



2026 Ohio ProStart Invitational®

Procedures and Rules for the Culinary Competition

Participating teams are responsible for understanding and following all the procedures and rules contained in this document; they will not be reviewed at the Ohio ProStart Invitational. Please read this document carefully to maximize your opportunity for success and to avoid receiving penalties during the competition. Refer all questions to the appropriate state ProStart® Coordinator prior to arrival at the Ohio ProStart Invitational.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What's New for Ohio Prostart Invitational 2026	4
General Competition Overview	5
Purpose.....	5
Eligibility.....	5
Event Personnel.....	6
Scoring	6
Culinary	6
Team Proposal Submissions	6
Schedules.....	7
NEW! Code of Conduct.....	7
General Provisions.....	8
2026 OPSI Culinary Competition	9
Team Proposal Submission (See Exhibit A for Deliverables Checklist).....	9
Workspace and Equipment	10
Competition Flow – Competition Segments & Flow	11
Feedback occurs:	12
Culinary Competition Rules.....	12
Uniform.....	12
Product Check-In	12
Day of Competition	14
Report to Competition.....	14
Team & Menu Introduction.....	15
Production Mise en Place	15
Meal Production	16
Judge Critique	17
Station Clean-Up.....	18
Post Competition	18
Exhibits	19
Exhibit A – Culinary - Culinary Station Blueprint	19
Exhibit B – Culinary - Deliverables Checklist.....	20

Exhibit C – Culinary - Recipe Example	21
Exhibit C – Culinary - Recipe Example	22
Exhibit D – Culinary - Recipe Cost Example	23
Exhibit D – Culinary - Recipe Cost Example	24
Exhibit E – Culinary - Menu Price Example	25
Exhibit F – Culinary - Product Check-In Inventory List.....	26
Exhibit H – Culinary - Sample Culinary Competition Score Sheet	27

WHAT'S NEW FOR OHIO PROSTART INVITATIONAL 2026

Culinary

Page 6	Code of Conduct added to competition
Page 10	The formatting and order of team proposal submissions has been updated as a required element of the submission
Page 14	Aerosol has been added to the list of prohibited equipment

GENERAL COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Purpose

Students participating at the Ohio ProStart Invitational (OPSI) will demonstrate their knowledge of, passion for, and creativity in the restaurant industry through the Culinary and Management competitions. Participation reinforces the skills and knowledge learned from the ProStart program.

Eligibility

Students

1. All high school students, currently enrolled in a confirmed ProStart program recognized by Hospitality Institute of Ohio, who have been certified to represent their school are eligible to compete.
2. Students may compete in one or both the Culinary and Management teams in any year. Competing on two teams at any one OPSI counts as one year of competition.

Teams

1. The designated ProStart Coordinator for each NRAEF-recognized ProStart state, or territory will certify one Culinary team and one Management team to represent the state, or territory at NPSI. The same team may compete in both competitions provided the ProStart Coordinator certifies the team for both competitions.
2. Participating teams consist of two (2) to four (4) student team members and one (1) optional team manager, for a maximum total of five (5) students.
3. Teams are not permitted to bring an alternate competitor, beyond the team members who are registered for the event. Only the team manager may be designated to replace a team member.

Team Manager

1. The team manager is considered a part of the team and may not have any verbal or non-verbal communication with anyone outside the competition area.
2. If a team member cannot participate or continue, the team manager, with Lead Judge and Event Staff's approval, may replace that team member.
 - a. The replaced team member, or any other competitor, may not return, step in for or replace the team manager. If the team manager replaces a team member, s/he must stay in the role for the remainder of the competition.
 - b. The replaced team member should leave the competition area and, at the discretion of the team's educator, may leave the event or may stay and watch as an observer. The replaced member is not permitted to communicate with their team from the moment they are replaced until dismissal.

In the Culinary competition, the one optional team manager may serve as an expeditor.

- The team manager may talk to the team at any time and have printed materials such as timelines, recipes or notes to assist in keeping the team on track.
- The team manager is not permitted to handle, organize, or prepare anything during Mise en Place or Production segments.
- The team manager may taste food throughout the competition. To do so, the team manager must carry their own supply of tasting spoons. Used, disposable tasting spoons may be discarded in the trashcans located on the shared space of the competition floor to avoid interfering with team station.

Event Personnel

1. Event Organizers: Hospitality Ohio staff members
2. Volunteers: Assigned and trained by Hospitality Ohio to assist with the event
3. Timekeepers: Personnel designated and trained by Hospitality Ohio, who are charged with keeping the official time for assigned teams during all segments of the competition.
4. Judges: Sourced from post-secondary education and the restaurant and foodservice industry, including two Co-Lead Judges. Lead Judges do not score teams.
 - a. All judges have been carefully selected by the Event Organizers for their related skills, experience, and expertise. Judges have reviewed the rules in advance of the competition and participated in an orientation and in-person training. By participating in the competitions, each team and its participants acknowledge that while every effort will be made to provide fair and impartial judging, some discretion and subjectivity is present in any judged competition. All decisions and scoring by judges are final. Any questions about scoring should be submitted to the Ohio ProStart Team at Info@oraef.org.
 - b. All judges will be consistent from team to team (i.e. judges scoring team presentation and knife skills or work skills and organization will be responsible for that category across all competitors). See Exhibit H for sample Culinary Competition Score Sheet.

Scoring

Culinary

A maximum of 100 points can be earned by a team during the Culinary competition. Product Check-In is worth five (5) points, Team Presentation/Knife Skills is worth ten (10) points, Work Skills/Organization is worth fifteen (15), Safety and Sanitation is worth fifteen (15) points, the Starter is worth fifteen (15) points, the Entrée is twenty (20) points, the Dessert is fifteen (15) points, and Menu and Recipe Presentation is worth five (5) points.

In the event of a tie: the tying teams will each be interviewed by a panel of judges for further insights into their performance. Teams will be asked questions to be answered verbally with regard to the methods, preparation and presentation of their meal. Judges will discuss and make a group determination as to the ranking of final winner(s).

Team Proposal Submissions

To allow officials and judges adequate time to review your menu, an electronic copy of the menu, recipes, and photographs of the dishes must be submitted as one pdf document through the Educator Portal at <https://www.hospitalityohio.org> no later than **Wednesday, February 25, 2026**. Minor adjustments and corrections to the recipes are allowed, but changes to the menu are not allowed after submission. If there is a question about what constitutes a minor adjustment, please contact Info@oraef.org.

Hospitality Ohio will review all submitted menus, recipes, and photographs to determine if they are significantly repetitive of work previously submitted at OPSI up to three years prior and will provide feedback to teams to permit each team ample time to revise. Ignoring Hospitality Ohio guidance and submitting for review or bringing work, or parts of work, previously submitted at OPSI, will result in immediate team disqualification via email or onsite.

To ensure compliance, the standard for change is included below:

Culinary Proposal Submissions

Standard for Change

1. Entrée and Starter:
 - a. Protein: The protein or cooking method must change.
 - b. Vegetable: The vegetable or cooking method must change.
 - c. Starch: The starch or cooking method must change.
 - d. Presentation: The presentation must be visibly different from previous years.
2. Dessert:
 - a. Base (e.g. mousse/Bavarian/tart/cake, etc.): The base must change.
 - b. Garnish: The garnish components or processing must change (e.g. raspberry whole v. coulis).
 - c. Presentation: The presentation must be visibly different from previous years.

Schedules

Competition schedules will be distributed in advance of the event once all teams have been identified. The schedule will include assigned start and finish times for all competition segments. All schedules are subject to change without notice but will be communicated with as much advance notice as possible.

NEW! Code of Conduct

Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure a positive, respectful, and professional environment for all participants, students, judges, educators, and spectators during the Ohio ProStart Invitational. All individuals involved in this event are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity, courtesy, and sportsmanship at all times.

Expected Behavior

All participants, students, judges, educators, and spectators are expected to:

- Demonstrate respect and courtesy toward all students, educators, judges, event staff, and guests.
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with the values of hospitality, teamwork, and respect.
- Follow all event rules, schedules, and directions provided by event staff and volunteers.
- Promote a safe, inclusive, and supportive atmosphere for all attendees.
- Maintain the cleanliness and condition of all competition and common areas.
- Use appropriate and professional language at all times.
- Adhere to the event dress code and present themselves in a professional manner.

Unacceptable Behavior

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited:

- Harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any kind, including verbal, physical, or electronic misconduct.
- Use of profane, vulgar, or disrespectful language or gestures.
- Interference with judges, staff, or other competitors before, during, or after the competition.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct, including negative comments about competitors, judges, or event outcomes.
- Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, or illegal substances.
- Damage, theft, or misuse of equipment, materials, or facilities.
- Any behavior that disrupts or undermines the integrity of the event.

Consequences

Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which may include:

- Immediate removal from the event venue.
- Disqualification of the individual or team from competition.
- Notification of school administration and/or parents or guardians.
- Restriction from participation in future events.

Acknowledgment

Participation in the Ohio ProStart Invitational constitutes agreement to abide by this Code of Conduct. By attending, all participants, students, judges, educators, and spectators acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to adhere to these expectations.

General Provisions

Teams will be using tools that may cause cuts, burns or injury if not used appropriately. Proper safety techniques must be followed by all team members. No horseplay or unduly hazardous behavior will be allowed or tolerated. The mentors, teachers, chaperones, and families are expected to ensure that the team members comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. Team members shall comply with all other written as well as verbal instructions or warnings provided by the Event Organizers.

2026 OPSI CULINARY COMPETITION

Culinary Competition Description

Teams demonstrate their culinary knowledge, skills, and creative abilities during the competition through demonstration of skills and the preparation of a unique three-course meal consisting of (i) a starter; (ii) an entrée; and (iii) a dessert. Performance during the Culinary event is observed and rated by judges from the foodservice industry and post-secondary schools. Teams demonstrate their ability to work together while creating and presenting their meal.

1. Each team prepares two (2) identical three-course meals, garnished and served appropriately. One meal is evaluated by the judges for both taste and presentation, and one meal will be used for display. The meal consists of:
 - a. A starter consisting of:
 - i. A first course: soup, salad, appetizer
 - ii. Size appropriate: 4-6 ounces total edible weight
 - b. An entrée consisting of:
 - i. Center of the plate item: 4-6 ounces suggested
 - ii. Two accompaniments such as vegetable and/or starch: 2-3 ounces each suggested
 - iii. Sauce
 - c. A dessert consisting of:
 - i. Something sweet served at the end of the meal
 - ii. Size appropriate: 3+ ounces total edible weight
2. Each meal component should be appropriate to the complete menu. Flavors across the menu should have harmony for the palate. The five characteristics considered for a plated meal will be:
 - a. Oral: Flavor, Texture, Temperature
 - b. Visual: Color, Shape
3. Teams must bring all ingredients necessary to prepare the menu they have developed. See Product Check-In for information on permitted vs. prohibited ingredients.
4. Educator(s) and Mentor participation:
 - a. May assist teams in preparing for the competition.
 - b. May not develop the menu.
 - c. Expertise is limited to menu suggestions and technique advice.

Team Proposal Submission (See Exhibit A for Deliverables Checklist)

1. Each team prepares eight (8) softbound folders/binders with the team's number and year clearly shown on each cover.
 - a. Do not use plastic pockets to hold pages, as this impedes judges' ability to provide feedback.
 - b. Examples of folder, these are not required items:
 - i. https://www.staples.com/Avery-Flexible-5-Inch-Round-3-Ring-View-Binder-Blue-17670/product_614315
 - ii. http://www.staples.com/JAM-Paper-Plastic-2-Pocket-Eco-School-Folders-with-Metal-Tang-Fastener-Clasps-Clear-6-Pack-382ECCLDD-/product_2329283
 - c. See Exhibit B for Deliverables Checklist.
2. Each binder/folder must contain a copy of the following items. All materials should be single-sided and organized together in order from a-e by course (menu, recipe, recipe costing, menu pricing, and

color photograph of the starter would be placed together, followed by all materials for the entrée, etc.

- a. A typed menu with menu prices printed on an 8½" x 11" sheet of paper, two selected knife cuts to be used listed in the footer of the page.
 - b. Recipes: all recipes for the meal presentation, typed and submitted on the official recipe template. Acknowledgements and sources must be listed on each recipe in MLA formatting. Must be written in a logical sequence. See Exhibits B and C for Recipe example.
 - c. Recipe Costing: all recipe costing sheets for the meal presentation. Recipe cost must be calculated for each individual recipe, typed and submitted on the official costing template. See Exhibit D and E for Recipe Cost examples.
 - i. Small amounts of kosher/table salt and black pepper may be priced at 1% of the total recipe cost. Everything else must be costed out.
 - ii. Oil for deep frying may be priced at 2% of the total recipe cost. Everything else must be costed out.
 - d. Menu Pricing: one menu price worksheet for each of the three courses, based on the recipe costs and calculated at a 33% food cost percentage. See Exhibit F for Menu Price example.
 - i. Each course on the presentation menu is priced separately.
 - ii. Menu price on the presentation menu may be rounded up after applying the 33% food cost percentage for a more realistic menu price.
 - iii. Final calculation before rounding must be indicated on costing template.
 - iv. Total menu price for the three-course meal may not exceed \$125.00 after applying the 33% food cost percentage.
 - e. Color Plate Photographs: an 8½" x 11" color photo of each plate. Final plates presented to the judges are compared to the photos provided.
3. Binders/Folders are submitted at Registration.
4. Each participating team also provides one (1) copy of a framed presentation menu:
- a. Presentation menu is kept with team equipment and not turned in with folders.
 - b. Must include descriptions and final menu prices for each course. Creative elements may be included on the menu, but should not obstruct the view of the required menu components
 - c. Must include two selected knife cuts, listed in the footer of the page. Teams may include them within their menu descriptions as well, as long as they also are highlighted in the footer as required.
 - d. Team name must be clearly identified on presentation menu.
 - e. Must be displayed on the team's table during competition and then moved to the display area with the team's display plates.
 - f. No other additions to the display are allowed.

Workspace and Equipment

1. The workspace consists of:
 - a. Two (2) eight-foot tables set up in an "L" formation within a 10' x 10' space. See Culinary Station Blueprint.
 - i. The station tables can be covered with a variety of materials to keep the table surface consistent across stations (e.g. fire-retardant plastic, food-safe elastic covering, tablecloth, etc.), which must remain in use during competition.
 - ii. Tables may not be moved prior to or during competition.
 - iii. See Exhibit A for Culinary Station Blueprint.
 - b. Food preparation must be done within the workspace on the tables provided.

- c. ALL equipment and supplies must be contained within the allotted 10' x 10' space. Teams will not be permitted to remove additional equipment brought onto the competition floor until teams are dismissed from competition by their timer.
 - d. Equipment may not be stacked in the workspace; large equipment may not be stacked to create additional workspace or if it exceeds the 2 ft (width) x 4 ft (height) x 3 ft (depth) size parameters for additional equipment
 - e. Team members may only work on the tables from the interior of the space.
 - f. For the safety of our participants, students, judges, educators, and spectators, venue fans will be running during the entirety of the competition. Please plan accordingly.
2. Event Organizers provide:
- a. Two (2) eight-foot tables, at approximately 36 inches in height
 - b. Access to running water (available prior to and after the competition only)
 - c. Hand sinks will be provided on the competition floor for handwashing during the team's competition time.
3. Team must provide:
- a. ALL necessary supplies to prepare the food they have selected, such as small utensils, cutting boards, small hand tools, cookware, gloves, and enough cloths for competition and clean-up
 - b. One speed rack and four (4) full size sheet pans
 - c. Sanitation buckets
 - d. Two (2) 1oz containers for Knife Skills selections
 - e. Two (2) Sterno Model 50108, 15,000 BTU burners (or equivalent) and necessary fuel
 - f. All presentation dishes.
4. Each participating team also provides one (1) copy of a presentation menu:
- a. Presentation menu is kept with team equipment and not turned in with folders.
 - b. Must include descriptions and final menu prices for each course. Creative elements may be included on the menu but should not obstruct the view of the required menu components.
 - c. Must include two selected knife cuts, listed in the footer of the page. Teams may include them within their menu descriptions as well, as long as they also are highlighted in the footer as required.
 - d. Team name must be clearly identified on presentation menu.
 - e. Must be displayed on the team's table in the designated area at the start of competition and remain there until presentation of plates when it's left in the tasting room, and then moved to the photography area with the team's display plates upon completion of the tasting and menu critiques.

Competition Flow – Competition Segments & Flow

- 1) Product Check-In (Open check-in during allocated time)
- 2) Report to Competition (15 Minutes)
- 3) Team & Menu Introduction (5 Minutes)
- 4) Production Mise En Place (20 Minutes)
- 5) Cook (60 Minutes – may present up to 3 minutes early)
- 6) Skills & Organization Critique (10 minutes)
- 7) Judges' Tasting Critique (10 Minutes)
- 8) Recipe & Menu Critique (5 minutes)
- 9) Station Clean-Up (20 Minutes)
- 10) Sanitation Critique & Dismissal (5 Minutes)
- 11) See Exhibit G for Sample Culinary Competition Timeline.

Feedback occurs:

- On the competition floor for the Product Check-In, Work Skills/Organization, Team Presentation/Knife Skills, and Sanitation segments.
- In the reserved judging area for Tasting and Menu & Recipe segments.
- Team members are encouraged to ask questions during Feedback to learn from the experience.
- Designated teacher(s) and mentor(s) are allowed to be present to observe only during the Tasting & Menu critique sessions.
- Communication with the team is still prohibited.

CULINARY COMPETITION RULES

Uniform

1. Teams must present a uniform appearance from Product Check-In through dismissal.
2. Appropriate required apparel consists of:
 - a. Long sleeve, white chef coats
 - i. Logos and sponsor names are permitted on chef coats
 - ii. Accent colors are permitted, provided the chef coat remains white
 - b. Checkered or black pants
 - c. Nonporous, closed toe, non-slip, hard sole black shoes
 - d. Aprons and hats; hair must be restrained and covered with chef hat. Aprons are NOT provided by Hospitality Ohio.
 - e. Team manager will wear a colored arm band provided by Hospitality Ohio indicating his/her role
 - f. Facial piercings must be taped over; this is only required during the time from Report to Competition and end of dishwashing
 - g. Jewelry and other accessories may not be worn on the competition floor.
3. Aprons, hats, and team manager's colored arm band are to be worn at or before Product Check In as teams will not have access to them prior to presenting at Product Check-In. Teams should add these uniform items from competition report time through dismissal. Hats and team manager arm band will be provided by Hospitality Ohio. Aprons are NOT provided by Hospitality Ohio.

Product Check-In

The team manager is allowed to fully participate in the Product Check-In segment. Teams' teacher(s) and mentor(s) are allowed to be present in a designated space adjacent to the check-in tables to observe only during the Product Check-In process, including feedback.

1. It is the responsibility of each team to store all product prior to Product Check-In.
2. Product Check-In is the first segment of the evaluation process. Team is judged according to:
 - a. Proper shipping and receiving procedures.
 - i. Complete printed product inventory list of every item contained in each cooler or other container holding food items must be attached to the inside and outside of the cooler and/or container. The list must be attached in a plastic sleeve. Inventory list must be submitted on the official Inventory template. See Exhibit F for Inventory List example.
 - ii. All ingredients must be turned in at Product Check-In.
 - iii. Proper temperature of ingredients must be maintained.

- iv. If an item has been found to be in the temperature danger zone, the item will not be available for use in the competition. See #3 below.
- b. Proper packaging.
 - i. Items should be packaged properly i.e. no liquid pooling from meats, poultry or fish; no seeping liquid; vegetables and fruits in proper containers and/or bags
 - ii. Items should either be in their original packaging, or re-wrapped, professionally/commercially labeled and packaged properly. Label should include date it was packaged, weight, item type, and where it was packaged i.e. butcher shop or grocery store.
 - For example, if you purchase a whole chicken and are only using chicken breast in your recipe, you may bring the whole chicken in its original, unopened package OR you may purchase chicken breasts and enter in their original, commercial packaging. Prepping or rewrapping proteins by the team is prohibited.
3. Any team that has a product disallowed during Product Check-In has until their assigned competition report time to present to the judges a replacement product for approval.
 - a. Teams will lose points if their entire product list does not meet the established criteria at the original check-in.
 - b. Replacement product that does not meet requirements at competition report time will also be discarded.
4. Walk-in cooler and freezer storage is NOT provided at any point.
5. Team should have all dry storage product collected in a single container ready to be checked in. Event site will provide secure dry storage space for teams.
6. Each team's food is placed in an appropriate and secure location at the competition site until the team's designated report time.
7. Ingredients:

Permitted Ingredients	Prohibited Ingredients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-prepared stocks • Team-prepared clarified butter • Team-prepared pre-soaked beans • Dry goods, open but in the original packaging/not premeasured • Pre-measured butter and oil • Pre-washed produce* • Dry ice • Commercially manufactured food items such as jams, breadcrumbs, bases and mayonnaise in the original, sealed container or packaging. Must be used as an ingredient, not as a finished product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-chopped, pre-sliced, or pre-prepared food not commercially manufactured • Meat, poultry, seafood that is not in original or commercial/professional labeled packaging (see 2b Proper Packaging above) • Pre-measured ingredients not included in the permitted ingredients list • Reductions, finished sauces, and clarified broths • Items that risk food illness
<p><i>*Team may also wash produce during Production Mise en Place.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Follow your state or school guidelines concerning alcohol in your recipes. OPSI permits the use of alcohol in Culinary competition recipes.</i></p>	

8. The previously prepared softbound folders are given to staff at time of team check in at Registration. Equipment and presentation menu are not turned in at this time.
9. No equipment will be checked-in during this period. Teams are to bring all their equipment to the competition area at their assigned Competition Report Time.
10. Should travel delays arise, and as a result a team is unable to check-in their ingredients during the times allotted, the team will be allowed to store those items in the OPSI refrigerated storage area. The team must contact their state ProStart Coordinator, who will contact the Event Organizers to make arrangements to access the storage area.
11. Product Check-In Feedback will occur immediately following each team's check-in.
12. Teams will fill their Sani Buckets after Product Check In Feedback and prior to exiting the Product Check In area.

DAY OF COMPETITION

Report to Competition

1. Team should arrive promptly to the Report to Competition area at their assigned report time.
 - a. Should a team arrive late, a ½ point per 15 seconds will be assessed. If a team is more than 10 minutes late, they will be disqualified. No adjustments will be made to the schedule if a team is late.
2. Team will be introduced to their Hospitality Ohio-assigned timer who will announce the start and end of each competition segment.
3. Teams will be allowed to place equipment on and/or otherwise organize their speed rack during their report time prior to entering the competition floor. Team manager may assist with organization during this time.
4. Team members should be prepared to carry and/or roll all their equipment and products onto the competition floor. Additional equipment may not be brought onto the competition floor. All equipment and materials must fit in the 10' X 10' workspace.
5. The team manager may assist in transporting the equipment and food products to the team's station, but may not assist in any organizing, unpacking, or set-up.
6. Teams may not move the tables in the workspace prior to or during the competition.

Permitted Equipment	Prohibited Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handheld whipped cream chargers • Digital scales and thermometers • Handheld butane/propane torch for FINISHING or CARAMELIZING only any item, sweet or savory • Metal, stone or other types of plates or apparatus to extend the cooking surface of the burners • Dry ice • Audio recording device to record the critique and feedback sessions • Electronic devices which contain no communication abilities (e.g. basic calculator or timer) • Additional sheet pans • Camping oven and/or smoker attachments for provided burner <p><i>All equipment must be used in a safe manner and not obstruct proper butane function.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fueled or mechanical heat sources other than provided event burners or handheld torch for finishing • MRE heater packs • Electric, battery-operated, or compressed air/gas devices (exceptions: handheld whipped cream chargers, digital scales, digital thermometers) • Plastic or Plexiglas for the purpose of covering tables • Cell phones, tablets, smart watches, or other communication devices , unless needed for health reasons with prior approval from Event Organizers • Additional speed racks or equipment exceeding the external dimensions of 2 ft (width) x 4 ft (height) x 3 ft (depth) • Large equipment may not be stacked in the workspace to create additional workspace or exceed 2ft (width) x 4ft (height) x 3ft (depth) parameters • Cutting guides i.e. cutting boards with rulers or other measurement aids for knife cuts • Mandolins • Aerosol

Team & Menu Introduction

Each participating team has five (5) minutes to verbally present its menu to judges. The team manager may fully participate in this section. During this time, students can anticipate:

1. Telling what each team member is charged with executing.
2. Describing their three-course meal.
3. Explaining how they designed their unique menu.

Production Mise en Place

The team has twenty (20) minutes to pre-set their station for the meal production segment. All of the team's equipment must be contained within the 10' x 10' workspace (Large equipment may not be stacked to create additional workspace or if it exceeds the 2 ft (width) x 4 ft (height) x 3 ft (depth) size parameters for additional equipment)

Team manager must stay on the outside of the “L” of the tables in the designated team manager workspace, and may not touch any equipment, products, or any other item on the table or production area.

During Production Mise en Place:

Teams are allowed to:	Teams are not allowed to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set their station• Obtain water and ice from designated areas on the competition floor• Measure dry and liquid ingredients• Wash produce at the vegetable washing station	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to any spectators, coaches, educators, or mentors• Heat water or any liquid• Marinate any food (all marinating must be done during the 60-minute meal preparation period)• Perform any knife work• Begin cooking any items• Mix any ingredients

The Hospitality Ohio-assigned timer will notify the team when the Production Mise en Place segment time ends and the Meal Production segment time begins.

After Mise en Place, team members may only leave the workstation to use the handwashing stations. Other requests to leave the workstation must be approved by a judge or Event Staff.

Meal Production

Final meal production and all plating must be completed in the sixty (60) minute time period provided. HOSPITALITY OHIO-assigned timer will announce the time at regular intervals, becoming more frequent towards the end of meal production time. It is the responsibility of each team to know their start time and be ready to begin when their assigned time is announced. *Teams may bring a manual or battery-operated timer; however, Event Organizers will keep and display the official time.*

The team manager must stay on the outside of the “L” of the tables, and may not touch any equipment, products, or any other item on the table or production area. See Exhibit A.

1. Meal Course Requirements

- Teams must employ a minimum of two cooking methods from the following list: Poach, Shallow Poach, Braise, Pan Fry, Steam, and Sauté.
 - Additional techniques are also permitted.
 - Molecular gastronomy in the competition:
 - Use of liquid nitrogen is not allowed.
 - Spherification, foams, and meat glue (transglutaminase) are allowed.

2. Knife Skills

- Knife cuts should be performed and presented within the first twenty (20) minutes of meal production time
- The team must demonstrate a minimum of two (2) of eleven (11) specified knife cuts to incorporate in their meal.
- Cuts must be demonstrated on fruits, vegetables, or herbs only.
 - Rondelle: ¼” thick disc shaped slices
 - Diagonal: ¼” thick oval shaped slices
 - Batonnet: Cut into long, thin, rectangular pieces ¼” x ¼” x 2”

- iv. Julienne: Cut into long, thin, rectangular pieces. $1/8'' \times 1/8'' \times 2''$
- v. Large Dice: Cube shaped $3/4'' \times 3/4'' \times 3/4''$
- vi. Medium Dice: Cube shaped $1/2'' \times 1/2'' \times 1/2''$.
- vii. Small Dice: Cube shaped $1/4'' \times 1/4'' \times 1/4''$
- viii. Brunoise: Very small dice. $1/8'' \times 1/8'' \times 1/8''$
- ix. Paysanne: Square cut $1/2'' \times 1/2'' \times 1/8''$
- x. Chiffonade: Leafy green vegetables such as spinach or basil that are stacked, rolled tightly, and then cut into long thin strips. Approximate width is $1/8''$.
- xi. Tourne: Football shape, $3/4''$ diameter, $2''$ long, seven equal sides and flat ended
- d. Team must identify the selected cuts at the bottom of their printed menu i.e. Knife cuts used: medium dice and brunoise.
- e. Team must set aside a 1oz. cup volume measurement for each knife cut for evaluation by Team Presentation/Knife Skills judges. This may be done at any time. Judges will rotate and evaluate when available.
- 3. A team is considered done cooking when each requirement is met:
 - a. The food is plated.
 - b. The dishes are on the service trays.
 - c. All team members have stepped away from the trays and raised their hands to signal they are finished.
 - i. Teams may present plates to judges up to three minutes before the 60-minute cooking time has completed. See *Culinary Competition Penalties*.

Judge Critique

Teacher(s), mentor(s), are allowed to be present to observe only during the Tasting & Menu critique sessions. Communication with the team is still prohibited.

After a team completes their two (2) identical meals, the team will determine which meal will be evaluated by tasting judges and which will be for display.

- a. Team members transport both service trays and their presentation menu to the judges' table and leave immediately. The team manager may accompany the team to the tasting area but may not carry plates or the menu.
 - b. The evaluation plates receive the most critical judging.
 - c. There should not be a major variance in composition of the finished plates. If there is a great variance, then the team will be assessed a penalty. If the second meal is not presented, the team will be disqualified. See *Culinary Competition Penalties and Disqualifications*.
1. Team returns to their station for the Work Skills/Organization and Team Presentation/Proper Knife Usage feedback.
 2. Judges have ten (10) minutes to evaluate the plates. At that time, the entire team (including the team manager) returns to the tasting area for a ten (10) minute feedback session. Only the designated teacher(s) and mentor(s) may accompany the team and listen to feedback.
 3. The team will proceed next to the menu and recipe judges for a five (5) minute feedback session. Only the designated teacher and mentor may accompany and listen to feedback.
 4. Team then takes display plates and presentation menu to the display area. *Reminder: the team is still competing, and students may only converse with their teammates. Team must return to their station immediately to begin Clean Up and be prepared for their Sanitation Critique at their designated time.*
 5. Team returns to their station to begin Station Clean-up.

Station Clean-Up

1. Team has twenty (20) minutes to clean and vacate their station.
 - a. The team must return station to the condition it was in when they arrived.
 - b. The team manager is allowed to assist during Station Clean-Up.
 - c. Team or team member cannot leave the floor unless released by Sanitation judge and accompanied by their assigned timer.

Sanitation Critique/Dismissal

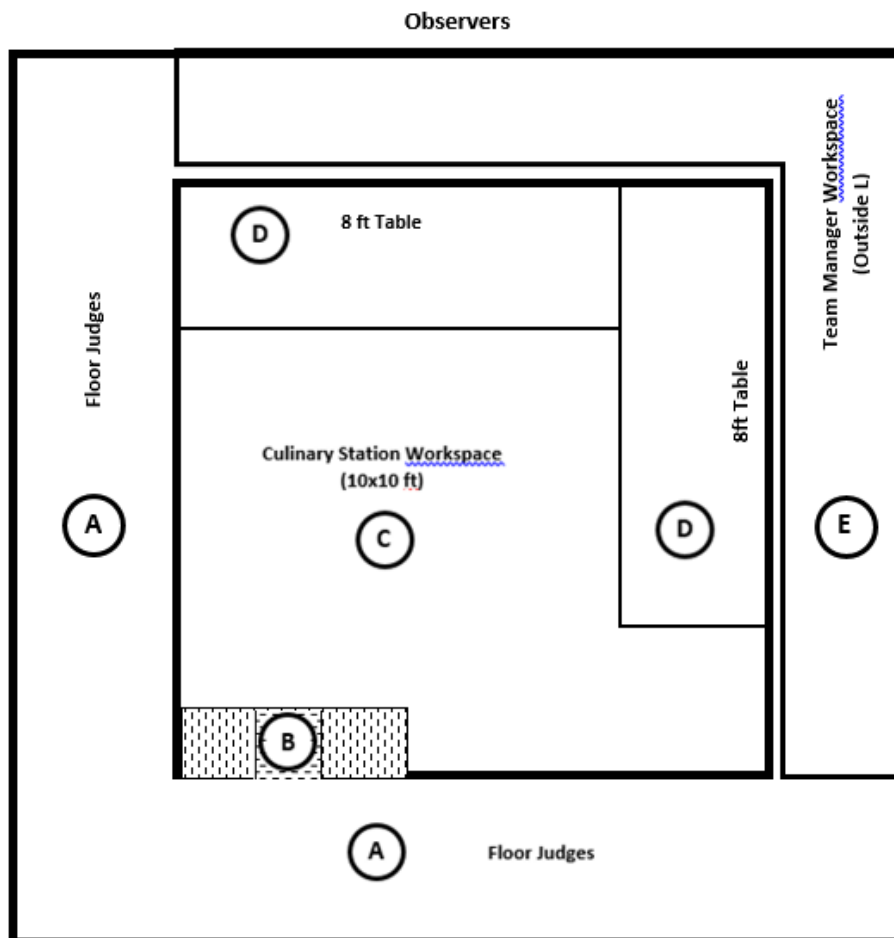
Team receives Sanitation feedback and is dismissed.

Post Competition

The softbound folders and framed presentation menu must be picked up by the end of competition or the Event Organizers will dispose of unclaimed materials. Report to the registration desk with a team member's badge to claim the team folders. HOSPITALITY OHIO will retain one copy of the folder from each team

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A – Culinary - Culinary Station Blueprint



- A. Competition floor outside of Culinary Station Workspace.
 - a. No team equipment should be in this area. Teams may access this area to use handwashing station. Floor judges have access to this space.
- B. Culinary Station Doorway
 - a. No team equipment should be in this area to leave a safe space to enter and exit the station. Approximately 2 ½ ft wide.
- C. Culinary Station Workspace (10ft x 10ft)
 - a. Teams must keep all materials inside designated area. Teams may store equipment under and around the tables.
 - b. Equipment may not be stacked to create additional workspace or to exceed 2ft x 4ft x 3ft parameter
- D. Two 8ft tables set up in “L” formation
 - a. Teams may not move or otherwise rearrange or readjust tables.
- E. Team Manager must stay in his/her designated space. Floor judges and the team’s timer will also have access to this space.

Note: This is a sample layout. Final locations of tables, doorways, observer spaces, etc. are subject to change. Image not to scale.

Exhibit B – Culinary - Deliverables Checklist

Present at Product Check-In

Eight binders/folders, each containing

Example 1: https://www.staples.com/Avery-Flexible-5-Inch-Round-3-Ring-View-Binder-Blue-17670/product_614315

Example 2: http://www.staples.com/JAM-Paper-Plastic-2-Pocket-Eco-School-Folders-with-Metal-Tang-Fastener-Clasps-Clear-6-Pack-382ECCLDD-/product_2329283

- ☐ Team Name and Team Number on cover
- ☐ Recipes typed on official template
- ☐ Recipe Costing Sheets typed on official template
- ☐ Menu Price Sheets typed on official templates
- ☐ Plate Photographs – A separate, 8½" x 11" color photograph of each plate
- ☐ Menu with Prices - Simple typed menu 8½" x 11"

Checklist of other items required

- ☐ Complete printed list of the contents of each cooler or dry storage container on the inside and outside of each cooler or container in a plastic **sleeve (Team name and number must be included on inside and outside list)**.
- ☐ One copy of framed Presentation Menu

Exhibit C – Culinary - Recipe Example

Culinary teams must complete this form prior to the competition. Make eight (8) copies to include in the folders turned in at Product Check-In.

Team Name	Awesome Team
Educator Name	Chef Jane Doe

Menu Item	French Fries		
Number of Portions	4	Portion Size	5 ounces
Cooking Method(s)	Fry		
Recipe Source (MLA)	TNN. "French Fries Recipe." Times Food, https://recipes.timesofindia.com/us/recipes/french-fries/rs54659021.cms Accessed 30 June 2021.		

Ingredients	
Item	Amount
Potato	500 gm
Kosher Salt	TT
Black Pepper	TT
Frying Oil	AN

Procedure
Chop potatoes and soak in ice-cold water for 10-15 minutes. Heat the oil in deep bottomed pan. Once hot, add the potatoes to the pan. Cook about 5 to 7 minutes. Remainder of procedures...

Exhibit C – Culinary - Recipe Example

Culinary teams must complete this form prior to the competition. Make eight (8) copies to include in the folders turned in at Product Check-In.

Team Name	Awesome Team
Educator Name	Chef Jane Doe

Menu Item	Ratatouille		
Number of Portions	6	Portion Size	5 ounces
Cooking Method(s)	Sauté		
Recipe Source (MLA)	Lagasse, Emeril. "Ratatouille." Food Network, http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeric-lagasse/ratatouille-recipe0.html . Accessed 30 September 2016.		

Ingredients	
Item	Amount
Olive oil	¼ cup
Yellow onion, small dice	1 ½ cup
Garlic, minced	1 tsp
Eggplant, medium dice	2 cup
Thyme	½ tsp
Green bell pepper, diced	1 cup
Red bell pepper, diced	1 cup
Zucchini squash, diced	1 cup
Yellow squash, diced	1 cup
Tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped	1 ½ cup
Basil, chiffonade	1 tbsp
Parsley, chopped	1 tbsp
Salt and black pepper	TT

Procedure
<p>Set a large 12-inch sauté pan over medium heat and add the olive oil.</p> <p>Once hot, add the yellow onions and garlic to the pan.</p> <p>Cook the onions, stirring occasionally, until they are wilted and lightly caramelized, about 5 to 7 minutes.</p> <p>Remainder of procedures...</p>

Exhibit D – Culinary - Recipe Cost Example

Culinary teams must complete this form prior to the competition. Make eight (8) copies to include in the folders turned in at Product Check-In.

Team Name	Awesome Team		
Educator Name	Chef Jane Doe		
Menu Item	French Fries		
Number of Portions	4	Portion Size	5 ounces

Ingredient	Purchase Unit	Purchase cost	Unit cost	Amount Needed	Ingredient Cost
Potatoes	5 kg	\$2.65	\$0.0005/g	500 g	\$0.25
Kosher Salt					
Black Pepper					
Frying Oil					

Subtotal	\$0.25
1 % for small amounts of spices (Q Factor)	\$0.003
2 % for frying oil (if used)	\$0.005
Total Recipe Cost	\$0.257
Portion Cost	\$0.064

Exhibit D – Culinary - Recipe Cost Example

Culinary teams must complete this form prior to the competition. Make eight (8) copies to include in the folders turned in at Product Check-In.

Team Name	Awesome Team		
Educator Name	Chef Jane Doe		
Menu Item	Ratatouille		
Number of Portions	6	Portion Size	5 ounces

Ingredient	Purchase Unit	Purchase cost	Unit cost	Amount Needed	Ingredient Cost
Olive oil	51 oz / 6.375 cup	\$16.79	\$2.634 / cup	¼ cup	\$0.658
Yellow onion, small dice	1 lb / 4 cup	\$1.40	\$0.35 / cup	1 ½ cup	\$0.525
Garlic, minced	1 head	\$0.50	\$0.10 / tsp	1 tsp	\$0.100
Eggplant, medium dice	1 lb / 3 cup	\$2.05	\$0.683 / cup	2 cup	\$1.367
Thyme	1 bunch / 18 tsp	\$2.09	\$0.116 / tsp	½ tsp	\$0.058
Green bell pepper, diced	1 lb / 4 cup	\$2.30	\$0.575 / cup	1 cup	\$0.575
Red bell pepper, diced	1 lb / 4 cup	\$1.07	\$0.268 / cup	1 cup	\$0.268
Zucchini squash, diced	1 lb / 2.5 cup	\$1.93	\$0.772 / cup	1 cup	\$0.772
Yellow squash, diced	1 lb / 2.5 cup	\$1.93	\$0.772 / cup	1 cup	\$0.772
Tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped	1 lb / 2 cup	\$2.40	\$1.20 / cup	1 ½ cup	\$1.80
Basil, chiffonade	1 bunch / 1 cup	\$1.54	\$0.096 / tbsp	1 tbsp	\$0.096
Parsley, chopped	1 bunch / ½ cup	\$0.53	\$0.066 / tbsp	1 tbsp	\$0.066

Subtotal	\$7.057
1 % for small amounts of spices (Q Factor)	\$0.071
2 % for frying oil (if used)	\$0.00
Total Recipe Cost	\$7.128
Portion Cost	\$1.212

Exhibit E – Culinary - Menu Price Example

Culinary teams must complete this form prior to the competition. Make eight (8) copies to include in the folders turned in at Product Check-In.

Team Name	Awesome Team
Educator Name	Chef Jane Doe

Menu Category	X Starter	Entree	Dessert
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Recipe	Portion Cost
Ratatouille	\$1.212
Couscous (from additional recipe and costing sheets)	\$0.972
Garnish (from additional recipe and costing sheets)	\$0.127

Total Plate Portion Cost	\$2.311
Menu Price at 33% Food Cost	\$7.003
Actual Price on Menu	\$8.00

Exhibit F – Culinary - Product Check-In Inventory List

Product Check-In Inventory Lists must be completed and contain the inventory list of every item, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER contained in each cooler or other container holding food items. Inventory forms must be attached to the inside and outside of the cooler and/or container. The list must be attached in a plastic sleeve.

Team Name	Awesome Team
Year	2026
Educator Name	Chef Jane Doe

Container Purpose	X Refrigerator	Dry Storage
Number of Items in Container/Cooler	11	

Inventory List	
Item	Confirmed (This column for judge use only)
Basil	
Eggplant	
Garlic	
Green Bell Pepper	
Parsley	
Red Bell Pepper	
Thyme	
Tomatoes	
Yellow Onion	
Yellow Squash	
Zucchini	

Exhibit H – Culinary - Sample Culinary Competition Score Sheet

EVALUATION CRITERIA	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	SCORE
Product Check-In						
Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper temperature • Proper packaging • Complete product inventory list(s) • Uniform and hygiene 	1	2	3	4	5	
Work Skills/Organization						
Work Organization/ Teamwork Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of a team plan • Mastery of skills required for individual tasks • Workload evenly distributed • Team cohesiveness • Communication • Professionalism • Proper Production Mise en Place • Proper time management 	1	2	3	4	5	
Proper Cooking Procedures Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate cooking method for product used • Required cooking techniques used minimum of two cooking methods from provided list • Cooking procedures done in a time efficient manner • Proper amount of product for recipe requirements • Effective use of remaining product • Proper pans and tools for intended use 	1	2	3	4	5	
Degree of Difficulty Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Complicated techniques • Preparation of item during competition rather than using commercial product 	1	2	3	4	5	
Team Presentation/Knife Skills						
Team Appearance Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White chef coats, long sleeve • Black or checkered pants • Uniform clean & presentable • Hard sole shoes • Hats, aprons, and arm band (provided) • Team uniformity 	1	2	3	4	5	
Proper Knife Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Selection • Consistency • Accuracy • Safety • Waste 	1	2	3	4	5	

EVALUATION CRITERIA	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	SCORE
Safety and Sanitation						
Follows Safety and Sanitation Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including but not limited to: Personal hygiene Proper knife safety Proper use and handling of food contact surfaces 	1	2	3	4	5	
Proper Food Handling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including but not limited to: Proper use of gloves Appropriate temperature control of ingredients Proper sanitation practices regarding food contact surfaces Proper storage of food Avoidance of cross contamination 	1	2	3	4	5	
Work Area Cleaned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including but not limited to: Work area cleaned in appropriate time frame Return of station to original condition 	1	2	3	4	5	
Product Taste						
Product Taste – Starter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subjective category based on tasting judges' expertise 	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Finished Product						
Appearance – Starter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including but not limited to: Balance of color Shape Texture Portion size 	1	2	3	4	5	
Product Taste						
Product Taste – Entrée <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subjective category based on tasting judge's expertise 	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	
Finished Product						
Appearance – Entrée <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including but not limited to: Balance of color Shape Texture Portion size 	1	2	3	4	5	
Product Taste						
Product Taste – Dessert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subjective category based on judge's expertise 	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	

EVALUATION CRITERIA	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	SCORE
Finished Product						
Appearance – Dessert Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of color • Shape • Texture • Portion size 	1	2	3	4	5	
Menu and Recipe Presentation						
Presentation Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typewritten • Recipe structure • Menu presentation • Recipe costing • Menu pricing • Within food cost guidelines • Sources and acknowledgements listed 	1	2	3	4	5	

DISQUALIFICATION
Reason for Disqualification:
_____ Team submitted work, or parts of work, that was previously submitted.
_____ Team started any competition segment more than 10 minutes early, or finished more than 10 minutes late. Disqualifying Segment _____
_____ Team used an electric/battery operated device or additional butane burner.
_____ Team did not produce two (2) complete meals.
_____ Violation of the General Disqualifications on page 5.
PENALTY
Reason for Penalty:
_____ Menu does not meet specifications, or was not submitted by February 25, 2026 to Info@HospitalityOhio.org – 5 pts
_____ Team not dressed in uniform. 5 pts
_____ Team did not submit folders with menu, plate photographs, recipe and recipe costing at Product Check-In – 2 pts
_____ Replacement product did not meet requirements and was discarded – 2 pts.
_____ Team manager touches or handles any equipment or food when not allowed – 5 pts
_____ Team begins any competition segment before their assigned start time – ¼ pt to 10 pts ¼ point is deducted per 15 seconds 10 or more minutes early, team is disqualified
_____ Team does not complete any competition segment within their allotted time – ¼ pt to 10 pts ¼ point is deducted per 15 seconds After 10 minutes, team is disqualified
_____ Use of prohibited equipment or pre-prepared ingredients – 5 pts <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-prepared ingredients
_____ Team produces two meals, which are not identical – 2 pts
_____ Station left in unsanitary manner – 3 pts
_____ Knife cut selections are not included on the presentation menu as required. – 1pt