



**WSET**

*'creating the trade professional'*

WSET<sup>®</sup> Level 4 Diploma  
in Wines and Spirits

**Candidate Assessment Guide**

**Part 1: Theory**

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Candidate Assessment Guide for the WSET® *Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits* (here referred to as the '**Diploma**').

This guide is designed to help you manage your studies as you work towards the Diploma, explaining the different methods of assessment and how you can prepare for success. It comprises two separate documents to be read in conjunction with each other. Part 1 covers preparing for the theory examinations. Part 2 covers how to approach the tasting examinations.

Whether you work in the industry or are a dedicated wine enthusiast, studying for the Diploma will deepen your knowledge of the world of wine and spirits, build your awareness of the global and domestic markets for these products and develop your ability to taste and assess quality as a professional. The Diploma is a challenging qualification which requires commitment and application but it is an opportunity to acquire expertise in a fascinating subject and one which we hope you will enjoy.

We wish you well in your studies and look forward to welcoming you to the global community of Diploma graduates.

**The WSET Awards Team**

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# How should I approach my theory studies? 1

The Diploma follows the WSET *Level 3 Award in Wines* (previously the *Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits*), but its scope – both in terms of what you need to know and how you need to apply it – is much broader.

You will have to pass six closed-book examinations (one for each Unit) and one open-book coursework assignment. These assessments are designed to test your knowledge and understanding of the world of wines and spirits in detail, as well as general skills such as research and writing clearly.

All of this means that you will need to plan your studies carefully, settling on a learning strategy that works for you.

## STUDY SKILLS

Study skills are personal and what works for one person may not work for another. If you feel that you have yet to find the right method for you, speak to your educators or ask fellow students for their tips. In this section, we make some suggestions which may help you organise your work throughout the course and in the run-up to the examinations.

### Planning Your Studies

Given the amount of material you will need to cover for the Diploma, planning your studies is especially important. If you have a clear idea of what you are going to do and when, you are more likely to:

- Cover everything you need to study
- Fit your study around your other commitments
- Avoid having to cram just before the exam

Before you get started you should read the latest version of the Specification for the WSET *Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits* (here referred to as the '**Specification**'). This sets out in detail the learning outcomes for each Unit of the Diploma and therefore the standard of knowledge and application required to succeed in the examinations. Reading the Specification carefully before you embark on your studies will help ensure that you cover the necessary material for each Unit in the correct level of detail.

The Specification also provides useful information about how the syllabus is weighted between Units, and lists important regulations which you should be familiar with when you come to take the Diploma examinations.

The next step in planning your studies should be to find out when your examinations will take place and work out what material you need to cover by when. Taking account of the lectures and course activities included in your study programme, you should then allocate time to:

1. Reading and taking notes
2. Consolidating your knowledge
3. Tasting
4. Revising and practising exam technique

### Reading and Taking Notes

Reading and taking notes is the first step in accumulating knowledge. There are many different ways of taking notes and which method you use will be a matter of personal preference. Some people use computers, others pen and paper. Some people write their notes while others highlight sections in a text.

Whichever way you choose to take notes, you should focus on extracting the key points from the learning material you are using. Too much detail can be overwhelming, so try to identify and link common themes between topics as building blocks to structure your learning. By getting to grips with Unit 2 topics such as viticulture and vinification at the start of your studies you can build a solid foundation of knowledge which can streamline the learning process for other Units.

Please refer to Chapter 5 *Recommended Study Materials* for a list of the materials we recommend you work from for the theory examinations.

### **Consolidating Your Knowledge**

Everyone takes on information at different rates. Some people can absorb a lot of detail quickly with minimal difficulty; others prefer to take more time. Consolidation involves reinforcing the knowledge you are acquiring as you study. There are several methods of doing this, active and passive.

By actively reviewing your theory notes, correcting errors and clarifying ambiguities as you cover each topic, you can produce a clear and concise set of notes that you can revise from confidently. By referring to the Specification, you can also check whether or not you have all the details you need for that particular Unit. If you leave space in your consolidated notes, you can return to them and add any new information as necessary.

Another active method of consolidating your knowledge of a specific topic is to try to explain it to someone else. Their questions can focus the mind, helping you to make important connections between material from different Units which might not have been obvious when you first studied the topic.

In addition to consolidating your knowledge actively, you will find that as you read around topics you will pick up new information and examples passively. Keeping up with developments in the wine and spirit industries by reading the trade press can give context to what you are learning. This in turn can provide a fresh perspective and reinforce your understanding of the subject matter. For some people, information acquired in this way is as easy to recall in examination conditions as information that has been learned by heart.

The best approach to consolidating your theory knowledge is likely to be a combination of these active and passive methods.

### **Tasting**

Consolidating your practical knowledge of the wines and spirits covered on the course is also important. You can achieve this by tasting widely, practising not only your tasting technique, but also how to write tasting notes in accordance with the Diploma Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine and the Diploma Systematic Approach to Tasting Spirits.

When you are tasting a wine or spirit you should think carefully about how its aromas, flavours and structural components relate to your theory studies, i.e. what you have learned about that style of wine or spirit and how and where it is made. Your theory knowledge of relevant production factors should help you understand why a wine or spirit tastes as it does. Tasting a particular style of wine or spirit repeatedly when you know how it is made can also create positive associations which reinforce your understanding. This two-way learning process – making connections between the theory and tasting components of the Diploma – is key to success.

For more information on how to approach tasting wines and spirits at Diploma level please refer to the second part of the Candidate Assessment Guide (*Part 2: Tasting*).

### **Revising and Practising Exam Technique**

This is the point when you should get yourself 'exam-fit', i.e. ready to deploy the information that you have



learned in an examination scenario. Revision should be the final push in your studies, when you fine-tune the knowledge you have acquired and commit topics to memory so that you can recall them easily.

In addition to rereading your consolidated notes to ensure you have all of the necessary information front-of-mind, you should test yourself on topics by thinking about how you would answer specific questions. This is also helpful to identify any areas of weakness so you can fill in remaining gaps in your knowledge.

Practising writing your answers in timed conditions is likely to be helpful at this point and you should read the most recent Examiners' Report (available online in the Diploma student area of the Global Campus). This document contains useful examples of candidates' answers to previous exam questions and tips on how to avoid common mistakes.

## 2 The Diploma Examinations

The Diploma examinations will assess your knowledge of the world of wines and spirits by testing both your ability to recall relevant facts correctly and how you apply those facts to the question. It is important to understand at the outset how you will be assessed so that you can maximise the effectiveness of your study technique.

Whichever form of question you are tackling in a Diploma examination, you should:

- **Manage** your time
- **Answer** the question as set
- **Plan** your answer
- **Write** clearly

Doing each of these things will maximise your chances of success.

### Managing Your Time

Diploma examinations are challenging because you have to give detailed written answers to a series of questions in a short space of time. It is vital that you leave yourself enough time to answer every question which you are required to answer. If you do not, you are unlikely to pass, even if you perform well on those questions that you do answer.

To help ensure that you do not run out of time in the examinations, you should practise writing answers in timed conditions as part of your preparation. The examiners are not expecting you to cover every possible

**FIGURE 2.1: SUGGESTED TIMINGS FOR THE CLOSED-BOOK EXAMINATIONS**

Exam	Format	Suggested Timings
<b>Unit 1 (Case Study)</b>	One open-response question to be answered in 75 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 minutes to plan your answer.</li> <li>• 60 minutes to write it.</li> <li>• Five minutes spare (to check your work or to use as a buffer in case you overrun when answering a question).</li> </ul>
<i>The Unit 1 Case Study question will be divided into sections. When you read the question for the first time in the exam, you will need to look at the number of sections and the marks allocated to each at the start of the exam and use this as a guide to how much time you should spend answering each one.</i>		
<b>Unit 2 (Multiple-choice)</b>	100 multiple-choice questions to be answered in 90 minutes.	Timing is rarely an issue in this exam; there is plenty of time to answer all of the multiple-choice questions and to check your responses.
<b>Unit 3 (Theory)</b>	Five questions to be answered in three hours. Questions will be a mix of short-form questions, open-response questions and essay questions.	<p>For this paper you have to answer one compulsory question and four out of six optional questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five minutes to choose which questions you will answer and to use as a buffer if you overrun when answering a question.</li> <li>• 35 minutes per question. For each question you should spend five minutes planning your answer and 30 minutes writing it.</li> </ul>
<b>Units 4, 5 and 6 (Tasting and Theory)</b>	One tasting question in three parts and one short-form theory question in three parts, both to be answered in 65 minutes.	<p>As these are mixed exams with a tasting component and a theory component we recommend spending 30 minutes on the tasting and 35 minutes on the theory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five minutes to plan your three theory answers.</li> <li>• 10 minutes to write each one.</li> </ul>

detail; instead they are looking for evidence that you can demonstrate full knowledge of the topic in the allotted time.

The previous table (Figure 2.1) lists the types of question used in each closed-book examination together with some suggested timings. Further explanation of question types follows in Chapter 3 *What type of question can I expect in the Diploma examinations?*.

### **Answering the Question as Set**

It is vital that you read the question carefully. Every question will contain key words that tell you what you should focus on in your answer. Even if you are accustomed to sitting written exams we recommend that you underline or highlight these key words in the question so that you can plan your answer accordingly. This can focus the mind and help to prevent you straying off-topic.

### **Planning Your Answer**

Planning what you write in answer to an exam question is equally important. How you plan will depend on the type of question, but will most likely involve making some rough notes before you start to write out your answer. It is not possible to suggest a strategy for answering every possible type of question but some suggestions and worked examples appear below.

### **Writing Clearly**

Many candidates – particularly those for whom English is not a first language or those who have limited experience of written examinations – worry about writing style. The examiners are most concerned with how well you demonstrate your understanding of the topic by applying relevant facts to the question. How well you write is of secondary importance. Rather than adopting a writing style which does not come naturally to you, we recommend concentrating on expressing yourself clearly. Often this means using short sentences and the signposting techniques outlined in the *Writing an open-response answer* section in Chapter 3.

If English is not your first language, the examiners will take this into account when marking your script; you will not lose marks for errors in your written English provided that it is intelligible. No candidate will be penalised for poor spelling or grammar if the meaning is clear but you should take particular care to spell correctly any technical vocabulary (such as the names of grape varieties or soil types) and wine terms which appear in languages other than English. This is important whether or not English is your first language.

### 3 What type of questions can I expect in the Diploma examinations?

Diploma examination questions vary in format but are broader in scope than those you may be familiar with from the WSET *Level 3 Award in Wines* (previously the *Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits*). They require you to go beyond simple factual recall to demonstrate your understanding of the syllabus by explaining not just ‘what’ something is but ‘how’ and ‘why’. This approach – known as critical thinking – often involves linking cause and effect and/or considering the wider context to a particular topic. In some cases, you will also have to provide a personal commentary based on an objective evaluation of the facts.

The examiners are not just looking for evidence that you have acquired the necessary knowledge, but that you are able to interpret what you have learned and apply it in a focussed way to answer a specific question. This is the key to success at Diploma level.

There are four types of question used in the closed-book theory examinations:

- Multiple-choice questions (used exclusively in the Unit 2 examination);
- Short-form questions (used in the examinations for Units 3, 4, 5 and 6);
- Open-response questions (used in the Unit 1 case study, the Unit 1 coursework assignment and the Unit 3 examination);
- Essay questions (used exclusively in the Unit 3 examination).

Examples of short-form, open-response and essay questions follow, together with tips on how to plan and structure your answer in each case. The Unit 1 assessments – the coursework assignment and case study – are considered separately in Chapter 4 *The Case Study and Coursework Assignment*.

#### SHORT-FORM QUESTIONS

Short-form questions appear in the examinations for Units 3, 4, 5 and 6 and require you to write a concise answer summarising the main issues in a given topic.

In the **Unit 3 examination**, a short-form question will typically offer you a choice of six topics to write about. You will be expected to write answers on five of these, for example:

*With reference to the wines of the Loire, write about FIVE of the following:*

- Rosé d’Anjou*
- Cabernet Franc*
- Savennières*
- Soils in Touraine*
- Fungal diseases*
- Quincy*

In the **Unit 4, 5 and 6 examinations**, the short-form question is compulsory and you will be expected to write a response on all three topics, for example:

*With reference to fortified wines, write about each of the following:*

- Symington Family Estates*
- Touriga Nacional*
- Sanlúcar de Barrameda*

As you can see, short-form questions can be straightforward as long as you have studied the topic and are able to recall relevant facts to demonstrate your knowledge.

### Planning Short-form Answers

As with all question types, planning your answer is key to success. As short-form questions typically require less information than essay or open-response questions, it may be sufficient to jot down key facts or observations that come to mind as soon as you read the question. These rough notes can form the basis of your answer and help ensure that you do not miss out key details.

A review of past papers will show that certain topics lend themselves to short-form questions. Questions on grape varieties, wine regions and key producers often appear in this format. With this in mind, when you are preparing for the exam we recommend that you give some thought to the kind of detail you would include in each case. This can be a good way to structure your learning.

For example, if asked to write about a grape variety you would probably want to include information about its colour and varietal characteristics (tannin, acidity and flavour), how and where it is grown, any relevant production methods and how all of these factors influence the resulting style of wine. For a producer question, you would want to cover historical background, key brands in their portfolio, principal markets and perhaps how they have responded to local challenges (e.g. land ownership or labour issues).

Remember: answers that not only describe but explain why or give context tend to score more marks; it might be correct to say that Touriga Nacional is thick-skinned, but better answers will always link cause and effect, explaining why this is important in Port production.

Managing your time is particularly important when answering this type of question; you must answer all parts of the question in order to score well.

### Short-form Answer Content

Responses for Unit 3 short-form questions do not need to be as detailed as those for Unit 4, 5 and 6 as there is less time available for each section. However, in order to demonstrate the required understanding of the topic your answers must include a sufficient level of relevant detail. Although much depends on writing style, it would be highly unusual for a candidate to cover sufficient of the main points to pass with just a few sentences of text. Remember, it is important to stay on-topic as no marks are available for irrelevant content, even if it is correct.

Examples of candidate answers to this and other types of question are given in the Examiners' Report which is published each year and available online in the Diploma student area of the Global Campus.

## OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

These questions appear in the Unit 3 examination and require you to write a fuller response in answer to a specific question, rather than simply state facts about a given topic.

As with short-form questions, you should look at past examination papers to familiarise yourself with the kind of topics that are commonly examined in this format.

### Planning Open-response Answers

As open-response questions are more involved than short-form questions, thinking time is important and we recommend that you spend five minutes planning your answers.

There are three distinct parts to the planning process. Firstly, you should **identify what is being asked**, reading the question carefully. Then you should **consider the key points to include** in your answer. Finally, you should **identify relevant examples** to support each point you wish to make. Only when you have done this should you start to write your answer, which you should aim to complete within 30 minutes.

To illustrate how to go about planning an open-response answer, let us work through the following Unit 3 question:

Explain how grape growing and winemaking determine the style of the following wines:

- a) *Beaujolais Nouveau*
- b) *Old Vine Barossa Valley Shiraz*

(Each section carries equal weighting)

**Step 1: what is being asked?** – This is the vital first step that ensures that you answer the question that has been set. The key words in this question are ‘grape growing’, ‘winemaking’ and ‘determine the style’. The examiners are not looking for you to write everything you know about these two wines, but to link grape growing and winemaking practice in these regions to the resulting style of each wine.

Note that the wines are specified styles, not simply ‘Beaujolais’ and ‘Barossa Valley Shiraz’ but ‘Beaujolais *Nouveau*’ and ‘*Old Vine* Barossa Valley Shiraz’. The question is deliberately narrow in focus to direct your answer. Information about Beaujolais Crus, for example, or Old Vine Barossa Valley Grenache, would not be relevant here and would not win you marks.

Because the question is clearly split into two sections, you would be best advised to tackle each part individually. It is always preferable to follow the structure of the question. Note also that each section carries an equal weighting of marks. This means you have to plan your answer carefully to cover both wines in equal detail. Candidates often make the mistake of attempting a comprehensive answer to one section at the expense of the other. Allocating equal planning and writing time to both will maximise your chances of success.

**Step 2: what are the key points to cover?** – The question is asking you to explain how each wine ends up tasting as it does. You could start by jotting down some ideas about how these wines differ in style, thinking about cause and effect, i.e. what grape growing/winemaking factors are relevant? Grape characteristics, climate, soils, training and harvest techniques are all likely to influence the style of the finished wine. By listing each of these factors as headings in your notes you can ensure you cover the same key points for each wine.

**Step 3: what examples can I bring into my answer to demonstrate my understanding?** – Having identified what you need to focus on, you should consider the key examples that will form the detail of your answer.

Figure 3.1 gives a possible plan for section (a) of the question. This is not definitive and there are other valid points that you could include but this should give an indication of what the examiners would be looking for in answer to this part of the question.

You would need to plan your answer to section (b) in a similar fashion. You may wish to complete this exercise as part of your exam preparation.

FIGURE 3.1: ANSWER PLAN

Beaujolais Nouveau*Style:*

*An approachable, easy-drinking red, deep purple in colour with medium(+) intensity of raspberry, kirsch and banana aromas. Simple and youthful. Dry in style with medium(+) acidity, medium alcohol, medium flavour intensity of simple red fruits and low levels of soft tannins. Acceptable to good quality. Drink now, not suitable for ageing. Inexpensive.*

*Achieved by:*Grape growing factors

- *Gamay grape – produces fragrant wines with raspberry and cherry fruit and low tannin. These characteristics are enhanced by carbonic maceration.*
- *The climate in Beaujolais is warmer and drier than the rest of Burgundy so there is less vintage variation. In any case, Gamay is naturally resistant to rot. This, together with the fact that plantings are often on fertile alluvial plains, ensures high yields (60hl/ha) are possible for bulk production. This explains the basic quality of most Beaujolais Nouveau.*
- *Hand harvesting is required because whole bunches are needed for carbonic/semi-carbonic maceration.*

Winemaking factors

- *Carbonic/semi-carbonic maceration process extracts colour but not tannin to give a light, soft, juicy wine with distinctive kirsch/bubblegum aromas for early-drinking.*
- *Bunches of grapes are put in vats filled with CO<sub>2</sub> where they undergo intracellular fermentation. This produces alcohol and juice as grapes burst and are pressed under their own weight.*
- *Wines are fermented in stainless steel and are bottled immediately for early release and consumption. No oak ageing.*

**Writing an Open-response Answer**

Whether or not you choose to plan your answer as suggested above, you need to have a clear idea of how you are going to communicate your knowledge to the examiner. This is particularly important with open-response questions and essay questions which normally require a more detailed application of knowledge than short-form questions.

Introductions and conclusions are not usually necessary for open-response questions where you are not asked to give a personal commentary on the topic. However, in some instances, it can be helpful to write a brief opening sentence or two to set the scene and explain what you will focus on in your answer. Likewise, a short concluding paragraph which summarises what you have addressed may also be worthwhile. Tips on how to write introductions and conclusions appear in the *Essay Questions* section below.

Signposting is an important technique which is relevant for all question types, from short-form questions to open-response questions and essays. By grouping points under subheadings or underlining key words you can make your answer more engaging and the examiner can see straight away that you have identified the key issues.

Note that the use of bullet points in isolation is rarely acceptable; the examiner will be looking for you to express yourself in full sentences, ordered into paragraphs. Aim to make one point per paragraph, with one short sentence communicating the core message and two or three further sentences to illustrate what you are saying. You should include clear examples to support your point as well as highlighting any exceptions.

The order in which you should set out your answer is usually determined for you by the examiner, as noted in the above example. Try to tackle each section as indicated, presenting the most relevant points first.

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Essay questions only appear in the Unit 3 examination. You will be expected to write your answer in 35 minutes in order to devote equal amounts of time to the other questions on the paper.

For many students this is the question type that causes most concern, often because of misplaced fears about the style of writing that is required. In fact, there are many similarities between open-response questions and essay questions. The three-stage planning process, the importance of planning your time and the approach to writing your answer are exactly the same for essay questions as they are for open-response questions.

The principal difference between these two question types is that essays require you to offer a personal commentary on a particular topic. This is an opportunity not just to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject, but also to weigh up both sides of an argument and present an informed conclusion. Here the examiner is not looking simply for facts to demonstrate your knowledge, but your ability to think critically about a topic and articulate your reasoning.

Let us consider the following essay question as an example:

*'Discuss the progress that has been made in Sicily in moving from bulk wine production to making quality wines with distinct varietal and geographical character.'*

### Planning an Essay

The approach to planning an essay is exactly the same as that recommended for open-response questions: identify what is being asked, identify the key points to cover and identify the examples you will use to illustrate your answer.

Unlike an open-response answer, a successful essay always contains three separate sections: an introduction, the main body of the answer and a conclusion. Using the above question as an example, let us look at each section in turn.

In your **introduction** you should define any terms that are open to interpretation in the question and set the context for your answer, perhaps touching on why this topic is of relevance in the wine industry. Here, for example, you could open by saying that Sicily is one of the most significant wine producing regions in Italy, with a long history of bulk wine production and that it is now reinventing itself as a fine wine producer. Two or three sentences are sufficient, so this should not take up too much of your time.

The **main body** of your answer should incorporate all of the information you wish to include in answer to the question, using examples to demonstrate your understanding. Here it would be sensible to start with the historical background, explaining how Sicily came to be an important bulk producer and why that is changing, if you believe it is. You could then consider how there has been a shift to the production of wines with varietal and geographical character. This might involve naming some of the indigenous grape varieties which have come to prominence recently, as well as identifying newly designated wine regions and producers who are championing terroir-driven wines.

Your **conclusion** is a final paragraph in which you should summarise the key points that you have made and offer a personal opinion. Here the question invites you to discuss the progress that has been made so you could finish with a statement as to whether you believe enough progress has been made or whether Sicily still has some way to go. Does the future of wine production in Sicily lie with bulk production or new-wave wines? Given the commercial importance of bulk wines, is a move to terroir-driven wines in fact desirable? There is no right or wrong answer, but the examiner will be looking for evidence that you have weighed up the arguments and formed a view which is substantiated by the points you have made in the main body of your answer.



## The Case Study and Coursework Assignment 4

Unit 1 (The Global Business of Alcoholic Beverages) is assessed differently to the other Units. The examination comprises a closed-book theory paper in the format of a case study and an open-book written coursework assignment. Both elements will assess your ability to research a topic independently, interpret data and give a personal commentary on your findings.

The **case study** examination comprises one question to be answered in 75 minutes. Unlike the closed-book examinations for the other Units, you will be made aware of the subject of the examination – but not the question – in advance. One month before the examination the WSET will publish a case study brief which will detail the topic that you need to research. Once you have completed your research, you should consolidate and revise what you have learned so that you are prepared to answer an unseen question on it in examination conditions.

In addition to the case study, you will have to submit one **coursework assignment** of 2500 – 3000 words in length. This is a form of extended essay on a given topic which you complete in your own time and submit to a deadline in November or April.

There are two common themes to both parts of the Unit 1 examination which require further explanation: research and personal commentary.

### RESEARCH

Independent research is a core assessment objective for Unit 1. In essence, researching a topic involves finding out something and consolidating the information you gather in order to answer a question on it. In this sense it is no different to studying for any other Diploma examination; it is simply that you have to identify and select which sources to use, rather than relying on those recommended in the learning materials.

If you have limited experience of research from your previous studies it may be helpful to consider the following four-step approach:

1. Preparation
2. Preliminary research
3. Analysis
4. Secondary research

**Preparation** involves reading the case study or coursework assignment brief carefully to identify the core issues that you are being asked to research. Then, before consulting any sources, write down what you know about the subject. Thinking in very broad terms about the issue can help you gather your thoughts and structure your research project.

**Preliminary research** involves working out which sources to consult to build up your knowledge of the subject. A first step might be to consult *The Oxford Companion to Wine* and the WSET Study Guides to familiarise yourself with the key issues. You could then choose to gather articles from wine industry magazines/journals, books and the Internet which you think might be relevant.

You should be selective when choosing the source material to consult for your case study or coursework assignment. Technical journal articles or other academic works are likely to be more authoritative than consumer magazines, for example, although which sources are most appropriate for a particular topic will depend on the brief. You should always aim to use a range of sources of different types to demonstrate the scope of your research.

Remember: your sources must be credible. When quoting or relying on someone else's work in support of an argument, you should satisfy yourself of the author's reputation: can they be considered a reliable source for the information or analysis they are providing?

**Analysis** involves evaluating the data that you have gathered from various sources and identifying key themes.

You should ask yourself whether you have enough information to answer the coursework assignment question or cover the topic identified in the case study brief comprehensively. When you come to write your answer, you will need to be able to show an awareness of different points of view on the issue to demonstrate to the examiners that you have researched the topic fully. By this stage, you will also have started to form your own opinions on the core issues, so consider what evidence supports your view and what undermines it.

**Secondary research** involves filling in any gaps in your knowledge that you have identified. You can follow up leads using your original sources or speak to industry insiders or opinion formers to gain more insight. First-hand evidence from someone close to the issue can lend credibility to your work, though you should always take care to identify who you have spoken to and the sources you have consulted.

### PERSONAL COMMENTARY

In addition to assessing your ability to research a topic independently, both elements of the Unit 1 examination require you to give personal commentary on your findings. This involves evaluating the issues objectively and reaching an informed conclusion, just as you would do for an essay question in the Unit 3 examination.

Remember: the examiners are not just looking for you to summarise the points of view of others on a given topic; they are looking for evidence of your own critical thinking. This means that you have to be able to present a well-reasoned argument as to which perspective is, in your opinion, more valid. However the question is phrased, personal commentary is more than simply giving your opinion about something. You

### FIGURE 4.1: CASE STUDY BRIEF

#### The Importance of Generic Promotional Bodies for the Wine Industry

Many wine producing countries have generic promotional bodies. One example is the Deutsches Weininstitut. Part of their 'who we are' statement is as follows:

*'The Deutsches Weininstitut (DWI, or German Wine Institute) is the German wine industry's marketing organization responsible for the generic promotion of the quality and sales of German wine domestically and abroad. At this time, some 40 men and women, under the leadership of the managing director, work in the interest of German wine at the wine institute's headquarters on Gutenbergplatz in Mainz. In addition, there are more than a dozen 'Information Bureaus for German Wine' in the most important export markets, from London to New York to Tokyo.'*

Another example is the Wine Institute of California, which describes its brief as follows:

*'The Wine Institute of California uses funding from the Department of Agriculture in Washington DC, under an agricultural export support programme, to raise the profile and promote the sales of California wine outside the USA. It maintains offices in the major markets of: the UK, Canada, Japan, and mainland Europe; and part-time or PR support in emerging markets such as the Far East.'*

Where a national generic body exists, the size of its budget and the source of that money will affect how it goes about its work. As a result, generic bodies have adopted various tactics in their efforts to promote their wines.

There has always been much debate in the wine industry about the importance or otherwise of generic promotional bodies. In some cases (e.g. Wine Australia), the national generic promotional body has been thought to have played a significant role in the development of key markets. In others cases (e.g. Italy), there has either been no national generic promotional body or any initiatives that have been taken have been perceived to be largely ineffective.

must be able to show a broad understanding of all of the issues, giving reasons to support your position. You should also present evidence as to why the opposing points of view are incorrect or unsound.

## THE CASE STUDY

The case study brief is worded carefully to ensure that you focus your research on specific aspects of the topic.

Unlike the coursework assignment, the format of the case study means that you do not know the specific question that you will have to answer when you are researching the topic. It is therefore particularly important that you have read and understood the case study brief in its entirety before you embark on your research.

Let us consider the case study brief shown in Figure 4.1. There are three key aspects to this brief which should inform the scope of your research:

1. Generic bodies' mission statements and the role these organisations play in promoting a country's wines;
2. The financing of generic bodies and how this impacts their work;
3. The ongoing debate about the relevance of generic bodies.

While the case study brief directs you to gather and interpret information on certain aspects of the topic, it is important that you do not try to second guess the examiners by learning a pre-prepared answer in advance. The case study examination is a test of your ability to think on your feet and tailor the knowledge you have acquired through your research to a specific question. Having a thorough grasp of the key issues and relevant examples, together with your own ideas, should suffice.

The question in the exam will be limited to the issues set out in the case study brief so provided you have researched all aspects of the brief and consolidated your knowledge with revision you should be well prepared.

### The Closed-book examination

When you open the case study exam paper you will see the question for the first time. It will be printed alongside a copy of the case study brief so that you can refer back to this if necessary. The question will be divided into sections, all of which will need to be answered.

The examination question for the above example is given in Figure 4.2. As with all examination questions, it may be helpful to highlight or underline key words to ensure that you understand exactly what is being asked. You are free to treat each section of the question separately or, as they follow logically, attempt a composite response which covers all three sections in turn. Whichever approach you choose, you should pay close attention to the weighting of the marks between sections to ensure you allocate your time sensibly.

If you have researched the topic thoroughly, you will likely have more information than you can use. Planning is therefore essential to stay on-topic as you write, and we recommend you use the same three-part planning process that you would for open-response questions and essays. The level of detail required for the case study is higher than for other question types because the subject matter has been disclosed in

### FIGURE 4.2: CASE STUDY EXAMINATION QUESTION

#### The Importance of Generic Promotional Bodies for the Wine Industry

Give an overview of the sort of mission statements and key objective adopted by the various national generic promotional bodies. Describe the activities undertaken by the generic bodies in pursuit of their objectives. (40% weighting)

Where does the money come from to finance generic bodies? Discuss the tension that this can create. (30% weighting)

How effective do you think national generic promotional bodies are in developing the market for their country's wines? Do they represent value for money? Suggest ways in which generic bodies might improve their performance. (30% weighting)

advance and you have longer to write your answer. To succeed you will need to have a thorough command of the relevant material. As the examiners are expecting sophisticated arguments which address the issues comprehensively, together with personal commentary, short answers are rarely sufficient. If your handwriting is of average size you should expect to write in the region of five sides of paper in answer to a case study question.

Be aware that you should, wherever possible, indicate the sources you have consulted during your research and attribute any ideas that are not your own.

### **THE COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENT**

The coursework assignment is an extended essay of 3000 words in length which you are free to write in your own time but must submit to a specified deadline.

The coursework assignment should be approached in the same way as the case study, using the research and planning processes outlined above. However, as you know the question to be answered from the outset, you should be able to conduct your research in a more targeted way.

As you do not complete the coursework assignment in examination conditions there are additional requirements that you must comply with. These are set out in the *Coursework Assignment Guidelines* section at the end of this chapter.

#### **How to Write Your Coursework Assignment**

If this is the first time that you have had to produce a piece of writing of this length, you could consider tackling the coursework assignment in three phases:

1. Plan and write a first draft;
2. Review your first draft, editing content as necessary;
3. Proofread the final version, checking for misspellings and other errors.

#### **Plan and First Draft**

The first step is to make a detailed plan of what you intend to cover, as you would with an open-response or essay question in examination conditions. Having collated all the data from your research, formed your opinions and decided what to include, think about how to order the information in a logical way. You should then write the first draft of your coursework assignment without worrying about the word count. Most candidates find that they write over 3000 words at this stage.

#### **Review of First Draft**

After you have completed your first draft you should put it to one side for a few days before re-reading it. When you do come back to it, this will make it easier to sense-check what you have written and identify what can or should be removed. As you read each paragraph, consider what point you are trying to make and ask yourself whether you can make that point more efficiently. It is easy to use too many linking words, adjectives and adverbs which can be edited out without changing the meaning of the point you are trying to make. Usually, this process will be sufficient to bring the word count down to under the 3000 word limit.

At this stage you should be checking that you have referenced all the sources you have quoted correctly. As explained, references usually take the form of footnotes to the text in which you cite the work that you have quoted, summarised or otherwise relied on to make a point. The full detail of every work consulted and referenced in this way must be included in your bibliography. Take care to ensure all of the relevant information is included, as set out in the *Coursework Assignment Guidelines* section.

#### **Proofreading the Final Version**

This is a vital final check to ensure that your assignment is presentable to the examiner. Proofread your work carefully to root out any spelling mistakes or typographical errors. Check that you have appended your bibliography and that this details all of the works you have consulted.

### SAMPLE EXTRACT FROM A COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENT

To assist you with the presentation of your assignment and demonstrate how to use footnotes, we have included the following conclusion from a candidate's coursework assignment (see Figure 4.3 below). The question related to the role of science and technology in wine production.

#### FIGURE 4.3: COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENT EXTRACT

##### **Concluding Remarks**

*In the future there are likely to be two very important factors which will present wine science with very different challenges; global warming and consumer pressure.*

##### **Climate Change**

*If the figure of +0.3°C every decade quoted by Pancho Campo and others<sup>1</sup> is correct the impact on wine science will be significant.*

*As large areas of the global vineyard would become challenging or unsuitable for viticulture, researchers will need to develop rootstocks and clones that are more drought tolerant and delay ripening. Ironically, growers may need to re-introduce some shade to help keep the grapes cool and retain flavour. Growers will also need to reassess their water management strategies as availability is reduced and costs go up, or plant in cooler areas with excellent water retaining soils.*

*Temperature control in the winery will be even more important and as alcohol levels rise there will be a greater need to intervene with sophisticated technologies such as reverse osmosis or spinning cone to produce balanced wines.*

*Demand will grow to reduce carbon footprint and energy inputs throughout the supply chain and to increase the use of renewable energy.*

##### **Consumer Pressure**

*Wine science has given consumers the consistent, fruity wines they love. However, as the pressures of exchange rates, taxes and price promotions put growing pressures on both retailers and producers<sup>2</sup>, the wine world will increasingly fragment towards two opposing poles:*

*(a) Individual flavour and provenance at a premium price will be the choice of the minority. Science has a role in this: the main thrust of Gladstones' book was to fully account for terroir in scientific terms and inform future vineyard management techniques and site selection<sup>3</sup>. However, some will turn away from science altogether. The rise of natural and biodynamic wines, all be it on a small scale to date, are clear evidence of this.<sup>4</sup>*

*(b) Multiple retailers will not abandon a large body of customers who prefer inexpensive fruity and off-dry wines to price inflation. To reach certain price points British and made-wine<sup>5</sup> will come to the fore with brands with a potential to reach a size far in excess of those currently limited by geographical designations.<sup>6</sup> Such products with their tight QA and cost parameters, their need for healthy grapes and clean fruity flavours and their complex blending demands will place ever greater demands on scientists to deliver a consistent product. For the majority of consumers science will remain the driving force behind their enjoyment.*

*These market pressures represent at once the triumph and the limits of science. Its theories and experiments can be used to inform vineyard management and bring ever greater control to the winemaking process but how the resulting wines are received by consumers is ultimately beyond its capacity to predict or explain.*

<sup>1</sup> The website of the World Conference on Climate Change and Wine <http://www.climatechangeandwine.com/> convened by Pancho Campo in 2006, 2008 and 2011 (last accessed 25/10/11).

<sup>2</sup> This debate surrounding the pressures on retailers and producers is very topical. The producers view was recently put by Cox in Harpers Issue no: 69, October 21 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Gladstones, Wine, Terroir and Climate Change, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Waldin, *Biodynamic Wines*.

<sup>5</sup> Made-wine is defined by HM Revenue & Customs as "a wide variety of drinks that do not fall under the heading of spirits, wine, beer or cider but are made from the alcoholic fermentation of any substance or the mixing of wine with another substance." <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/wicimanual/wici6030.htm> (last accessed 30/10/11).

<sup>6</sup> Dan Jago of Tesco predicted the rise of made-wine in a speech to the 2011 WSET BACK course. This was supported by personal communications with Laura Jewell MW of Tesco and industry commentator Robert Joseph. Joseph also sees a significant future for off-dry wines, especially Moscatel, and aromatized low alcohol wines because they are not very "wine-like". His views on wine trending were articulated at 2011 WSET BACK course and 2011 International Sparkling Wine Symposium.

## COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

### Word Count

The coursework assignment has a mandatory minimum word count of 2500 words and a mandatory maximum word count of 3000 words. This means that your assignment **must** be between 2500 and 3000 words in length. If your assignment is less than 2500 words long it will be disqualified and you will fail this component of Unit 1. Any words in excess of 3000 will not be marked by the examiner.

Your references, bibliography and any appendices to your assignment are excluded from the total word count. Note, however, that the use of footnotes and appendices to make points that should be included in the body of the assignment is unacceptable.

### Spelling, Grammar and Clear Presentation

A proportion of the marks available for the coursework assignment are allocated to spelling, grammar and presentation (which includes referencing and the use of a bibliography) so you should take particular care with these areas. Mistakes can be picked up with proofreading or using computer spellcheck functions so you should always check your work.

If English is not your first language, the examiners will take this into account when marking your assignment; you will not lose marks for lack of fluency or errors in your written English provided that the meaning is clear.

Clear presentation is straightforward; you can use different text styles, bold type or underlining for headings, bullet points, etc. to format your assignment and make it easier to read.

You are encouraged to write your assignment on a computer but you may hand-write it if you wish: both formats are equally acceptable.

### References

You **must** include references in your coursework assignment. This means that every source you quote, summarise or rely on to make a point in your assignment must be cited in full, either in footnotes to the text or in brackets within the body of the assignment.

This shows the examiner that you have researched the topic fully and enables verification of your source material. It also helps the reader to distinguish between your thoughts and those of others and so can avoid accusations of plagiarism.

The 'Harvard system' is one of the most well-recognised referencing systems and guides to this and alternative systems are widely available online. Which system you use is up to you; the examiners do not favour any one over another. Your references should, however, meet the following basic criteria:

- For web sources, you should include the full URL which will take the reader directly to the relevant page. You should also include the date when you last accessed the link.
- For books and journals or magazines, you should include the author's name, the publication and article title and the relevant page numbers.
- For unwritten sources (e.g. people you have interviewed), you should include as much detail as possible to enable the examiner to follow up as necessary.

### Bibliography

You **must** include a bibliography as an appendix to your coursework assignment.

Your bibliography should contain a list of all of the works that you have referred to, quoted or relied on in the body of your assignment. There is no prescribed format for your bibliography but you could consider dividing the works by type (books, journals, websites, etc.) or by subject.

The works you have consulted should be listed alphabetically by author surname and should include the full title, edition, publisher and date of publication. Web resources should be cited with the full URL and the date when you last accessed the relevant page. For example:

Gladstones, John; *Wine, Terroir and Climate Change* [Wakefield Press 2011]

Limmer, Alan; *The Chemistry of Post-bottling Sulfides in Wines* [[http://nzic.org.nz/CiNZ/articles/Limmer\\_69\\_3.pdf](http://nzic.org.nz/CiNZ/articles/Limmer_69_3.pdf) (last accessed 30/10/11)]

Robinson et al; *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (4th Edition) [Oxford University Press 2015]

### Footnotes and Appendices

As indicated above, footnotes are a useful tool for referencing and their contents are not included in the word count. They should, however, be used cautiously and in moderation.

Where more than a sentence of text appears in a footnote the examiner will consider whether the point being made should have been included in the body of your assignment. If so, it will be disregarded by the examiner and you will not gain marks for that observation. The example footnotes that appear in the sample assignment extract above are at the limit of what is acceptable in terms of length and content.

Appendices are acceptable if you wish to record interviews or other referenced material which cannot be readily accessed by the examiner. Note that irrelevant information contained in appendices will be disregarded by the examiner and undermines the credibility of your work.

### Collusion and Plagiarism

The coursework assignment must be entirely your own work. This means that you should not collaborate with other students or your teachers to produce it. Presenting a piece of work as your own when it is in fact the work of a group is considered collusion and is a serious disciplinary matter.

Plagiarism is claiming another person's thoughts or work product as your own. Copying or paraphrasing material from any source (a textbook, article, electronic file, etc.) or from a fellow student is plagiarism. Take care not to share your notes or research findings with other students if you suspect they may copy them. You may find it difficult to prove that you were the originator of the work and where it is unclear which piece of work is the copy and which the original, both candidates will be penalised.

Quoting directly from a source without using quotation marks or otherwise using information in your assignment the source of which is unreferenced may also constitute plagiarism. For this reason, you **must** make sure that every source you have consulted and relied on in the preparation of your assignment is correctly referenced throughout the text and listed in your bibliography.

Penalties for plagiarism and collusion as with other forms of cheating include an automatic fail grade for the assignment or for Unit 1 as a whole. You may also be disqualified from future WSET examinations.

## 5 Recommended Study Materials

The below documents are specifically designed to help you study and prepare for the Level 4 assessments:

- WSET Level 4 Diploma Specification
- Candidate Assessment Guides
- Study guides for Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
- Dave Broom & WSET, *Distilling Knowledge: A Professional Guide to Spirits and Liqueurs*

*The Oxford Companion to Wine 4<sup>th</sup> edition* is a recommended resource for this course, however, students are encouraged to read widely and can equally use other resources, such as those suggested below.

The WSET Study Guides for Units 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, together with *Distilling Knowledge* and *The Oxford Companion to Wine* are all available to buy from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust or via your course provider. The WSET Study Guide for Unit 1 is updated every year and is available online in the Diploma student area of the Global Campus.

### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

We would encourage you to read widely around the subjects you are studying. This is the best way of keeping up to date with developments in the wine industry. Some suggested resources are listed below.

#### The Internet

Please note that web links that follow are not intended to be comprehensive and that web addresses and content can change without notice. The WSET is not responsible for the content published on these sites and, whilst they have been identified as suitable for Diploma students, you should exercise your own judgement as to their integrity and relevance.

#### Periodicals and Journals

Periodicals tend to have a local rather than an international circulation so it is not possible to list all of the ones that you might find helpful here. Please ask your teaching institution for advice.

#### Books

The books listed below may be helpful to you in your studies, but you should not feel that you need to buy them all. Although some of the books are out of print they were all, at the time of publication, available via online retailers or in digital format.

### GENERAL BOOKS AND WEBSITES

WSET, *Understanding Wines, Explaining Style and Quality*

Hugh Johnson & Jancis Robinson, *The World Atlas of Wine* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Oz Clarke, *Oz Clarke's Wine Atlas* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)

Tom Stevenson, *The Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Michael Schuster, *Essential Winetasting* (New Edition) (though do note the Candidate Assessment Guide Part 2: Tasting should be students' key reference when preparing for Diploma tasting assessments)

<http://www.jancisrobinson.com>

Google Earth

### UNIT 2: WINE PRODUCTION

David Bird, *Understanding Wine Technology* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)

Stephen Skelton, *Viticulture*

Oz Clarke & Margaret Rand, *Grapes and Wines*

Jamie Goode, *Wine Science*



**UNIT 3: LIGHT WINES OF THE WORLD****France**

Andrew Jefford, *The New France*

Oz Clarke, *Bordeaux: the Wines, the Vineyards, the Winemakers*

Stephen Brook, *Bordeaux: Medoc & Graves*

Clive Coates, *The Wines of Burgundy*

Jasper Morris, *Inside Burgundy*

John Livingstone-Learmonth, *The Wines of the Northern Rhône*

<http://www.inao.gouv.fr>

<http://www.bordeaux.com> (this will direct you to the other local AC websites)

<http://www.bourgogne-wines.com>

<http://www.beaujolais.com>

<http://www.alsacewine.com>

<http://www.vinsvalde Loire.fr>

<http://www.vins-centre-loire.com>

<http://www.vins-rhone.com>

<http://www.languedoc-wines.com>

<http://www.coteaux-languedoc.com>

**Germany**

Stephen Brook, *The Wines of Germany*

Dieter Braatz, *Wine Atlas of Germany*

<http://www.deutscheweine.de>

**Austria**

Philip Blom, *The Wines of Austria*

<http://www.winesfromaustria.com>

**Hungary**

Alex Lidell, *The Wines of Hungary*

**Romania**

<http://www.wineromania.com>

**Italy**

Nicolas Belfrage, *Barolo to Valpolicella*

Nicolas Belfrage, *Brunello to Zibibbo*

<http://www.langhevini.it>

<http://www.consorziovalpolicella.it>

<http://www.italianmade.com>

<http://www.chianticlassico.com>

<http://www.consorziobrunellodimontalcino.it>

**Spain**

Jesús Barquín et al, *The Finest Wines of Rioja & Northwest Spain*

John Radford, *The New Spain*

<http://www.winesfromspain.com>

<http://www.riberadelduero.es>

<http://www.riojawine.com>

### **Portugal**

Richard Mayson, *The Wines and Vineyards of Portugal*

<http://www.winesofportugal.info>

<http://www.ivv.min-agricultura.pt> (Portuguese language only)

### **Greece**

Konstantinos Lazarakis, *The Wines of Greece*

<http://www.newwinesofgreece.com>

### **South Africa**

Tim James, *Wines of the New South Africa: Tradition and Revolution*

<http://www.wosa.co.za>

<http://www.sawis.co.za>

### **Australia**

James Halliday, *James Halliday's Wine Atlas of Australia*

Clive Hartley, *The Australian Wine Guide*

Max Allen, *The Future Makers* (available in digital format)

<http://www.wfa.org.au>

<http://www.wineaustralia.com>

### **New Zealand**

<http://www.nzwine.com>

### **USA**

Larry Walker, *The Wines of the Napa Valley*

<http://www.wineinstitute.org>

<http://www.napavintners.com>

<http://www.oregonwine.org>

<http://www.washingtonwine.org>

<http://www.washingtonwine.org>

### **Canada**

Michael Schreiner, *The Wines of Canada*

<http://winesofontario.org>

<http://www.winebc.com>

### **Chile**

Peter Richards, *The Wines of Chile*

<http://www.winesofchile.org>

### **Argentina**

<http://www.winesofargentina.org>

### **Brazil**

<http://www.winesofbrazil.com>

**UNIT 4: SPIRITS OF THE WORLD**

For a full list of suggested resources please refer to the Unit 4 Study Guide.

**Cognac**

Nicholas Faith, *Cognac*

<http://www.cognac.fr>

**Armagnac**

<http://www.armagnac.fr>

**Brandy de Jerez**

<http://www.brandydejerez.es>

**Whisky**

Dave Broom, *The World Atlas of Whisky*

Richard Paterson and Gavin Smith, *Goodness Nose* (the chapter on blending)

<http://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk>

<http://straightbourbon.com>

**Rum**

Dave Broom, *Rum*

**Tequila and Mezcal**

<http://www.crt.org.mx>

<http://www.crm.org.mx> (Spanish language only)

<http://www.delmaguey.com>

**UNIT 5: SPARKLING WINES OF THE WORLD**

For a full list of suggested resources please refer to the Unit 5 Study Guide.

Tom Stevenson & Essi Avellan MW, *Christie's World Encyclopedia of Champagne and Sparkling Wine*

**Champagne**

<http://www.champagne.fr>

**Cava**

<http://www.crcava.es>

**Prosecco**

<http://www.prosecco.it>

<http://www.discoverproseccowine.it>

**Asti**

<http://www.astidocg.it>

**Franciacorta**

<http://www.franciacorta.net>

## UNIT 6: FORTIFIED WINES OF THE WORLD

For a full list of suggested resources please refer to the Unit 6 Study Guide.

### Sherry

Consejo Regulador Jerez-Xérès-Sherry, *The Big Book of Sherry Wines* (available from <http://www.latiendadelaula.com/en>)

Julian Jeffs, *Sherry*

Peter Liem & Jesús Barquín, *Sherry, Manzanilla & Montilla, A Guide to the Traditional Wines of Andalucía*

<http://www.sherry.org>

### Port

Richard Mayson, *Port and the Douro*

<http://www.ivdp.pt>

### Madeira

Trevor Elliot, *The Wines of Madeira*

Alex Liddell, *Madeira, The Mid-Atlantic Wine*

Richard Mayson, *Madeira: The Islands and Their Wines*

<http://www.vinhomadeira.pt>