

# **BJCP Exam Grading Process**

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# 1 Introduction

The BJCP is very grateful for the time and energy that our volunteer graders contribute to the program. While we cannot compensate graders financially, grading exams is a key part of the Grand Master Service Requirements (GMSR) needed to become a Grand Master judge exam graders also earn non-judging experience points for their efforts. In return for enabling this promotion path, BJCP exam graders are asked to complete the grading assignments in a reasonable amount of time. Exam sets occasionally get stalled, and while this is sometimes unavoidable, we want to minimize these incidents. The timeline laid out below establishes a process that keeps the exam program running smoothly and ensures that there are no excessive delays in the path for the examinees to become BJCP judges.

An additional and related aspect of the timeline is a progression path from apprentice grader to lead exam grader. The exams are typically scored by a team of two graders, with one functioning as the lead and the other in a supporting role as second grader. The lead grader ultimately has the responsibility for completing the Report to Participants (RTPs), but the second grader may also assume that role for some exams in the set. Each grader receives GMSR credit as a lead grader for the RTPs they complete, regardless of whom is nominally serving in the capacity of lead grader. It generally takes a few exam sets to become familiar with the exam grading process, but after this calibration period, many graders evolve to the lead grader role. An outline of this progression path is provided at the end of this document.

As stated in the Exam Scoring Guidelines, our target is to complete the grading and review of exam sets in eight weeks from when the exams reach the graders. This requires that graders complete the scoring in no more than four weeks, which should be manageable given the less stringent demands on grading primarily Beer Judging Exams under the 2012 exam structure, as opposed to evaluating the combined essay and tasting format of the Legacy BJCP Exam.

The description of the process is composed of a number of tasks, some have to happen before the exam date and others happen after the exam date.

## 2 Grading Process Work Breakdown

It is important to realize that the descriptions and the associated Gantt chart only shows a single exam set flowing through the BJCP but at any point in time there are many exam sets being processed by the BJCP grading team. Multiple exam sets are given every month, more sets than there are Associate Directors or Exam Directors. At a higher level, not shown here, that means the processing of individual exam sets can encounter resource conflicts at the AD and ED level. These conflicts are hard to predict since they are driven by when individual sets reach the AD and/or ED for review.

The task numbers in this section refer to items in the detailed Gantt chart that shows all activities.

Given that we are all volunteers, we realize that the “ideal” timeline doesn’t always work given the reality of family, work and other commitments. If this situation occurs, it

should be apparent early in the grading process, and it is much better to request that the exams be re-assigned rather than delaying the grading cycle by weeks or even months. We can accommodate some flexibility in the grading schedule, but that requires open communication between the graders and the AD/ED if issues arise during the grading. If this communication does not happen, or if the delays are excessive, the exam sets can and will be reassigned to other graders so that they can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

## **2.1 Exam Director's duties prior to the exam**

Prior to the scheduled exam date, the ED may be in discussion with the local exam administrator to work out details such as the proctors and the exam beers or meads.

**Task 1.1;** the ED creates the PDF files for the exam site. This includes inserting the exam code, location, and date into the appropriate files.

**Task 1.2;** the ED emails the files to the local exam administrator a week to 10 days prior to the scheduled exam date.

**Task 1.3;** the ED sends emails to the graders and AD scheduled to handle this exam set. This notice should reach the graders three to three and one half weeks prior to when they will receive the actual exams.

**Task 1.4;** the ED sends email to the AHA support staff providing the exam code and the exam date. The shared folder name is created using the exam code.

## **2.2 Local exam administrator's duties prior to the exam**

The local exam administrator has a number of activities that must be completed prior to the exam day.

**Task 2.1;** the local administrator works with the ED on exam beers or meads and on approval of proctors – proctors not on the pre-approved lists on [bjcp.org](http://bjcp.org) must be approved by the ED in advance.

**Task 2.2;** really a milestone, the receipt of the exam files from the ED.

**Task 2.3;** the local administrator make the necessary copies of the exam files. The cover letter from the ED details how many copies are required per examinee.

**Task 2.4;** for Beer Judging or Mead Exams, the local administrator prepares the beers/meads that will be evaluated. The local administrator also completes the beer/mead description document that will be submitted to the ED along with the exams. These descriptions are needed by the graders to understand what was presented to the examinees.

**Task 2.5;** for all exams the local administrator collects the information needed to fill in the Examinee Data Capture ([examinee-data-capture.xls](#) spreadsheet). The local administrator also collects the information needed to fill in the Exam Staff Capture ([exam-staff-capture.xls](#) spreadsheet) for Beer Judging or Mead Exams.

**Task 2.6;** for all exams involving tastings the local administrator prepares the electronic description of the beverages. For Beer Judging, it is <exam code>-BEERS.doc, for mead exams it is <exam code>-MEADS.doc.

### **2.3 The actual exam is administered**

**Task 3.0;** on exam day, the local administrator follows the instructions from the ED and gives the exam.

### **2.4 The local exam administrator duties after the exam**

After the exam is over the local administrator has a number of immediate duties.

**Task 4.1;** the local administrator makes a copy of all the exam paperwork. This copy has two purposes; first, it is a backup for the originals that are to be sent to the AHA Support staff and two, eventually a copy is provided to each examinee.

**Task 4.2;** the local administrator emails the Examinee Data Capture (file name [examinee-data-capture.xls](#)) , any Exam Staff Capture (file name [exam-staff-capture.xls](#)) and any description of exam beers (file name <examcode-Beers.doc), meads (file name <exam code>-MEADS.doc) to the ED.

**Task 4.3;** the local administrator pays the BJCP via PayPal. The BJCP only accepts payment for the exams via PayPal – only the administrator pays the BJCP, not the individual examinees.

**Task 4.4;** the local administrator sends the exams to the AHA Support staff via USPS Flat Rate mail. Alternatively, if the ED agrees, a high quality scan of the exams may be acceptable; scans are then directly sent to the ED. If the scans are set directly to the ED then the ED MUST copy the scans to the appropriate shared storage folder.

**Task 4.5;** the ED acknowledges receipt of the exams in an email to the local administrator. The local administrator will then provide a copy of each examinees exam back to them – only their exam page, not the proctor sheets.

### **2.5 The BJCP Treasurer's duties**

**Task 5.1;** the BJCP Treasurer receives notice from PayPal that the exam set has been paid for and notifies the ED and the Assistant Exam Director. Exam results will not be released if payment is not received.

### **2.6 The Exam Director's duties after the exam**

After the ED receives the scanned exams the ED has a number of tasks.

**Task 6.1;** really a milestone, the receipt of the exams by the AHA.

**Task 6.2;** after the AHA notifies the ED that the exam have been received, the ED emails the local administrator to acknowledge receipt of the exams.

**Task 6.4;** the ED updates the grader forms for the set. This includes:

- For the RTP:
  - customizing the RTP with the graders', AD, and ED names

- the location
- the exam code
- the exam date
- For Beer Judging and Mead exams the EGF including:
  - the graders' names
  - the location
  - the date
  - the tasting scores
- For Beer Written Proficiency and Mead Exams the EGF:
  - The true/false question numbers
  - the examinee answers to the true/false question

**Task 6.5;** the ED validates that all examinees are eligible to take the exam. The ED notifies ineligible examinees that they will not be receiving exam results or a refund.

**Task 6.6;** the ED send the exams and forms to the graders and the AD. The forms are emailed to the graders and AD. The exams are transferred to the graders by passing a link to the read-only shared storage space containing the scans.

**Task 6.7;** the ED updates the Exam Staff Capture form to include the graders, AD and ED information for the set.

**Task 6.8;** the ED sends the Examinee Data Capture and Exam Staff Capture to the AED. Have the ED do this as soon as possible closes the loop with the examinees quickly and also minimizes issues with sending the final exam results later by getting the examinees entered into the BJCP database so that their moves after the exam date can be recorded.

## **2.7 The Assistant Exam Director's duties after the exam**

The Assistant Exam Director (AED) handles the initial entry of the exam data into the BJCP database.

**Task 7.1;** a milestone, the AED receives the Examinee Data Capture form and Exam Staff Capture form from the ED.

**Task 7.2;** the AED imports the data from the Examinee Data Capture form and the Exam Staff Capture form into the database, BJCP IDs are created as necessary. Various fields in the database are setup for when the exam set is ultimately closed including the names of the ED, AD, and graders.

**Task 7.3;** the AED validates the information extracted from the Capture forms. This is done for both new and existing members. This information is needs to be correct for when the exams are closed.

## **2.8 The initial scoring and consensus activities**

This set of activities focuses on getting the consensus scores for the exam set.

**Task 8.1;** a milestone, the graders receive the exams from the ED. Based on recent data this happens about 15 days after the exam date.

**Task 8.2;** the graders independently assign scores and complete their EGF. This task is allocated three weeks.

**Task 8.3;** the graders reconcile their scores and add them to the EGF. This task is allocated one week. During this task, the lead grader starts writing the RTPs. If there is no communication with the AD and ED, the AD emails the graders for a progress report.

**Task 8.3.1;** this task is optional, the graders have communicated with the AD and ED to request an extra week to complete their scoring. This should be an exceptional situation. If after the week there is not communication with the AD and ED, the AD emails the graders for a progress report.

**Task 8.3.2;** this task is optional, the graders have communicated with the AD and ED to request a second extra week to complete their scoring. This should be a really exceptional situation. If after the week there is not communication with the AD and ED, the AD emails the graders for a progress report.

**Task 8.4;** both graders send their completed EGF and consensus scores to both the AD and the ED.

If grading has not completed task 8.4 within five weeks (three is desired but five can be tolerated with valid reasons) of task 8.1, one or both graders has/have been unresponsive or unable to fulfill the grading commitment. **This is a situation we want to avoid.**

If the lead grader is the bottleneck, then the lead grading role is transferred to a back-up grader, an incomplete assignment by the lead grader is noted, and no GMSR credits are granted. Processing goes back to task 6.6 for the ED to send the exams to the back-up grader.

If the second grader is the bottleneck, the exams are assigned to a back-up grader, an incomplete assignment by the second grader is noted, and not GMSR credits are granted. Processing goes back to task 6.6 for the ED to send the exams to the back-up grader.

## **2.9 The completion of the RTPs**

This set of activities focuses on getting the RTPs completed and delivered to the AD and ED.

**Task 9.1;** the lead grader completes the RTPs. This task is allocated two weeks. The lead grader is responsible for completing the RTPs but the second grader may be writing some of them. If there is no communication with the AD and ED by the end of the week, the AD emails the graders for a progress report.

**Task 9.1.1;** this task is optional, the lead grader has communicated with the AD and ED to request an additional week to complete the RTPs. This should be an exceptional situation. If there is no communication with the AD and ED by the end of the week, the AD emails the graders for a progress report.

**Task 9.1.2;** this task is optional, the lead grader has communicated with the AD and ED to request a second extra week to complete the RTPs. This should be a really exceptional situation. If there is no communication with the AD and ED by the end of the week, the AD emails the graders for a progress report.

**Task 9.2;** the lead grader emails the completed RTPs to the AD and ED. The completed RTPs should not have a score filled in but everything else should be filled in.

If grading has not completed task 9.2 within three weeks (one is desired but three can be acceptable with valid reasons), the lead grader has been unresponsive or has been unable to fulfill the complete grading commitment. **This is a situation we want to avoid.** Since the lead did complete scoring but not the RTPs, he or she is still given GMSR credits as second grader but not the additional credits normally allocated to the lead grader. The AD and ED will share responsibility for completing the RTPs, and incomplete assignment by the lead grader is noted.

## **2.10 The Associate Director's initial scoring of the exams**

The AD does an initial scoring of the exams as a baseline for reviewing the graders' results.

**Task 10.1;** a milestone, the AD receives the exams from the ED.

**Task 10.2;** the AD determines preliminary scores for the exams. This task is allocated two weeks.

## **2.11 The Associate Director's review of the grading**

This set of activities focuses on the AD review of the grading results.

**Task 11.1;** a milestone, the AD has received the EGF and consensus scores.

**Task 11.2;** the AD notifies the Exam Scheduler (ES), the ED that handles scheduling of exams and graders, that preliminary scoring is completed. The ES needs this information to coordinate awarding credits to sites trying to increase their seat limits.

**Task 11.3;** the AD reviews the graders' scoring. The AD evaluates the scoring vs. the AD's preliminary scores produced in task 10.2.

**Task 11.4;** a milestone, the AD receives the finished RTPs.

**Task 11.5;** the AD notifies the ES that the RTPs have been completed for this set. The ES needs this information to coordinate awarding credits to sites trying to increase their seat limits.

**Task 11.6;** the AD reviews/revises graders' scoring and RTPs. This task is allocated three weeks. The AD reviews and revises the scores and RTPs as necessary. Changes to the RTPs are made with "track changes" active.

**Task 11.7;** the AD emails the reviewed/revised scores and RTPs to the ED. The AD sends a cover letter with final scores along with the revised RTPs to the ED.



## **2.12 The Exam Director's review of the grading**

This set of activities focus on the ED's activities to complete the grading and to close the exam set.

**Task 12.1;** the ED reviews/revises the scores and RTPs. This task is allocated two weeks. The ED modifies scores and RTPs as appropriate. Changes to the RTPs are made with "track changes" active.

**Task 12.2;** the ED finalizes the exam scores and RTPs.

**Task 12.3;** the ED sends the final results and RTPs to the graders, AD and AED. The revised RTPs, and final scores are sent out. In keeping with the BJCP Privacy Policy, the graders and AD are not provided the names of the examinees.

## **2.13 The Assistant Exam Director's duties to close out the exam**

This set of activities focuses on getting the results into the BJCP database and notifying the examinees of their results.

**Task 13.1;** the AED enters the results into the database. The final scores are entered into the database along with entering/updating the proctors, administrator, graders, AD, and ED

**Task 13.2;** the AED sends final results, pins, RTPs, credentials to examinees.

## **2.14 The graders and Associate Director's review of the final results**

**Task 14.1;** the graders review the final scores and RTPs (updated during review with "track changes"). The revised documents and scores help them improve. They may question the AD and/or ED about the changes.

## **2.15 The examinees review of their final results**

**Task 15.1;** the examinees receive their scores and RTP. At this point the exam set has finished grading.

## **2.16 Exam scheduling activities**

The activities in this section are related to coordinating the credits for other designated exam sites that are trying to increase their exam seat limits by helping recruit exam graders.

**Task 16.1;** the ES determines if the graders associated with a designated exam site have completed the grading assignments.

**Task 16.2;** the ES notifies the local exam administrator and the ED that the site seat limit is increased. This only happens if all the assigned graders complete their work prior to the designated exam date. This task couples into the Gantt chart for a different exam set. Current data indicates that it typically is 10 to 11 weeks after an individual grader receives the exam when credit can be given to increase the seat limit for a designated site.

## **2.17 AHA Support Activities**

**Task 17.1;** the AHA receives email from the ED detailing the exam code and the exam date. The exam code is used to identify the shared folder the exam files will be placed in.

**Task 17.2;** the AHA receives the hard copies of the exam from the local administrator.

**Task 17.3;** the AHA sends email to the ED containing the exam code and indicating that the exams have been received.

**Task 17.4;** the AHA scans the exams and places the images in the shared folder indicated in task 17.1.

**Task 17.5;** the AHA emails the ED a notice that the exams have been scanned.

**Task 17.6;** the AHA mails the original hard copies to the BJCP.

## **3 Incomplete Grading Assignments**

Any incomplete results from either grader will be noted by the ED, and the responsible grader will be notified. Graders are given two “freebie” incompletions, but are put on probation after the second is incurred. If a second grader is responsible for a third incompleteness, he or she is removed from the list of active graders. If a lead grader is responsible for a third incompleteness, he or she is relegated to the second grader role for future exam sets. This aspect of the graders history is not part of one’s BJCP record and is held in confidence by the Exam Directors. The Exam Directors also reserve the right to modify this policy in specific cases if there are extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the graders.

## **4 Progression Plan to Lead Grader**

The BJCP typically enlists approximately 30 judges as new volunteer graders in a calendar year. Some of these graders only score one set to get a better feel for the examination progress, and this provides useful training for leading CEP or Exam Study courses. However given the extra time and effort it takes to mentor new exam graders, a more preferable outcome is that the judge continues in the grader role, even if he or she is only able to volunteer for a few sets per year. Grading exams at some level is an excellent way to continue one’s beer judging education and give something back to the exam community.

As noted above, the exam grading is typically split into lead and second grader roles. While there are rigorous requirements for being a BJCP exam grader, the distinction between lead and second grader is fuzzier due to our diversity of backgrounds and judging experience. Generally, the lead grader possesses most or all of the following attributes:

1. Active exam grader (has graded at least once in the past two years),
2. Has graded at least four exam sets in the past two years,
3. Is up-to-date on any changes made to the BJCP exam or scoring process,
4. Has completed exam grading assignments on a timely basis,

5. Has demonstrated the ability to complete RTPs with clear, concise and constructive feedback, and
6. Has demonstrated the capability to mentor apprentice and junior graders.

Most of these attributes are teachable, but it does take a few exam sets to move up the learning curve. A typically progression path is as follows:

1. **Apprentice grader.** These graders have typically scored only one or two sets, or do not score exams on a regular basis. They should review the RTPs, but do not take an active role in their completion. They still provide a valued service by providing supporting scores to the lead grader and AD.
2. **Grader.** After one or two exam sets, these graders take an increasing level of responsibility for completing the RTPs. For example, with most exam sets having 12 exams, they may take on completing two RTPs in their third grading assignment and then four RTPs in their fourth grading assignment.
3. **Lead grader.** These graders have the experience and ability to take responsibility for at least half of the RTPs in an exam set. Many of these individuals are involved in the mentoring and coaching of new exam graders and also contribute in other ways to the homebrewing community.
4. **Associate Exam Director.** These positions are appointed by the BJCP Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the Exam Directors. These individuals have typically been involved with the grading program for several years and have scored over 100 exams. They play a critical role in reviewing the consensus scores assigned by the graders and the written feedback on the RTPs. This is an excellent role for increasing ones visibility in the BJCP, and we have historically rotated one or two lead graders into this role each year. While not formally required, most Exam Directors were previously an Associate Director.
5. **Exam Director.** These positions are appointed by the BJCP Board of Directors. The qualifications and responsibilities for this position, as well as the Associate Exam Director, are provided on the BJCP web site. The AD and ED responsibilities are described here.

## 5 Detailed Chart

The detailed Gantt chart depicting the processing of a single exam set is shown below. For creating this Gantt chart, the exam date was set as January 1, 2014 which results in the examinees receiving their scores and RTPs on May 12, 2014. The May 12<sup>th</sup> date is if the extra two weeks are used in Task 8.4 and the two extra weeks are used in task 9.2. Otherwise the result would be available on April 14, 2014.

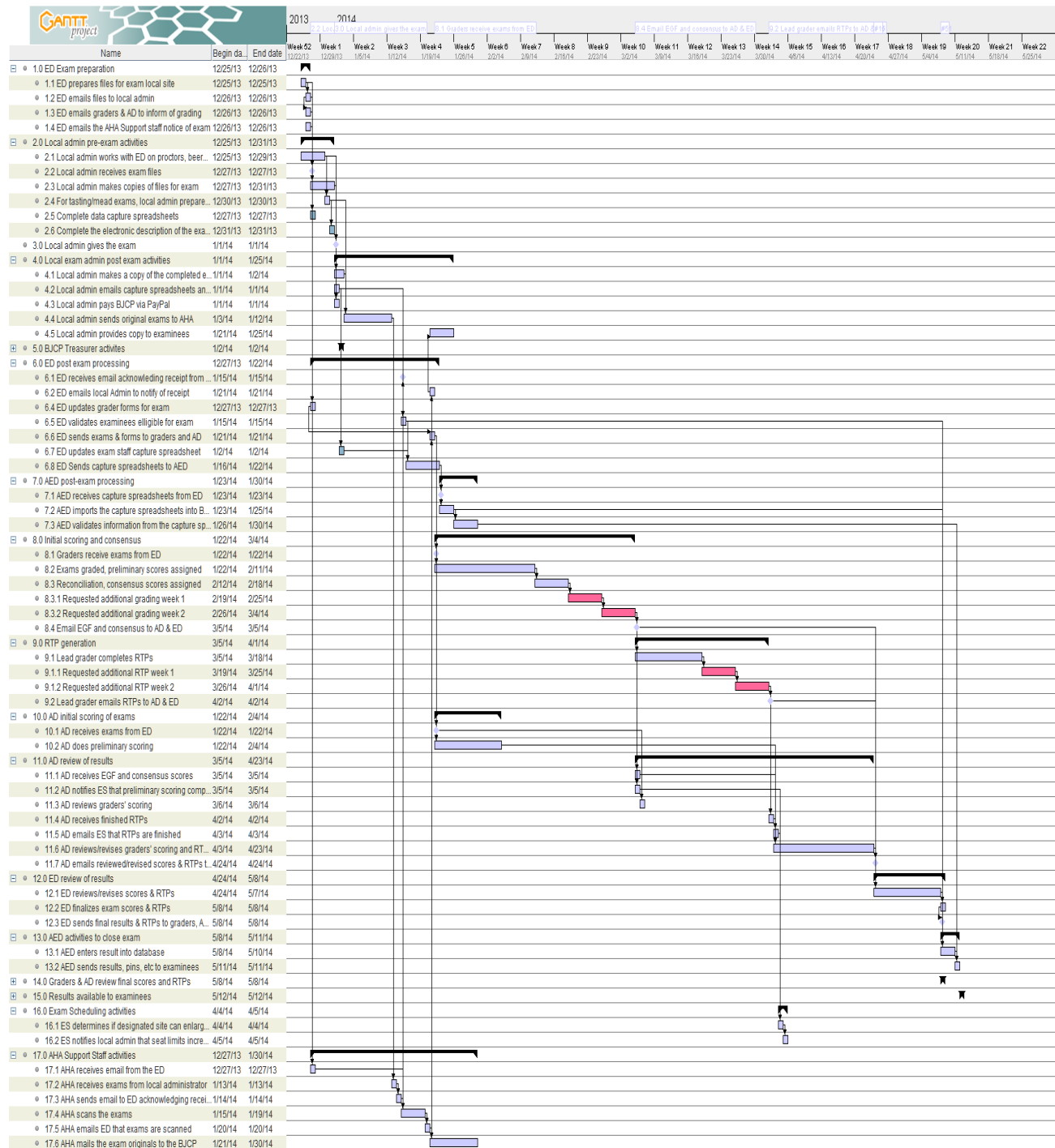


Figure 1 – Grading Process Gantt Chart