

WSET[®] Diploma in Wine & Spirits

Candidate assignment brief – academic year 2009/10

ASSIGNMENT 1:

Rising alcohol levels in wine – the future or a passing fashion?

CONTENT, SUGGESTED APPROACH AND SECTIONS IN THE REPORT:

1. Context

In many wine regions average alcohol levels have been rising over the last 20 years. This has stimulated debate and concern, yet these higher alcohol wines remain popular with many consumers. There has been much speculation about the causes of this trend and what, if anything, the industry should do to reverse it.

2. Strategy and required sections

a) Presentation and structure:

Assignments should include a declared word count and a bibliography correctly referenced throughout the body of the text.

b) Tracing the trend:

The candidate should present evidence to show that alcohol levels have increased since the 1980's.

c) Why this has happened:

The candidate should account for the increase in alcohol levels in this period.

d) Concerns about higher alcohol levels:

The candidate should establish who is voicing concerns about raised alcohol levels and outline what these concerns are.

e) Options for reducing alcohol levels:

The candidate should describe and evaluate the options available for making small reductions in alcohol levels. Candidates need to consider the financial, legal and organoleptic impact of these various options.

f) Conclusion and personal commentary:

In your opinion, is this trend towards higher alcohol levels cause for concern?

MARKING

Structure:

The report should be of between 1500 and 2000 words in length (not including appendices, tables or diagrams) with a declared word count and bibliography which is correctly referenced throughout the body of the assignment. Appendices are for the exclusive inclusion of charts, diagrams, tables etc. Allocation of marks will be as follows:

Section a) – including structure and style (coherence, flair, fluency, use of examples), bibliography showing diversity of evidence of research which is used appropriately and correctly referenced, presentation (spelling, grammar, legibility) 20%

Section b) – Tracing the trend: 10%

Section c) – Why this has happened: 15%

Section d) – Concerns about higher alcohol levels: 20%

Section e) - Options for reducing alcohol levels: 30%

Section f) – Conclusion and personal commentary 5%

Examiners will be looking for

- Explicit evidence within the body of the assignment of careful and thoughtful study of the course materials plus additional evidence of diverse and relevant research.
- Evidence that information for the assignment has been drawn from both the trade press and other industry sources.
- Examples and information to justify arguments made in the assignment
- Evidence that the information and examples uncovered by research have been the subject of careful study, analysis and reworking before being deployed in the assignment
- Good presentation and clear thinking. This includes good layout, contents lists and references.
- Evidence of original and reflective thought.
- Candidates must address all required sections and gain an overall minimum mark of 55% to qualify for a pass grade.