidisciplinary perspective. Reflects excellent knowledge and experience of the wine trade. Very well written, with clear and convincing structure of argument	Almost completely accurate identification of wines. Very high quality and structure of argument based on evidence in the glass. Identifies the most relevant criteria, and provides a concise summary of the evidence. Clearly answers the question. Excellent knowledge of implications of grape characteristics and wine-making techniques.
<p><b>Good Pass</b></p> <p><u>A Grade</u></p>	70-79	Provides a good and convincing answer to the question, drawing on a good range of examples and relevant literatures from a multidisciplinary perspective. Reflects good knowledge and experience of the wine trade. Well written, with good structure of argument.	Good accuracy in identification of wines. Good structure of argument based on evidence in the glass. Identifies many of the relevant factors, and provides a concise summary of the evidence. Answers the question with specific relevance to samples. Good knowledge of implications of grape characteristics and wine-making techniques.
<p><b>MW Pass</b></p> <p><u>B Grade</u></p>	65-69	Provides a sound answer to the question, drawing on a range of examples and relevant literatures from a multidisciplinary perspective. Reflects appropriate knowledge and experience of the wine trade. Satisfactorily written, with clear structure of argument	Generally accurate in identification of wines. Structures argument based on evidence in the glass. Identifies the most important factors, and provides a reasonably concise summary of the evidence. Answers the question with specific relevance to samples. Adequate knowledge of implications of grape characteristics and wine-making techniques.
<p><b>Below threshold</b></p> <p><u>C Grade</u></p>	55-64	An incomplete answer to the question that omits key issues. Contains few examples or mentions of relevant literatures; insufficiently multidisciplinary in approach. Insufficient knowledge and experience of the wine trade. Adequately written, with weak structure of argument	Some accuracy in identification of wines. Arguments not always based on evidence in the glass. Identifies some relevant factors, but insufficiently focused on answering the question based on samples. Some knowledge of implications of grape characteristics and wine-making techniques.
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p> <p><u>D Grade</u></p>	35-54	Very limited answer to the question, with few examples and negligible mention of relevant literatures; very little multidisciplinary approach. Reflects little knowledge or experience of the wine trade. Inadequate written style or structure of argument	Inadequate accuracy in identification of wines. Arguments insufficiently based on evidence in the glass. Identifies few relevant factors, and does not provide a focused answer to the question. Little knowledge of implications of grape characteristics and wine-making techniques..
<p><b>Very inadequate</b></p> <p><u>E Grade</u></p>	Less than 34	Does not answer the question. Fails to provide examples and does not mention relevant literatures. Lacks multidisciplinary approach. Reflects negligible knowledge or experience of the wine trade. Very poor written style and very inadequate structure of argument.	Poor recognition and analysis. Arguments not based on evidence in the glass. Does not identify relevant factors, with very poor structure and many answers incomplete. Very little knowledge of implications of grape characteristics and wine-making techniques.

## **Dissertation**

The Dissertation consists of a 10,000 word dissertation on a subject of the candidate's choice.

The purpose of the Dissertation, the third and final part of the Master of Wine examination, is to enable candidates to demonstrate, through a disciplined research project, in-depth knowledge and understanding of an area of their choice from the wine industry. It should be emphasised that this may involve a very wide spectrum of interest, including production of wine, business of wine, contemporary issues and wine tasting.

### **Requirements**

- A Synopsis which defines the subject, enquiry, methodology and scope of the Dissertation;
- Original and relevant research conducted by the candidate;
- Analysis of relevant prior published material, documented in accordance with recognised standards;
- Critical and analytical organisation and processing of evidence;
- Formulation of pertinent conclusions arising from and supported by the candidate's own research
- Meeting stated criteria for length, originality and presentation
- Completion of the work within the set time limits

### **Candidates should note that the Dissertation must be centred on original and first-hand research.**

The Dissertation must be typed in English, and candidates for whom English is not their first language are advised to have their Dissertation proof-read by a native English-speaker for grammatical and spelling accuracy.

Candidates are obliged to undertake the Dissertation after succeeding in both the Practical and Theory parts of the Exam. Candidates who have passed the Theory part of the exam or have achieved a Conditional pass in the Theory part of the Exam and a Practical pass may commence their Dissertation, but there is no requirement to do so until both Practical and Theory parts of the Exam are passed.

Candidates will be required to submit a synopsis of their chosen topic no later than 15<sup>th</sup> November in the year of their successes in both the Theory and Practical Exams for approval by the Education and Examination Board. If the Education and Examinations Board requires revisions, candidates will be expected to submit these by 15<sup>th</sup> December of the same year. The final Dissertation must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> June of the following calendar year for consideration in that year. The Dissertation will be awarded a mark of pass, referred or fail.

More information is available to dissertation candidates from the Executive Office or the student section of the website.

<b>Grade</b>	<b><u>Dissertation</u></b>
Pass with Distinction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Persuasive and masterful treatment of the subject. Argued convincingly and coherently with purposeful conclusions. Has fully explored the subject matter as defined by the Synopsis. Demonstrates significant original research without undue reliance on literature review. Shows original and clear thinking.</b></li> <li>• <b>Shows a commendably high level of knowledge and understanding on the subject matter.</b></li> <li>• <b>All sources cited accurately in the text and listed in the bibliography.</b></li> <li>• <b>Likely to be of high value.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>High quality of grammar, spelling and presentation</b></p>
Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Original research used from a sufficient number of suitable sources to address all matters in the Synopsis, and to enable meaningful conclusions to be drawn.</b></li> <li>• <b>Confidently argued and coherently expressed.</b></li> <li>• <b>Good level of grammar, spelling and presentation</b></li> <li>• <b>All sources cited accurately in the text and listed in the bibliography.</b></li> </ul>
Refer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Insufficient evidence of original research.</b></li> <li>• <b>Structure and analysis insufficient to address all matters in the Synopsis adequately.</b></li> <li>• <b>Incomplete, muddled argument leading to unconvincing conclusions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Narrow evidence base.</b></li> <li>• <b>Insufficient referencing, lack of co-ordination between text citations and bibliography.</b></li> <li>• <b>Inadequate presentation either in structure (e.g. new material introduced in conclusion), spelling, or grammar.</b></li> <li>• <b>Contains a number of factual inaccuracies.</b></li> <li>• <b>Does not read smoothly and logically.</b></li> <li>• <b>Exceeds permitted word count, or excessive amount of material included in appendices.</b></li> </ul>
Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fundamentally weak, muddled, lacking clarity of structure.</b></li> <li>• <b>Poorly presented with very narrow evidence base.</b></li> <li>• <b>Fails to address objectives of Synopsis in a coherent way, or to draw meaningful conclusions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Very little original research, relying heavily on a literature review, or on hearsay, or discussion with a statistically insignificant number of respondents.</b></li> <li>• <b>Major shortfalls in referencing, with high levels of inaccuracies or omissions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Contains major errors of fact or logic, or shows a lack of knowledge or understanding of key matters; below the level expected for theory candidates.</b></li> <li>• <b>Poor spelling and grammar; muddled structure and presentation. Very difficult to follow.</b></li> <li>• <b>Length exceeds permitted word count, or excessive amount of material included in appendices.</b></li> </ul>