



Detailed Curriculum



Core Objectives

The WSG Tasting Diploma takes a bold, disruptive approach to wine tasting, breaking free from the constraints of traditional systems and analytical models. It offers a groundbreaking, multisensory methodology that embraces the complexity and diversity of wine while celebrating its artistic, hedonistic and emotional dimensions. Students develop a holistic understanding of wine, cultivating an intimate and authentic relationship with it.

By exploring the truths often overlooked or obscured within the wine industry, this program fosters transparency, critical thinking and a realistic acknowledgment of the evolving, messy and diverse wine world.

WSG Tasting Program Framework



WSG TASTING CERTIFICATE

will launch as a mid-level qualification, followed by an entry-level course designed to introduce beginner students to the fundamentals of the WSG tasting philosophy. Together, these offerings form a cohesive program that supports tasters at every stage of their journey.



WSG TASTING DIPLOMA

is part of a comprehensive, multi-tiered educational pathway designed to transform how wine is tasted, understood and communicated. As the most advanced level of the WSG Tasting Program, the WSG Tasting Diploma is tailored for experienced tasters who are ready to challenge traditional frameworks and develop a more holistic, articulate, and personal approach to wine evaluation.

WSG Tasting Diploma Overview

The WSG Tasting Diploma is structured into nine distinct units, each lasting one month. Each unit is divided into three to five modules that allow for progressive learning and study flexibility.

Each unit includes eLearning lessons, videos, tasting exercises and assignments. The course is designed to be self-paced, allowing students to engage with the material on their own schedule. Regular assignments are built into the program to maintain momentum and help students stay on track. The online classroom and student community forums can be accessed on laptops, tablets and mobile phones.

At the end of each month, students are invited to participate in an online live session to reinforce core concepts, ask questions and engage in structured discussions with faculty and peers. These sessions take place online and are recorded for students unable to attend the live session.

REQUIRED TIME COMMITMENT

Each unit (except *Unit 4: In-Person Summit*) requires between 11-15 hours of total study commitment time, most of which can be done autonomously. Each unit includes:

2 HOURS	6-8 HOURS	1-2 HOURS	2-3 HOURS
Live online instruction (recorded for those who can't attend live, see dates below)	eLearning content (online lessons, videos, readings, quizzes, etc.)	Participating in online forums and completing assignments	Self-guided tasting exercises

Unit 4: In-Person Summit will take place over 4 days and will be entirely in-person. The midterm examination will also take place in person during *Unit 4: In-Person Summit*. Students are required to attend the entirety of *Unit 4: In-Person Summit* in order to take the final exam.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

UNIT	DATE	TITLE	CORE FOCUS AREAS
1	Month 1	CRITICAL THINKING	Rethink the core pillars of wine tasting and question the concepts of quality, greatness, typicity, authenticity and purpose.
2	Month 2	HISTORY OF TASTING	Survey existing tasting approaches, understand how they came about and understand their strengths and limitations.
3	Month 3	WSG TASTING APPROACH	Learn to recalibrate with a broadened set of tasting criteria and an enriched lexicon using an intuitive, qualitative and holistic approach.
4	Month 4	IN-PERSON SUMMIT & MID-TERM EXAMINATION	Experience expert-guided tastings using the WSG Tasting Approach, neuro-sensory workshops and formative seminars. Connect in-person with your fellow educators and classmates.
5	Month 5	MOUTHFEEL & TEXTURE	Explore first impressions, texture, geometry, shape and salivation in wine tasting. Draw deeper connections from mouthfeel to terroir.
6	Month 6	THE BUILDING BLOCKS	Explore and qualify acidities, sweetness, bitterness, salinities and umami through the lens of biology, neuroscience and tasting. Connect the dots with the "why" of what's in the glass.
7	Month 7	SIGHT & SMELL	Go beyond sight and smell and truly decipher aromas, reframe visual cues and understand common wine faults.
8	Month 8	MASTERING WINE COMMUNICATION	Consolidate your learnings to capture the full, holistic experience of a wine and articulate meaningful conclusions across diverse audiences.
9	Month 9	REVIEW & REFLECTION	Leave the WSG Tasting Diploma empowered to approach every wine with clarity, confidence and context—wherever your journey takes you.
	Onward	FINAL EXAMINATION	Offered in-person in various cities across the world.

Detailed Curriculum by Unit

UNIT 1: CRITICAL THINKING

In this foundational unit, students critically explore the philosophy and essence of wine tasting. Emphasizing a holistic understanding, learners assess commercial versus authentic wines of place, discussing typicity, terroir, quality and emotional responses. The unit challenges students to question and articulate their personal definitions and experiences of wine.

Module 1

OBJECTIVES OF WINE TASTING

This module introduces the course, the main themes and explores the various objectives of wine tasting.

Module 2

WINE AND SOCIETY

Explore wine's role beyond simple pleasure or product, examining how societal and cultural forces shape access, perception, and communication around wine.

Module 3

WHAT IS GREAT WINE?

Explore and question the philosophical foundations of wine quality by examining how intention, along with viticultural and winemaking choices, shapes a wine's style, purpose, and the way it is perceived within the WSG Tasting Approach.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Evaluate diverse philosophical perspectives on great wine, including typicity, terroir, and quality.
- ✓ Compare and contrast quality commercial wines and authentic wines of place, examining their distinct sensory profiles, cultural significance and intention.
- ✓ Analyze how viticultural and winemaking decisions reflect a wine's intended style and positioning, and how these choices influence its identity and perception.

UNIT 2: HISTORY OF WINE TASTING

This unit examines the historical development of wine tasting practices and lexicons, tracing transitions from traditional analytical methods to contemporary holistic techniques.

Learners critically assess the strengths and limitations of these evolving methodologies, understanding their cultural significance and impact on today's wine experiences.

Module 1

HISTORY OF WINE TASTING

Examine the history of wine tasting from ancient Greece to the present day.

Module 2

THE ANALYTICAL MODEL

Explore the development of the analytical model, how it is used, and how it has shaped wine tasting and wine aesthetics globally.

Module 3

LIMITATIONS OF THE MODEL?

The analytical model has been useful, but it has limits. Here we explore those limits and set the stage of the WSG Tasting Approach in Unit 3.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Analyze the evolution of wine tasting language and methods and their impact on modern tasting practices.
- ✓ Assess the effectiveness and limitations of current analytical tasting methods in capturing the complexity of wine experiences.
- ✓ Compare traditional analytical methods with holistic tasting approaches, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses.

UNIT 3: WSG TASTING APPROACH

This unit introduces the WSG Tasting Approach—a holistic framework that balances analytical precision with emotional insight. Students explore both familiar and unexpected dimensions of wine evaluation, developing the language, confidence, and critical thinking skills that underpin the rest of the program. This unit also serves as essential preparation for the immersive In-Person Summit.

Module 1

INTRODUCING THE WSG TASTING APPROACH

An introduction to the revolutionary WSG Tasting Approach, and how we integrate the taster into the act of tasting.

Module 2

THE UNFAMILIAR ASPECTS OF THE WSG TASTING APPROACH

We explore how to navigate the WSG Tasting Approach, looking at first impressions, salivation, geometry and more.

Module 3

REINTERPRETING THE FAMILIAR ELEMENTS

We all know acid, tannins and other elements, and here we introduce them in the context of the WSG Tasting Approach. In later units we explore these concepts in much more depth.

Module 4

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

With a solid understanding of the theory of the WSG Tasting Approach, we now put it all together through guided tastings and discussions.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Refine each element of the WSG Approach and understand how these can be used to provide a more holistic description of a wine.
- ✓ Develop confidence in personal tasting abilities by balancing intuitive (emotional) and analytical (rational) responses.
- ✓ Describe a wine using the WSG Tasting Approach and compare two wines of similar quality with a more nuanced and precise vocabulary.

UNIT 4: IN-PERSON SUMMIT

Spanning four immersive days, the In-Person Summit brings theory to life through experiential learning. Students apply the WSG Tasting Approach in a collaborative setting that includes guided tastings, group workshops and a suite of sensory and neuroscientific experiments designed to challenge assumptions and sharpen perception.

This unit examines how the brain perceives flavor, texture and aroma, uncovering the powerful—but often unconscious—mechanisms that influence our tasting experiences. By connecting science with language and personal interpretation, students refine their ability to communicate about wine with greater clarity, cultural awareness and emotional intelligence.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Apply the WSG Approach as a flexible framework to describe wines, drawing on relevant elements to convey their unique personality and overall appeal in a holistic manner.
- ✓ Analyze the interplay of sensory perceptions and their impact on wine tasting and evaluation
- ✓ Identify and communicate authoritatively about authentic wines of place within diverse cultural contexts.
- ✓ Reflect on your personal tasting identity, including genetic dispositions, aesthetic preferences, and cultural influences.

UNIT 5: MOUTHFEEL & TEXTURE

This unit introduces the WSG Tasting Approach—a holistic framework that balances analytical precision with emotional insight. Students explore both familiar and unexpected dimensions of wine evaluation, developing the language, confidence, and critical thinking skills that underpin the rest of the program. This unit also serves as essential preparation for the immersive In-Person Summit.

Module 1

MOUTHFEEL

Explore the brain's intuitive reactions to wine, including first impressions and salivation, as well as a wine's energy and shape.

Module 2

TEXTURE

Unpack the layered textures of wine and how they influence emotion, quality assessment, and the physical act of tasting.

Module 3

WHAT INFLUENCES MOUTHFEEL AND TEXTURE?

Investigate how viticulture, vinification and terroir all affect mouthfeel and texture.

Module 4

ALCOHOL AND TANNINS

Examine how tannin structure and alcohol shape mouthfeel and texture, influence balance and support—or obscure—a wine's authentic character.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Evaluate the importance of first impressions when tasting a wine and understand the neuroscience that underpins them.
- ✓ Understand how wines can be described using geometry, texture and energy.
- ✓ Interpret how terroir, viticultural and winemaking practices can explain mouthfeel and texture of a wine.

UNIT 6: STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS: THE BUILDING BLOCKS

In this module, students analyze the five key structural elements of taste and how they relate to wine. Building on the In-Person summit, students go in depth into the neuroscience behind each element and conduct at-home experiments that will surprise, delight and inform. We go beyond the pure quantification of these elements, exploring how to qualify them as well.

Module 1

ACIDITY

Examine how acidity shapes a wine's architecture and tension. Understand its role in balance, longevity, and perceived energy on the palate. Be able to qualify acidity accurately and understand what factors influence it.

Module 2

SWEETNESS

Explore sweetness from both a sensory and emotional lens. Learn how it interacts with texture, aroma, and structure to influence perception.

Module 3

BITTERNESS

Examine the role of bitterness in wine and where it comes from. Develop the ability to assess when bitterness contributes positively to a wine's profile and when it detracts from overall balance.

Module 4

SALINITIES

Uncover the various types of salinity that exist in wine. Explore how soil, viticulture and winemaking contribute to this often overlooked structural element.

Module 5

UMAMI

Explore umami's role in shaping mouthfeel, depth, and length. Understand its possible sources, its relationship to structure and its influence on food pairing.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Explain the role of structural components in wine and how they interact with the taster to affect the holistic appreciation of the wine.
- ✓ Quantify and qualify structural elements with nuance and precision using the WSG Tasting Approach.
- ✓ Explain how each structural element can be affected by terroir, viticulture, winemaking and aging.

UNIT 7: SIGHT & SMELL

This unit explores the aromatic and visual dimensions of wine, focusing on how to identify, interpret, and describe key traits. Students consider how aromas are shaped by personal and cultural context, and how vision, as a predatory sense, influences the other senses. The unit also covers common faults and their impact on perception and wine quality.

Module 1

AROMAS

Learn to recognize and describe aromas. Interpret the origin and nature of these aromas. Discover how to convey these aromas effectively across diverse cultural contexts.

Module 2

VISUAL ASPECTS

Explore what visual cues—color, clarity, viscosity—can reveal about a wine's age, condition, and style. Learn how sight sets sensory expectations.

Module 3

FAULTS

Identify common wine faults, understand their causes, and assess their impact on perception and quality. Build confidence in fault recognition.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Explain the various aromas found in wine and how they interact with the taster.
- ✓ Describe the various visual aspects in wine and their influence on sensory expectations.
- ✓ Identify common wine faults, recognize their sensory characteristics and their underlying causes, and assess their impact on wine quality.

UNIT 8: MASTERING WINE COMMUNICATION

This unit develops advanced skills in wine evaluation and communication, integrating emotional, cultural, and contextual insights. Students move beyond traditional assessment methods to form nuanced conclusions about quality, style, personality and aging potential, while learning to adapt their language to different audiences and purposes.

Module 1

QUALITY CONCLUSIONS

Move beyond BLIC and develop broader methods of assessing wine, considering identity, drinkability, aesthetics and other parameters. Learn to communicate the quality of a wine.

Module 2

AGING POTENTIAL

Develop conclusions that balance technical accuracy with emotional insight. Learn how to assess aging potential.

Module 3

CONCLUSIONS

Learn how to interpret a wine's intention and communicate your conclusions with precision, tailoring your voice to different audiences and contexts.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Assess a wine's quality, style, intention, aging potential and personality using the WSG Tasting Approach as a starting point.
- ✓ Evaluate how emotion and reason work together to provide a holistic assessment of a wine's quality, taking into account the context in which a wine is tasted.
- ✓ Communicate wine evaluations clearly and persuasively, adapting tone and language to suit different audiences and contexts.

UNIT 9: REVIEW AND REFLECTION

This final unit offers space for reflection, consolidation, and forward thinking. Students revisit key themes from the program—particularly the question of “What is great wine?”—and are encouraged to assess how their perspectives have evolved. This unit also explores how to apply the skills and mindset developed throughout the diploma in both professional and personal contexts. Students learn to stay adaptable and reflective as they navigate the ever-evolving world of wine.

Module 1

REVISITING GREAT WINE

Understand how wine quality has evolved. Re-examine the concept of “great wine” using your refined perspective and consider how this applies across wine styles, regions, and contexts.

Module 2

REFLECTING ON YOUR JOURNEY

Consolidate your personal development as a taster, communicator, and thinker. Reflective activities help you identify your strengths, challenges and voice.

Module 3

LIFE BEYOND THE DIPLOMA

Explore how to apply your new skills in writing, judging, education, or professional settings. Learn how to continue growing your tasting practice and advocate for authentic wines of place.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Communicate about wines effectively by incorporating cultural, artistic, and expanded vocabulary elements beyond the analytical and WSG Tasting Approach.
- ✓ Reassess and articulate their personal definition of great wine in light of the full diploma journey.
- ✓ Reflect critically on their development as tasters and communicators throughout the program.
- ✓ Identify opportunities for applying their diploma skills in professional, educational, and personal wine-related settings.

Prerequisites and Application Criteria

Students should possess a high level of wine knowledge, but no formal requirement is required. Students are expected to be familiar with the fundamental principles of viticulture, vinification and wine tasting.

This program is not designed for beginners; rather, it builds upon existing technical understanding developing deeper sensory and critical analysis skills, with a strong emphasis on communication and evaluation.

Applicants must be able to attend the in-person WSG Tasting Diploma In-Person Summit. Please note, travel and lodging costs are not included in the tuition program.

Applicants must also be willing to travel for their final examination to take place on a designated day.

The exam is held in multiple locations. These locations may include:



OVERVIEW OF THE EXAMS

THEORY EXAMS

Theory exams assess the broad intellectual foundation of the WSG Tasting Diploma.

They draw on a wide range of content covered throughout the course, including the historical evolution of tasting, the neuroscience and biology of perception, key chemical and structural elements of wine, the role of language and culture in tasting, viticultural and winemaking practices and their impact in the finished wine, terroir influences, and the development of personal and professional tasting skills.

These exams ensure that students can connect conceptual knowledge to practical application and communicate their understanding clearly and thoughtfully.

Exams may include a mix of multiple-choice questions and short written responses.

Rather than focusing on rote memorization, these assessments are designed to evaluate critical thinking, interpretive ability, and the capacity to apply theory to real-world tasting situations. Students are expected to demonstrate a clear grasp of core ideas, an ability to compare and evaluate different approaches, and a thoughtful engagement with the human, cultural, and sensory dimensions of wine.

TASTING EXAMS

These exams test students' ability to apply the WSG Tasting Approach and communicate effectively about wine. All tasting exams take place in person. The Mid-Term Exam is held during the April Summit, while the Final Exams take place in October 2026 at various locations around the globe.

The tasting examination does not ask students to identify grape variety, country, or region. Instead, it assesses their ability to observe, interpret, and articulate their sensory experience using the WSG Tasting Approach. The mid-term tasting exam will be 4-6 wines, while the final exam will be 8-10 wines.

Students may be asked to:

- Describe a wine holistically, integrating emotional, structural, and sensory elements
- Evaluate a wine's balance, quality, and potential for aging
- Compare two wines of similar quality using precise and expressive language
- Reflect on the intention or aesthetic behind a wine and how this might appeal to certain wine consumers
- Communicate conclusions clearly, adapting language to suit a particular audience or purpose

HOW CAN WSG TEST ON TASTING?

Tasting is subjective, but subjectivity does not make it unexaminable.

What the WSG Tasting Diploma examines is not whether a student perceives a specific aroma or identifies a particular grape, but whether they can engage with wine thoughtfully and communicate their experience with clarity and intent.

The exams evaluate the depth of observation, the coherence of interpretation, and the ability to contextualize a wine's structure, style, and emotional impact. In this way, tasting is assessed not as a fixed science, but as an intellectual, sensory, and communicative act grounded in personal insight and critical thinking.

Grading System

Throughout the WSG Tasting Diploma program, students complete a series of written reflections, tasting analyses and tasting exercises aligned with each unit. These activities are designed to support the integration of knowledge and the development of articulate, well-supported conclusions about wine.

Students are examined throughout the program. Here is a breakdown of how your total score is weighted:

	THEORY	TASTING	TOTAL WEIGHTING
Monthly Assignments	10%	20%	30%
Mid-term Exam	10%	10%	20%
Final Exam	15%	35%	50%
TOTAL	35%	65%	100%

Full examination guidance is provided to students throughout the course.

A total score of 75% or higher is required to pass the WSG Tasting Diploma.

Students scoring 85-90% pass with "Honors."

Students scoring 91-100% pass with "Highest Honors."

Learning Support and Educator Engagement

Although the program is self-paced, students are not alone in their learning journey.

Monthly live sessions offer opportunities for direct interaction with faculty and fellow learners. These sessions are designed to reinforce learning, clarify complex concepts and encourage peer discussion.

These live sessions are recorded and then uploaded to the online classroom so students can rewatch them, or catch up if they were unable to attend live.

In addition, students have access to dedicated WSG Community forums. Here students can ask questions to educators directly via the Ask Your Educator forum specific to the WSG Tasting Diploma. Students are also able to interact with other WSG students via the student forums.

The online classroom is accessible via any internet browser and is mobile-friendly.

Educators, Speakers and Presenters

Learn from top Master of Wines, sommeliers, professors, winemakers, writers and wine buyers. For the most up-to-date list of contributors, visit the WSG website.





Wine Samples Throughout the Course

The WSG Tasting Diploma does not require students to source exact wines. Each unit provides a flexible list of recommended wine types that align with the learning objectives, allowing for substitutions based on local availability, budget, and personal preference. What matters is that the selected wines meet the general style or structural profile outlined in the list—whether it's an Albariño or a Chianti, the focus is on the tasting experience, not specific labels. To support this, WSG Members (membership sold separately) gain access to the Producer Guide, an extensive database of over 2,000 handpicked producers that reflect the range and character of the wines explored in the program. This ensures that students in every market can fully engage with the tasting curriculum.

Educators are always available for guidance through the dedicated "Ask Your Educator" forum, where students can seek help sourcing appropriate alternatives or clarifying tasting objectives.

Each unit typically requires students to taste 6-12 wines, selected to highlight the theory explored in each unit. Students are encouraged to taste thoughtfully, reflect critically, and apply the WSG Tasting Approach with increasing confidence.

During the In-Person Summit, all wines are provided. This immersive experience features an exceptional lineup of wines, carefully chosen to challenge the palate and expand sensory insight.

Completing the Course & Diploma

Students who successfully complete the WSG Tasting Diploma are awarded a digital and printable diploma in recognition of their achievement. A physical lapel pin is also available for purchase upon completion.

Graduates of the WSG Diploma will join an international community of alumni who share a commitment to thoughtful tasting and authentic wines of place. They gain access to a dedicated online alumni forum, where connections are deepened, ideas are exchanged and new perspectives are explored. The alumni network offers opportunities for continued growth through exclusive events, special tastings, and professional collaborations. It is a space to stay inspired, stay connected and remain part of a global dialogue about the evolving role of the taster in today's wine world.