



SENSORY SKILLS MODULE

Sensory Skills courses cover concepts and skills relevant to the evaluation of coffee and related products. The content of these interactive courses includes sensory science, industry-specific protocols, common sensory attributes of coffee, physiological sensory training, implementation of sensory programs, consumer testing design, application in business and more.

Sensory Skills can be studied at three different levels within the SCA Coffee Skills Program:

Sensory Skills Foundation

The Sensory Skills Foundation course introduces the essentials of sensory evaluation in a practical and interactive manner. It investigates the way human senses influence perception and how to apply this knowledge when evaluating coffee's natural characteristics. Learners gain the ability to differentiate certain sensorial aspects of coffee including body, acidity, bitterness and more. The course introduces fragrance identification references and also focuses on the purpose and procedure for conducting an SCA cupping. Learners gain insight into identifying specialty coffee qualities, as well as an overview of how to implement this in business. Practical learning objectives and activities specifically prepare the learner to identify basic differences in coffee attributes, recall fragrance identification and set up a cupping according to the SCA Cupping Protocol. A written exam tests theoretical knowledge based on Foundation course learning objectives.

Required Prerequisites	None	Recommended Prerequisites	Introduction to Coffee	Delivery Method	In-person, distance learning or as a combination of both.	Minimum Length	7 hrs	Required Exams Passing Scores	Written exam 60%
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Sensory Skills Intermediate

The Sensory Skills Intermediate course builds on the concepts and skills introduced in the Sensory Skills Foundation course and prepares the learner for more complex job functions in the sensory evaluation of coffee and related products. This course covers a wide range of topics, including the physiology of taste and aroma; the types of sensory analysis tests, the operation of a cupping session; the diversity of coffee attributes; the use of the SCA Flavor Wheel and WCR Sensory Lexicon; and the implementation of a sensory analysis panel and session. A written exam tests intermediate course knowledge while a practical exam assesses the learner's ability to identify basic differences in coffee attributes and recall fragrance identification.

Required Prerequisites	None	Recommended Prerequisites	Introduction to Coffee, Sensory Skills Foundation and Green Coffee Foundation	Delivery Method	In-person or as a combination of in-person for practical elements and distance learning for theory.	Minimum Length	14 hrs	Required Exams Passing Scores	Written exam 70% Practical exam 70%
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Sensory Skills Professional

The Sensory Skills Professional course builds on the concepts and skills introduced in the Sensory Skills Intermediate course and prepares the learner for managerial job functions in the sensory evaluation of coffee and related products. In this interactive course, learners gain alignment with industry coffee and sensory standards; learn about the implementation of sensory evaluation in a coffee business; acquire the skills required to start identifying and evaluating qualities in specialty green coffee; and demonstrate how to accurately measure and describe coffee beverage characteristics. Participants will learn how to generate repeatable and methodical sensory measurements of coffee, along with interpretation of those results. A written exam confirms professional course knowledge while a practical exam tests the skills described above based on different working activities carried out during the course.

Required Prerequisites	Sensory Skills Intermediate	Recommended Prerequisites	Green Coffee Intermediate and Roasting Intermediate	Delivery Method	In-person or as a combination of in-person for practical elements and distance learning for theory	Minimum Length	21 hrs	Required Exams Passing Scores	Written exam 80% Practical exam 80%
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SENSORY SKILLS COURSES – TOPIC OVERVIEW		
Foundation	Intermediate	Professional
THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF SENSORY ANALYSIS Defining Sensory Analysis Role of Sensory Analysis in the Coffee Industry PHYSIOLOGY AND SENSORY ATTRIBUTES Physiology and Human Anatomy Basic Tastes Basic Aromas IDENTIFYING SENSORIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN COFFEE Taste and Body Aromas in Coffee Communication and Language in Sensory Analysis Introduction to the SCA Flavor Wheel CUPPING PROTOCOL Defining Cupping The SCA Cupping Methodology Core Cupping Protocol Core Sensory Equipment within the Cupping Room	SENSORY ANALYSIS OVERVIEW Four Stages of Sensory Analysis Purpose and Challenges of Sensory Science Importance of Sensory Analysis in Coffee Purpose of Cupping as Related to Sensory Science PHYSIOLOGY AND SENSORY ATTRIBUTES Taste and Aroma Human Physiology and The Senses Impact of Psychology on Sensory Perception Evaluating Sensorial Qualities in Coffee Five Basic Tastes Common Mouthfeel Sensations Impact of Supply Chain on Flavor Positive and Negative Aromas TRIANGULAR TESTING Purpose of Triangle Testing Common Applications for Triangle Testing Triangle Testing Protocols and Statistics Alternative Methods for Discrimination Testing CUPPING SESSION OPERATIONS Key Terms in the SCA Cupping Protocol Terminology on the SCA Cupping Form Qualitative and Quantitative Scales CUPPING FORMS IN USE Non-SCA Cupping Forms Importance of Standardized Cupping and Protocols SETTING UP A SENSORY PROGRAM Definition and Purpose of a Sensory Panel Venue Requirements for a Sensory Analysis Sensory Analysis Best Practices SETTING UP A SENSORY PANEL Panel Selection and Proposals Panelist Screening and Training Sensory Performance Testing and Calibration IN/OUT TESTS vs DESCRIPTIVE TESTS In/Out Test Definition and Purpose ANALYTICAL TESTS Analytical Testing	SENSORY OVERVIEW Importance of Sensory Analysis PHYSIOLOGY AND SENSORY ATTRIBUTES Chain of Sensory Perception Sensation and Perception Impact of Stimuli Interactions on Perception Thresholds and Sensitivity BIAS & ERROR Psychological Based Biases Mitigation of Bias in Sensory Evaluation SCA FLAVOR WHEEL & WCR LEXICON Application and Taxonomy GUSTATORY ATTRIBUTES IN COFFEE Rank Intensity of Gustatory Attributes Distinguish Differences in Quality of Attributes Applied to Coffee MOUTHFEEL IN COFFEE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES IN COFFEE Cultural Perceptions of Flavors Distinguishing and Assessing Value in Flavor Attributes Common Negative Attributes SENSORY DESCRIPTIVE PROFILING Basics and Sensory Descriptive Methods Analyzing Data and Interpreting Results APPLYING SCA CUPPING PROTOCOL SCA Cupping Protocol Review and Application Processing Considerations with SCA Cupping Form SCA Cupping Calibration SENSORY PANELS & CALIBRATION APPLIED Objective Sensory Evaluation Preparing A Training Program Sensory Panel Performance, Health and Welfare SHELF LIFE, CONSUMER TESTING AND NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT Plan for Sensory Testing Design