

Hill Country Wine Academy WSET Approved Program Provider

Policies & Procedures

Definition of an APP: A WSET Approved Program Provider (or APP) has been granted the provisional right to offer WSET courses at their approved location(s). All offerings and policies & procedures are set forth and controlled by this APP within the regularly updated WSET requirements. Questions or concerns should always be passed through the APP prior to involving WSET directly, if necessary.

Admission Policy

At the time of enrollment, students must be at least 21 years of age and present a valid form of government issued identification.

Attendance Policy

Your success in this program is dependent on the time and effort invested into the program. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. Should a student miss more than 20% of the sessions or experiences excessive tardiness they will be informed via email of the options to postpone the course examination. The student will have until 3 weeks before the exam date to postpone the exam or they will be automatically enrolled in the exam.

Complaints and Appeals

Students are requested to discuss concerns or give feedback directly to the instructor or other manager at the Hill Country Wine Academy. However, should a student have a complaint about the school or instructors, a formal written complaint should be emailed to the school's administrator at info@hcwineacademy.com. Hill Country Wine Academy will respond with intent of resolution within 15 days.

A formal written complaint and proposed resolution must be received by the APP before the same complaint may be escalated to the WSET. If after the formal written complaint and proposed resolution do not bring about a satisfactory resolution to the student, the student will be referred to submit their formal complaint to WSET at QA@wsetglobal.com.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual's personal interest in an individual or assessment interferes with the integrity of the WSET standards for conduct within this APP.

Examples of Conflict of Interest within our APP:

- The teaching of students by an individual who is unable to give equal dedication to students within the classroom due to a personal affiliation,
- The delivery and monitoring of an examination to a direct supervisor,

- The moderation of an assessment of any student by an individual who has a personal interest in the outcome of the assessment,
- The investigation of a formal written complaint to the APP by someone who is unable to act impartially.

If a student of the APP feels there is a conflict of interest, they should submit their concerns immediately via email to info@hcwineacademy.com. The APP will report any conflict of interest that they are aware of or are made aware of. It is acknowledged and expected that some conflicts of interest are acceptable and can be managed, as long as they are immediately brought to the attention of this APP, who will declare the conflict to WSET, who have measures in place to manage such conflicts.

Registration of any students which any administrator at the APP deems to be at risk for being a conflict of interest will be noted by the school administrator at info@hcwineacademy.com and declared to Quality Assurance at QA@wsetglobal.com.

Malpractice and Maladministration

The goal of the Hill Country Wine Academy Malpractice and Maladministration Policy is to protect both the interests of students and the integrity of WSET qualifications by ensuring compliance with both WSET's and this APP's Policies and Procedures. This policy provides information for identifying, reporting, and managing potential malpractice or maladministration and an overview for the potential sanctions.

There are two general categories of non-compliance with WSET Policies and Procedures:

1. Maladministration happens when non-compliance is not intentional but rather, accidental; and
2. Malpractice wherein non-compliance is either intentional or occurs as the result of negligence.

Often the boundaries between these issues are not clearly defined and as such, some incidents may fall into either group depending upon the broader context. For example, a maladministration issue may in fact become a malpractice one via failure of implementation of corrective measures, incident repetition, or additional non-disclosure or misrepresentation attempts. Furthermore, an incident of malpractice may be deemed to be maladministration if there are additional extenuating circumstances. Determination of whether a situation is deemed maladministration or malpractice is first considered by this APP and is completed by WSET following an investigation.

Examples of Maladministration or Malpractice by students may include:

- Failure to submit forms in a timely manner, withholding information or providing false information during or after registration with this APP,
- Cheating which may include the use of unauthorized materials or devices,
- Use of social media platforms to post copyrighted content or exam information,

- Disruptive behavior during an exam,
- Plagiarism by students,
- Impersonation,
- False or inaccurate submission of information in order to gain a qualification,
- Failure to comply with Hill Country Wine Academy's Policies,
- Dissemination of misinformation and/or slandering via social media platforms and/or written communication,
- Failure to comply with WSET Policies and Procedures.

All suspected maladministration or malpractice will be reported by this APP to WSET, who have processes in place to investigate such suspicion. Maladministration or malpractice by students, including but not limited to the above listed examples, may result in measures including removal from the exam room or currently enrolled course of study with the opportunity to reschedule, up to more severe measures such as irreversible expulsion from the Hill Country Wine Academy APP.

Examples of Maladministration or Malpractice by this school could include:

- Lack of adherence to WSET Policies and Procedures or Center Agreement,
- Inadequate adherence to WSET Awards' registration and certification procedures including late student registrations,
- Unqualified and/or unregistered educators or assessors,
- Failure in assessment,
- Forgery or reproduction of certificates, fraudulent claim and/or use of certificates,
- Improper business practices.

Non-compliance in an Assessment (Examination) Non-compliance: During an examination, should an invigilator note non-compliance, they will record the situation and notify the Examinations Officer directly. WSET will be immediately notified by a written note sent directly to Quality Assurance by the Examinations Officer.

Non-compliance by a school staff member or Educator: Should a school staff member or Educator be suspected of non-compliance of WSET and/or Hill Country Wine Academy policies or procedures, the WSET Main Contact will record and submit a detailed report to WSET Quality Assurance directly at QA@wsetglobal.com.

Observed or suspected Malpractice or Maladministration by Candidates: Should a WSET Candidate observe or suspect Malpractice or Maladministration at Hill Country Wine Academy, they will be asked to refer to the Complaints Policy for this APP. Students are not to submit a complaint about suspected Malpractice or Maladministration to WSET Quality Assurance until they have followed the appropriate actions as detailed in the APP's Complaints Policy, which has

the goal of resolving these concerns speedily and internally.

Diversity and Equality

Hill Country Wine Academy does not discriminate in the provision of education or examinations on the grounds of race, religion or beliefs, sex or sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or age (provided the legal minimum age for consumption of 21 is met). We work to ensure that we promote equality by:

- Providing equal registration opportunities,
- Working with students with documented special needs to ensure education and examinations are through our reasonable accommodation policy,
- Requesting anonymous feedback from students in regard to the nature of their educational experience,
- Reviewing policies as needed to continually meet local and national requirements.

Students who believe they have been unfairly discriminated against should contact the school administrator at info@hcwineacademy.com promptly to resolve the issue.

Reasonable Accommodation in the Classroom

Hill Country Wine Academy seeks to make wine education accessible to all regardless of special need or requirements. During enrollment students should utilize the appropriate section on the enrollment form to denote special requirements and/or disabilities, or communicate via email with the Education Director at: kelseykr@williamchriswines.com. The Education Director will discuss potential accommodations with the student and together assess which education accommodations can be made to maintain a fair and equal learning environment for all.

Examples of reasonable accommodations in the classroom are:

- Classroom location on the main floor and as such, has sufficient ADA access,
- Certified assistance animals are allowed on premise,
- For those with visual impairments, students can be placed in the front of the room and all electronic visual aids available on an additional laptop for viewing,
- For those with auditory impairments, students can be placed in the front of the room and recording and/or amplification devices may be utilized to assist with material delivery,
- For those with learning disabilities, the main contact and educator will meet with the student to determine what modifications can be employed to address these needs.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments stands for any action(s) that help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. All requests for reasonable adjustments must be approved by WSET prior to an assessment in order to facilitate fair candidate access to the assessment.

The following are examples of reasonable adjustments as defined by WSET:

- Changing standard assessment arrangements, for example, allowing candidates extra time to

complete the assessment activity;

- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in large text format;
- Providing access facilitators during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or reader;
- Re-organizing the assessment room, such as removal of visual stimuli for an autistic candidate.

Adjustments are put into place to allow fair access to the exam and no adjustments will be given unless they are approved by WSET prior to the assessment in question. To receive approval for a reasonable adjustment request, they must follow the process set forth here. Every candidate will be given the opportunity to make this school aware of their potential need for a reasonable adjustment on the Booking Request Form. Should potential adjustments to the traditional examination format be anticipated due to the student's stated special need(s) or request(s), the candidate will be contacted by an administrator or educator within the APP to discuss further. During this discussion, the candidate may make an official request for a reasonable adjustment, and the APP will complete a Reasonable Adjustment Application Form for submission to WSET, as long as it is at least 5 weeks prior to the examination in question. During completion of a Reasonable Adjustment Application Form, evidence supporting the request for a reasonable adjustment may be requested of the candidate. Upon receipt of the student's request and requested supporting evidence, the school administrator or educator will submit the Reasonable Adjustment Application Form to WSET, the school's Examinations Officer, and the school's Exams Manager. All requests for adjustments must be approved by WSET and the school to maintain a fair exams environment for all.

This APP will maintain a private record of all reasonable adjustment applications. All data collected in communication about reasonable adjustments or form submission for reasonable adjustments will be protected by the standards set forth in the Hill Country Wine Academy WSET Data Protection Policy. Any questions or clarification about the Data Protection Policy should be submitted to info@hcwineacademy.com prior to submitting a Reasonable Adjustments Application Form.

Special Considerations

A special consideration is an action taken by a student who has been at a disadvantage during an assessment due to adverse circumstances, injury or temporary illness to request review by WSET. Students may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Were affected by circumstances beyond their control including bereavement, accident, personal illness, or examination room conditions,
- The alternative assessment arrangements agreed to prior to the assessment were found to be inadequate or not appropriate,
- The application of special consideration would not mislead the use of the certificate as to the candidate's attainment.

Applying for Special Consideration

Students must submit a Special Consideration Application Form to the Hill Country Wine Academy within 5 working days of the assessment date for which special consideration is being sought.

Eligibility will only be considered if the completed form is submitted with supporting documentation.

All data collected in communication about Special Consideration will be protected by the standards set for in the Hill Country Wine Academy WSET Data Protection Policy. Any questions or clarification about the Data Protection Policy should be submitted to info@hcwineacademy.com prior to submitting a Special Consideration Application Form.

Cancellations and Refund Policies

Course Transfers

Course transfers can be made up to 15 days before the course start date on payment of a \$50 administrative fee plus the cost of any additional study materials, which may be required upon course transfer. Course transfers may not be able to be carried forward to a subsequent academic year. Any requests for transfers must be sent in writing via email kelseykr@williamchriswines.com and to info@hcwineacademy.com.

Examination dates are connected to the course onto which you book, and any transfer to an alternative date will incur an administration fee of \$50. All examination transfer requests must be made in writing at least 21 business days prior to the *original* examination date. Any examination transfer request made within 21 business days will be treated as a re-test with all associated re-testing fees, which are published on our website at www.hcwineacademy.com. Any requests for examination transfers must be sent via email to: kelseykr@williamchriswines.com and to info@hcwineacademy.com.

Student Cancellations

Students who cancel within 14 business days of registration, and at least 14 business days prior to the start of the course will receive a full refund of payment minus a \$50 non-refundable registration fee, providing any student-received course materials are returned unmarked. Cancellations after this time will forfeit all payments made. Any requests for cancellation must be sent via email to: kelseykr@williamchriswines.com and info@hcwineacademy.com.

Cancellations by the APP

The APP reserves the right to cancel any class session or exam and will strive to do so within 48 hours of the beginning of the class session or exam whenever possible. Upon cancellation the APP will immediately notify affected candidates. If any candidate is not able to attend the session once it is rescheduled, the student will be considered for a full refund if a suitable alternative is not able to be found.

Replacement Requests and Name Changes

Replacement Pins and Certificates

Pins and official WSET certificates may be replaced upon request in writing directly to the Hill Country Wine Academy APP at info@hcwineacademy.com. Any request may be followed up with a

request for more information or related proof of loss, and a Replacement Request Form must be completed by the candidate unless the APP agrees to submit a form on the candidate's behalf and with the candidates written consent. The Replacement Request Form will be submitted by the candidate directly to the Examinations Department of WSET (unless otherwise decided) and WSET will submit a link for payment directly to the candidate. Payment must be received prior to WSET processing a new pin and certificate.

Found Certificates and Pins

For candidates who have requested or received a replacement pin or certificate, or both, if the original certificate and pin are in possession of the candidate, they must be returned directly to WSET in London. Any original certificate or pin that is found at any time must be returned. Candidates will be responsible for any courier costs associated with the return.

Legal Name Changes

Each Candidate will be asked to fill out their legal information prior to registration with the Hill Country Wine Academy. This information is required to match a government ID that is not expired, and the provided information will be tied to your WSET candidate number upon exam registration. Should a legal name change take place, a candidate registered with the Hill Country Wine Academy must fill out Legal Name Change paperwork, and at least 2 weeks prior to being registered for any further WSET examination.

Requests for an updated certificate due to a legal name change must be submitted in writing to info@hcwineacademy.com and are granted on a case-by-case basis by the WSET Exams team. Relevant supporting documentation must be provided by the candidate upon submitting their request. Certificate replacements due to a legal name change are subject to an administrative fee of \$65 for each occurrence. If the previous certificate is requested to be returned to the Hill Country Wine Academy or to WSET in London, the candidate must comply as requested and will be responsible for any shipping cost associated.

Hill Country Wine Academy Candidate Data Processing

Due to the nature of the WSET programs, Hill Country Wine Academy may be required to obtain and store certain candidate personal data (e.g., name, individual demographic information, physical or mental health conditions, age, birth date, address, billing information, etc.) about students. Furthermore, results of assessments and examinations taken by candidates will also be obtained and stored at Hill Country Wine Academy. Select aspects of a candidate's personal data must be shared with WSET for assessment and examination processing and result certification, such as email and date of birth. The Candidate's personal data will only be shared with WSET in accordance with both the Hill Country Wine Academy and the WSET Data Protection Policy. For questions about candidate data processing please contact info@hcwineacademy.com.

Data Protection

In order to ensure candidate privacy and data collection safety, Hill Country Wine Academy follows the following procedures:

- All students have access to Data Collection policies,
- All candidate data that is collected will be stored in an electronic database accessed by a secure password,
- Any paper documents with confidential information including exams, candidate numbers, course records, etc. will be held in a locked drawer, which is accessible only by authorized staff of the Hill Country Wine Academy,
- All data collected by Hill Country Wine Academy is not sold or shared with third parties for marketing purposes.

Please direct all questions about Hill Country Wine Academy's Data Protection Policy to info@hcwineacademy.com.