



**INTERNATIONAL  
CAKE  
EXPLORATION  
SOCIETE**

## **ICES Certification Program Guidelines for Applicants**

### **Sugar Artist & Master Sugar Artist**

The purpose of the International Cake Exploration Societé (“ICES”) Certification Program is to expand and enhance the qualifications of ICES members and to encourage members to develop their talents in the sugar arts, strive for excellence in achievement, and acquire new sugar art skills.

The certification program is available to any ICES member in good standing. Maintaining certification will require continued membership in good standing, as well as periodic continuing education to improve and share skills.

The test for certification will be held in conjunction with the annual ICES Convention and Show. The testing schedule will be published with the Convention and Show schedule and on the ICES web site. Highly qualified adjudicators will monitor the testing; decisions of the adjudicators will be final. If the facilities at the Convention and Show location allow, an audience will be permitted to watch the testing.

The test shall be completed in a single session on a single day, with the judgment of the adjudicators to be made known and the certification presented at the Saturday Awards Banquet. The certification recipient will receive a certificate, pin, decorator’s hat and a patch indicating the certification achieved. Additional patches will be available for purchase by successful candidates. All fees for testing must be paid in advance and are non-refundable, except in the following cases: 1) the application is refused due to space limitations, and 2) the certification testing is cancelled.

The following pages list requirements to certify at the Sugar Artist and Master Sugar Artist levels. Appendix A describes the skills that the candidates may choose to include for adjudication.

Once an application is accepted, the candidate will be sent additional materials to help plan his/her displays and organize additional information to be submitted to the adjudicators.

## Certified Sugar Artist

- The test for Certified Sugar Artist will be conducted in a period of six (6) hours.
- During that time, the candidate must complete at minimum: one 3-tiered cake and one non-tiered cake, incorporating no fewer than six (6) of the techniques or methods listed in Appendix A. Additional cake or non-cake display pieces may be completed to ensure the technique requirements are met. If more than six techniques are incorporated, the candidate must pre-identify which six of the techniques are to be adjudicated for the individual skills portion of the score. The candidate must choose at least one technique from each of the defined skill level groups, and the total skill points for the six techniques chosen for adjudication must be at least 15.
- The cakes may be iced and decorated cake dummies unless the technique(s) chosen specify that real cake must be used. Cakes (either real or dummy) must be iced during the test.
- Pieces that require drying or setting time may be made in advance for inclusion in the final product, but at least one representative sample of each piece must be fully re-created by the candidate during the test so that the adjudicators can evaluate the candidate's work process.
- All work on the finished cakes must be the sole work of the candidate.

### Scoring

- Each technique identified for skill adjudication will be scored against a predetermined, standard set of criteria for adherence to accepted standards. The adjudicators may award bonus points for difficulty of technique.
- Additionally, the finished cakes will be judged for artistry and overall impression, and the candidate's work process (neatness, cleanliness, adherence to food safety guidelines, etc.) will be evaluated.
- The final score will be calculated from the skill score, the artistry score, and the work process score. The final score will determine whether certification is awarded. The ruling of the adjudicators is final.

## **Certified Master Sugar Artist**

- The test for Certified Master Sugar Artist will be conducted in a period of eight (8) hours.
- During that time, the candidate must complete at minimum: one 3-tiered cake, one non-tiered cake, and one non-cake display piece, incorporating no fewer than eight (8) of the techniques or methods listed in Appendix A. Additional cake or non-cake display pieces may be completed to ensure the technique requirements are met. If more than eight techniques are incorporated, the candidate must pre-identify which eight of the techniques are to be adjudicated for the individual skills portion of the score. The candidate must choose at least one technique from each of the defined skill level groups, and the total skill points for the eight techniques chosen for adjudication must be at least 21.
- The cakes may be iced and decorated cake dummies unless the technique(s) chosen specify that real cake must be used. Cakes (either real or dummy) must be iced during the test.
- Pieces that require drying or setting time may be made in advance for inclusion in the final product, but at least one representative sample of each piece must be fully re-created by the candidate during the test so that the adjudicators can evaluate the candidate's work process.
- All work on the finished cakes must be the sole work of the candidate.
- If, before or during the test, the CMSA applicant feels she/he will not be able to complete all the required elements within the given time frame, she/he will have the option of requesting reclassification as a CSA candidate. The candidate must then complete the requirements for the CSA in the time remaining, and the adjudication will be adjusted accordingly.

### **Scoring**

- Each technique identified for skill adjudication will be scored against a predetermined, standard set of criteria for adherence to accepted standards. The adjudicators may award bonus skill points for difficulty of technique.
- Additionally, the finished cakes will be judged for artistry and overall impression, and the candidate's work process (neatness, cleanliness, adherence to food safety guidelines, etc.) will be evaluated.
- The final score will be calculated from the skill score, the artistry score, and the work process score. The final score will determine whether certification is awarded. The ruling of the adjudicators is final.

# ICES Certification Program Guidelines

## Appendix A

### Adjudicated Techniques for Sugar Artist/Master Sugar Artist Certification

#### **Skill Level Group A (1 point each)**

##### **Piped Flowers (buttercream or royal icing)**

Flowers can be piped using a nail or directly onto the cake/display. Drop flowers will not be judged. Piping precision, coloring and incorporation of flowers into overall design will contribute to final score.

##### **Piped Embellishments (buttercream or royal icing)**

Embellishments include swags, fancy borders, freehand embroidery, etc. Adjudicators will look for neatness and precision of piped elements, as well as incorporation into overall design.

##### **Chocolate Piping**

Melted chocolate piped directly onto cake/display or piped onto other surface and placed onto cake/display once set. Adjudicators will look for neatness and precision of technique, pressure control and consistency.

##### **Painting (airbrush)**

Airbrush techniques include backgrounds, frames, coloration of cake/display or elements (to include sugar or chocolate flowers). Commercially-available stencils will not be allowed. Candidate is allowed to create stencils for use, and adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for stencil creation skills. Detail line work may be done using a paintbrush. Adjudicators will look for neatness and precision of painting, especially detail work, as well as use of color.

##### **Painting (simple brushwork)**

Simple painting techniques using brushes or other tools (sponges, paint knife, etc.). May include *trompe l'oeil* or faux finishing techniques. Paint mediums can include liquid/gel/paste food color, petal/luster dust (dry or wet application), thinned royal icing, chocolate, etc. Adjudicators will look for neatness, effectiveness of technique and incorporation into overall design.

##### **Cocoa Painting/Cocoa Butter Painting**

Cocoa painting/Cocoa Butter painting may be done on iced display or plaque. If a stencil or mask is used, it must be created during testing. Adjudicators will be looking for neatness, demonstration of shading, texturing and highlights in Cocoa painting, and use of colors, shading and texturing. There should be no white streaks. Plaque may be made in advance to allow drying time, but a sample must be completed during testing.

### **Pressed Sugar**

Pressed/molded damp granulated sugar as typically used for panoramic eggs. May be used for accents, support pieces, bases, etc. Adjudicators will look for molding technique, finishing skill, use of color and incorporation into overall design. Pressed sugar pieces may be made in advance to allow drying time, but a sample of each piece must be fully recreated during the test.

## **Skill Level Group B (2 points each)**

### **Cast (boiled) Sugar**

Sugar or Isomalt cooked and poured freehand or into molds or forms suitable for the design. Can be used for accents, support pieces, bases, etc. Adjudicators will look for technique, use of color, finish and incorporation into overall design.

### **Chocolate Cutwork**

Melted chocolate poured and cut freehand or with shaped cutters. Couverture and confectionery coating are allowed, as are transfer sheets, acetate, etc., for desired finish. Adjudicators will look for technique, finish and incorporation into overall design.

### **Fabric Effects in rolled fondant**

Rolled fondant applied as accents, not just cake covering. Techniques may include, but are not limited to, folds, frills, pleats, drapes, fringes, quilting, etc. Commercial lace molds and textured rolling pins may be used. Adjudicators will look for use of color, texture, and pattern, realistic replication of fabric and incorporation into overall design.

### **Figure Piping**

Figures (people or animals, in whole or in part) piped in buttercream or royal icing. Adjudicators will look for icing texture, detail, and use of color, as well as proper proportion and position. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity of design.

### **Modeling, non-figures**

Mediums may include rolled fondant, gum paste, pastillage, modeling chocolate and marzipan. Animals and people will not be awarded points in this category (see *Modeling, figures*). Use of molds will not be permitted. Adjudicators will look for effective modeling techniques, use of color and incorporation into overall design.

### **Brush Embroidery**

Royal icing or buttercream may be used, and technique may be applied to any surface in the completed project or on a plaque. Design may be laid out freehand or with the use of cutters, stencils, and/or embossers. Adjudicators will look for brush technique, clarity of finished work and incorporation into overall design. Plaques may be made ahead to allow drying time, but a sample must be completed during testing.

### **Lace Points**

Lace points must be piped using royal icing or chocolate and applied to project after drying/setting. Adjudicators will look for uniformity and detail of lace points, neatness of application and incorporation into overall design. There should be no visible joining. Pieces may be made in advance to allow drying time, but at least ten (10) samples of each design must be made during testing.

### **Royal Icing or Color Flow™ Runouts**

Runout pieces may be the central design or accents supporting the overall design. Adjudicators will look for linework precision, flood technique, surface imperfections and freedom from air bubbles and dips. Outline work must have no visible joining. Double flooded pieces may be used. Pieces may be made ahead to allow for drying, but a sample of each design must be made during testing.

### **Wings**

Repeated royal icing side pieces using a combination of floodwork and linework/filigree. Adjudicators will look for piping precision, flood technique, uniformity of wing pieces, neatness of attachment and incorporation into overall design. Pieces may be made in advance to allow drying time, but a sample of each design must be made during testing.

### **Painting (One-Stroke™)**

Craft painting commonly referred to as the One-Stroke™ method, involving loading two (2) or more colors onto the brush simultaneously before painting. Adjudicators will look for effectiveness of technique, use of color and incorporation into overall design. Note: adjudicators are not certifying the One-Stroke™ method itself; only its application to the particular sugar art piece. The painting may be done directly onto the cake or onto a fondant or gum paste plaque. The plaque may be made ahead to allow for drying, but a sample must be made during testing.

### **Bas Relief**

Built-up shallow relief design using royal icing, rolled fondant, modeling chocolate or other edible media. The design can be made directly on the cake or on a plaque. If using a plaque, it may be made ahead to allow drying time, but a sample must be completed during testing. Use of molds will not be permitted. Adjudicators will look for modeling technique, effectiveness of bas relief layers and incorporation into overall design.

## **Skill Level Group C (3 points each)**

### **Cake Sculpting**

Standard cake shapes cut and carved to create a 3-D non-standard shape. Real cake must be used. No sculpting may be done in advance. Only icing and other edible items may be used to enhance details of shape. Non-edible support structures are allowed and may be made in advance. Adjudicators will look for effectiveness of shape to convey the design, cleanliness of work space during and after sculpting and icing, and finishing. Sculpture must be in proportion and coloring must be correct for the design. Structure must be stable and transportable. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity of design.

### **Modeling Chocolate Flowers**

Wireless flowers created from modeling chocolate. Modeling chocolate may be made and colored in advance, but the creation of all flowers must occur during the test, including all dusting, airbrushing and detail painting. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for very complicated flowers.

### **Gum Paste Flowers**

Flowers may be made in advance to allow drying time. A sample of each stage of each flower included in the finished display must be made during the test for the adjudicators to watch the candidate's work process. Candidate may use colored gum paste for flowers made in advance, but all dusting, airbrushing and detail painting must be done during the test. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for very complicated flowers.

### **Modeling, figures**

Mediums can include rolled fondant, gum paste, pastillage, modeling chocolate and marzipan. Use of molds to provide facial detail will be permitted. Adjudicators will look for effective modeling techniques, finishing, use of color and incorporation into overall design. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for freehand modeling to create facial details and for other complexity.

### **Overpipe Work**

Overpipe work may be done using royal icing or buttercream. Work may be tops, borders and/or side designs. Adjudicators will be looking for precision, neatness, no visible joinings, details, effectiveness and incorporation into overall design.

### **Royal Icing Collars**

Runout collars in royal icing applied to top and/or side of cake. Collars may be made in advance to allow for drying time before applying to cake, but must be recreated entirely during the test. Adjudicators will look for evenness of collar pieces, finish, neatness of application, freedom from air bubbles and dips, and incorporation into overall design. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity.

### **Stringwork**

Stringwork may be done using buttercream or royal icing. Adjudicators will look for effectiveness of technique, precision, neatness of application and incorporation into overall design. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity.

### **Pulled Sugar**

Sugar or Isomalt, pulled to form flowers, ribbons and other shapes. Adjudicators will look for shine and texture of finished pieces, effective achievement of shape and clean edges, use of color, and incorporation into overall design. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity.

### **Blown Sugar, simple shapes**

Sugar or Isomalt, blown to form simple, mostly round shapes (bubbles, fruits, etc.). No complex construction to finish pieces will be awarded points in this category (see *Skill Level Group D*). Adjudicators will look for shine and texture of finished pieces, effective achievement of shape, use of color, and incorporation into overall design.

### **Tube Embroidery**

Needlework technique to replicate crewel embroidery. Design may be laid out freehand or with the use of cutters, stencils, and/or embossers. Adjudicators will look for fineness and evenness of piped “threads”, use of color, effectiveness of technique and incorporation into overall design.

### **Smocking**

Needlework technique to replicate smocked fabric. Rolling pins and/or impression mats may be used only to create the ribbing. Gathers must be created manually. Adjudicators will look for consistency of gathers, fineness of piped threads, finishing, effectiveness of technique and incorporation into overall design.

### **Quilling**

Replicate the art of paper quilling using gum paste cut into thin strips, rolled, and formed into shapes to compose a design. Quilled shapes may be made in advance to allow for drying, but a sample of each shape must be made during the test. Assembly of quilled shapes into the final design must be done during the test. Adjudicators will look for neatness, consistency in formed shapes, finishing and incorporation into overall design.

## **Skill Level Group D (4 points each)**

### **Bridge/Extension Work**

Royal icing bridge/extension work used to create bottom borders and side designs. Various methods of creating the bridge will be allowed, but the bridge must be made of royal icing, not gum paste. Adjudicators will be looking for consistency of bridge work size, delicacy and evenness of strings, neatness, precision, and incorporation into overall design. Templates may be used, but must be created during testing. Adjudicators have discretion to award points for complexity of design; i.e. use of overpiping, embroidery, lace insertions, etc.

### **Floating Collars (royal icing)**

Royal icing runout collars suspended above cake by royal icing stringwork. Collars may be made in advance to allow drying time before applying to cake, but must be recreated entirely during test. All suspension stringwork piping must be completed during test. Adjudicators will look for evenness of collar pieces, finish, freedom from bubbles and dips, neatness of application, evenness of suspension strings, and incorporation into overall design. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity.

### **Pulled and Blown Sugar (figures and multi-component pieces)**

Sugar or Isomalt, pulled and/or blown to create figures, complex shapes, and/or multi-component pieces. May be used as ornaments on a cake or as part of a non-cake showpiece. Adjudicators will look for shine and texture of finished pieces, effective achievement of shapes, use of color, construction, and incorporation into overall design.

### **Nirvana**

Nirvana style of layered flow-in collars and panels that stand away from cake, open in the center to show the design behind. Adjudicators will be looking for evenness and delicacy (thinness) of collar pieces, finish, neatness of application, background design (behind panels) and incorporation into overall design. Flow-in pieces may be made ahead to allow for drying, but must be recreated during testing. All assembly must be done during the test.

### **Lambeth**

Lambeth Style using royal icing to create multi-layered decorations. Adjudicators will be looking for precision of techniques, neatness, balance of design and incorporation into overall design.

### **Counted Cross Stitch**

Needlework technique to replicate counted cross stitch. Adjudicators will look for fineness of “fabric” (embossed fondant or piped royal icing grid), delicacy and evenness of “stitches”, effectiveness of technique and incorporation into overall design.

**Painting (portraiture)**

Brushwork and/or airbrush used to paint a portrait. Candidate must create any stencils used for this technique. Adjudicators will look for effective recreation of photo (applicant must provide photo of subject), finishing, and incorporation into overall design. Adjudicators have discretion to award bonus points for complexity and non-use of stencils.