

# **Catering: Professional Catering**

**T Level outline content: final version**

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# Contents

Introduction	3
Outline content for T Levels:	
Core Content and Food Safety	4
Employer Set Project	8
Occupational specialist content:	
- Professional Catering	9

# Introduction

## Outline content

This outline content has been produced by [T Level panels](#) of employers, professional bodies and providers, and is based on the same standards as those used for apprenticeships. The outline content will form the basis of the specifications for T Level Technical Qualifications, which will be developed by awarding organisations for approval by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. One awarding organisation will be appointed to develop and deliver each Technical Qualification following a procurement process.

Colleges and other education and training providers will decide how to structure the T Level courses they offer, based on the qualification specifications. This will enable them to deliver the study programme's mandatory components in the most effective way for students.

A T Level programme consists of a Technical Qualification, substantial industry placement, English and maths, and other occupation-specific requirements where essential for entry to skilled employment. This outline content relates solely to the Technical Qualification part of a T Level programme.

Further information about T Levels is available on the website of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education here: [www.instituteforapprenticeships.org](http://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org), and at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk).

## **Catering: Professional Catering**

Awarding organisations will need to ensure that students have an up-to-date knowledge of the legal and regulatory obligations relating to employment in the occupations relevant to the T Level and understand the practical implication of these on their work.

Maths, English and digital skills are set out in a separate annex. Awarding organisations should integrate these within the qualification so that they are applied in occupationally relevant contexts.

### **Core content**

The core content relates to the whole route 'route core'. The core knowledge and understanding is assessed through an examination and core skills through a practical employer-set project.

The core knowledge and understanding focuses on the students' knowledge and understanding of contexts, concepts, theories and principles relevant to the T Level. This could include, where appropriate, assessment of knowledge and understanding relevant to the route and the pathway.

The employer-set project provides the opportunity to develop and apply a minimum range of core skills important for employability. The allocation of content to each type of assessment will need to be approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

### **Food Safety**

T Level students must have completed the food safety training content prior to commencing their industry placement

It is recommended that T Level students are provided with the opportunity to achieve an appropriately recognised food safety qualification.

## Core knowledge and understanding

Element	Content
<b>Culinary</b>	<p>Quality points (e.g. aroma, texture) to look for in fresh ingredients for different food groups and sensory techniques used to determine brand standards are met.</p> <p>Different types of knives, their purpose, characteristics and techniques for safe and efficient use.</p>
<b>Kitchen operations</b>	<p>How the dining experience (e.g. buffet, formal dining, takeaway) impacts on kitchen organisation, workflows and resources.</p> <p>Par levels and safe storage conditions for food items required to meet planned operations.</p> <p>The correct use and preventative maintenance (e.g. cleaning, service scheduling) of food production equipment.</p> <p>Suitability of food production equipment for different activities and how the equipment is operated.</p> <p>How technology supports production of dishes and menu items in a kitchen.</p> <p>How to adapt to technological issues (e.g. failure of the IT ordering system, temperature gauge not working effectively) in the kitchen.</p> <p>Factors affecting timings of food for service e.g. number of customers, location, service style.</p> <p>How to work in a challenging, quality focussed, timebound environment.</p>
<b>Health, safety and security</b>	<p>Employee responsibilities under health, safety and security legislation.</p> <p>What is included in a risk assessment e.g. hazard, person(s) at risk, potential harm.</p> <p>The importance of following risk assessments.</p> <p>Types of hazards that individuals can create in a kitchen and how associated risks can be mitigated.</p>

	<p>The importance of protecting peoples' health, safety and security.</p> <p>How to use hazardous materials (e.g. chemicals, hot oil, liquid nitrogen) safely.</p> <p>Procedures for dealing with misuse and malfunctions of commonly used kitchen equipment.</p> <p>How to monitor health and safety in the kitchen environment.</p> <p>When and how to use safety equipment e.g. guards, signage, fire extinguisher.</p>
<b>Nutritional analysis</b>	<p>Key types of nutrients (including macro (e.g. protein) and micro (e.g. minerals) found in different food items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their nutritional values</li> <li>• how nutritional information is obtained e.g. food labelling</li> <li>• the contribution nutrients make to the function of the body</li> </ul> <p>Techniques used to maximise the nutritional contribution of food items to a dish in preparation, cooking and finishing.</p> <p>The importance of combining nutrient groups to produce balanced dishes.</p>
<b>Food safety</b>	<p>Food safety practices and procedures to ensure the safe preparation, cooking and holding of food.</p> <p>What to look for in ingredients (e.g. temperature, use by date) and how to handle and store them to maintain quality, in line with current food safety legislation.</p> <p>The principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how these are incorporated into a Food Safety Management System</li> <li>• how the system is implemented to ensure due diligence requirements are met</li> <li>• how the supervisor or team leader can contribute to the effective implementation of the system</li> </ul>

	<p>Types of bacteria (e.g. salmonella, Escherichia coli) their characteristics, how they develop, their positive and negative effects including on food and the human body and the implications for food preparation, cooking and finishing.</p> <p>Types of allergens, how they are identified and differences between allergies and intolerances.</p>
<b>Team working</b>	<p>Factors to consider (including equality legislation, importance of respect, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and language) when working with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures and how to apply these to contribute to team success.</p> <p>Equality legislation and how this is applied when working with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.</p> <p>Signs of slavery and people trafficking and the importance of monitoring staff and colleagues for those signs.</p> <p>The qualities required of a team member, how they are demonstrated and their impact on team dynamics.</p> <p>Communication methods (including the use of social media) and styles of communication and suitability for different situations that may arise through kitchen operations.</p> <p>Employment rights and responsibilities of the employer and employee.</p> <p>Methods of personal and professional development (e.g. coaching, independent research) and outcomes that can be achieved e.g. long-term employment, positive contribution to the industry.</p> <p>Different teams operating in catering establishments e.g. with front of house in traditional establishments, with delivery drivers in takeaways, with care workers who serve food in hospitals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how those involved in professional catering interact with other teams including how and when they interact.</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b>	<p>The relationship between the business vision, objectives and company standards and the importance of meeting these.</p>

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How to operate efficiently to support the overall business performance (e.g. reducing waste, improving customer experience) with consideration for food, people, environment, finance and utilities.

How businesses improve competitiveness, measure business performance, apply concepts of gross and net profit and loss, set and work within budgets, and enhance the customers' experience.

How to cost menu items e.g. food costs, gross profit.

The principles of risk assessment and how to identify, plan for and minimise risks to the service (including food production) and operation of the business.

Waste management principles (e.g. reduce, recycle, reuse) and how they are applied in the different types of kitchen and implications to the environment.

The principles of supply chain management and sustainable procurement including sources of information.

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## Employer-set project

The employer-set project ensures students have the opportunity to combine core knowledge and skills to develop a substantial piece of work in response to an employer-set brief. The employer-set project forms part of the Technical Qualification and is a separate part of the T Level programme to the Industry Placement.

To ensure consistency in project scope and demand, awarding organisations will develop assessment objectives, which require students to:

- plan their approach to meeting the brief
- apply core knowledge and skills as appropriate
- select relevant techniques and resources to meet the brief
- use maths, English and digital skills as appropriate
- realise a project outcome and review how well the outcome meets the brief

The awarding organisation will work with a relevant employer or employers, to devise a set brief that:

- ensures a motivating starting point for students' projects, for example, a real-world problem to solve
- ensures students can generate evidence that covers the assessment objectives
- is manageable for providers to deliver
- is officially approved by the awarding organisation and employer

For Professional Catering, in achieving the assessment objectives and meeting the brief, students must demonstrate the following core skills:

- **Communication: using a range of communication methods tailored to the audience**
  - e.g. presenting a proposal to host an event or delivering a training session to aspiring chefs
- **Working collaboratively with others including stakeholders**
  - e.g. to design a kitchen or food production area, developing a food safety management system, allocating tasks, presenting and sharing ideas, agreeing solutions
- **Applying a logical approach to problem solving**
  - e.g. by reviewing and revising menus to meet the needs of the local demographic
- **Undertaking research**
  - e.g. identifying sources and obtaining information related to customer requirements; interrogating, analysing and reporting on data collected or provided
- **Creative thinking**
  - e.g. producing a marketing plan for a new or revised brand or menu, making connections and seeing relationships, exploring ideas, reflecting critically on ideas, actions and outcome

## Occupational Specialist Content

Specialist content is structured into different occupational specialisms, which correspond to the apprenticeship standards listed on the relevant occupational map. Occupational specialisms ensure students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve a level of competence needed to enter employment in the occupational specialism, and are organised around 'performance outcomes' that indicate what the student will be able to do, as a result of learning and applying the specified knowledge and skills.

For Professional Catering, students are expected to develop understanding and advanced skills in **each** performance outcome to work with **all** different food groups as follows:

- meat, poultry and game, including associated products
- fish and shellfish dishes and products
- vegetables, vegan and vegetarian dishes, including vegetarian protein sources and specific dietary considerations and needs
- dough and batter products, including fermented dough and batter products
- paste and patisserie products
- hot, cold and frozen desserts
- biscuits, cakes and sponges

Across performance outcomes the knowledge and skills should be associated with a range of techniques and styles including traditional, classical, modern and contemporary. They should also include local cultural ingredients and dishes and diverse ethnic and cultural ingredients and dishes.

Whilst there are some content areas that are included in both the Core and Occupational Specialism sections, this is intentional. Where in Core, it is assessed via the exam. Where in the Occupational Specialism, it is assessed in the context of the Performance Outcome.

# Occupational Specialist Content

## Occupational Specialism: Professional Catering

### Performance Outcome 1: Produce quality dishes using fresh ingredients for service

For the purpose of this outline content fresh ingredients are those in their natural form such as live mussels and unpeeled potatoes and not tinned or otherwise preserved.

Knowledge Specific to Performance Outcome	Skills
<p><b>Culinary</b></p> <p>How to apply preparation techniques to fresh ingredients (e.g. boning, turning) from different food groups.</p> <p>How to apply cooking techniques (e.g. hot smoking, stewing) to fresh ingredients from different food groups.</p> <p>What makes good presentation; the techniques, practicalities and types of equipment that can be used.</p> <p>How to present finished dishes e.g. garnishing, latticing.</p> <p>How to maximise the use of whole ingredients in developing menu items to minimise waste.</p> <p><b>Kitchen operations</b></p> <p>How to use specifications and recipes to produce consistent menu items and dishes that meet business concepts.</p>	<p>Apply food preparation techniques for fresh ingredients from different food groups.</p> <p>Apply cooking techniques for fresh ingredients from different food groups.</p> <p>Apply finishing techniques.</p> <p>Apply food safety practices.</p> <p>Check quality of fresh ingredients.</p> <p>Monitor quality and timing of produced dishes against the menu specification.</p> <p>Sequence tasks to meet requirements for quality and timing.</p> <p>Handle many tasks at once.</p>

Checks to be made to ensure sufficient food and equipment resources are in place for service.

**Business**

How to identify, plan for and minimise risks (e.g. below par levels, wastage) to food production and service of quality dishes prepared from fresh ingredients.

Clean as you go.

Solve own service-related problems e.g. timing, resource limitations.

## Performance Outcome 2: Lead the production of quality dishes using prepared ingredients for service

For the purpose of this outline content, prepared ingredients are convenience foods such as shelled prawns and sliced onions. This performance outcome requires students to interact with team members in a leadership role. They must have the opportunity to demonstrate some supervisory/leadership skills. The development of these skills provides the foundation to develop full occupational competence after they gain employment. Team members could be peers, professionals or examiners.

Knowledge Specific to Performance Outcome	Skills
<p><b>Culinary</b></p> <p>How to apply preparation techniques to prepared ingredients (e.g. shaping, adding other ingredients) from different food groups.</p> <p>How to apply cooking techniques (e.g. baking, steaming) to prepared ingredients from different food groups.</p> <p>What makes good presentation; the techniques, practicalities and types of equipment that can be used.</p> <p>How to present finished dishes e.g. saucing, dressing.</p> <p><b>Kitchen operations</b></p> <p>How to use brand specifications and recipes to produce standardised menu items and dishes.</p> <p>The importance of keeping up-to-date with product ranges and promotions.</p>	<p>Apply food preparation techniques for prepared ingredients from different food groups.</p> <p>Apply cooking techniques for prepared ingredients from different food groups.</p> <p>Apply finishing techniques to dishes.</p> <p>Forecast par levels against given data e.g. previous sales, seasonality.</p> <p>Allocate time, people and resources to tasks.</p> <p>Manage achievement of team goals for production of quality dishes using prepared ingredients within time allowed.</p> <p>Coordinate production of dishes and menu items.</p> <p>Assess quality of food deliveries.</p>

**Team supervision**

How the teams are monitored for their understanding and compliance with all relevant industry specific regulations, legislation and procedures.

The methods available to a supervisor/team leader and the importance of training and development to maximise the performance of the team.

Techniques used to brief, coach and motivate others positively to deliver high quality products.

How to deliver training and feedback to individuals including oral and written.

The role of the supervisor in building teams and inter-team relationships and how to influence behaviours of team members both back and front of house.

The role of the supervisor in supporting the team to meet business objectives.

Monitor the application of food storage requirements by others.

Monitor food temperatures from delivery to food service.

Efficient use of own personal space in a kitchen environment.

Apply food safety practices in the production of dishes.

Demonstrate how to carry out a specific food production task.

Check understanding of others.

Facilitate involvement of audience in briefings.

Present information to team members.

Question team members' knowledge, understanding and ownership of tasks.

Use motivating language towards meeting specific business objectives.

### Performance Outcome 3: Adapt quality dishes for specific customer requirements

Knowledge Specific to Performance Outcome	Skills
<p><b>Culinary</b></p> <p>How to apply preparation techniques (e.g. kneading, pureeing) to different food groups that support the adaptation of quality dishes.</p> <p>How to apply cooking techniques (e.g. poaching, microwaving) to different food groups.</p> <p>How to apply finishing techniques (e.g. glazing, piping) to different food groups.</p> <p>Identify how industry and food trends, customer preferences, influence the development of dishes and menus.</p> <p><b>Culinary science</b></p> <p>Scientific processes (e.g. lamination, proving) additives and their effect on texture, aesthetics, nutritional value and taste.</p> <p>Effects of physical (e.g. lamination and aeration) and technological techniques (e.g. sous vide, thermostatically controlled food processing) in preparation and cooking of food.</p>	<p>Apply food preparation techniques for different food groups.</p> <p>Apply cooking techniques for different food groups.</p> <p>Apply finishing techniques.</p> <p>Manage own time to meet specified requirements.</p> <p>Monitor quality of dishes.</p> <p>Clean as you go.</p> <p>Apply food safety practices.</p> <p>Solve problems to meet customer requirements.</p>

Suitability of replacement items for specific diets e.g. agar agar in place of gelatine, chickpea water in place of eggs.

### **Nutrition**

How to ensure adapted dishes meet nutritional values.

Customer nutritional requirements, how they affect menu design and implications of not meeting specific needs.

### **Kitchen operations**

The concept of a 'brand' and what that means to different types of catering establishments.

How to adapt specifications and recipes to meet brand standards for an establishment.

The importance of keeping up-to-date with product ranges for alternative ingredients.

The importance of preventative maintenance for maintaining the integrity of dishes to meet customer requirements including allergens, intolerances and cultural ingredients e.g. halal, kosher.

The importance of monitoring the correct use and maintenance of food production equipment when adapting dishes to meet customer requirements.



**Food safety**

Consequences of inclusion of allergens in menu items and dishes to customers, employees and the business.

**People**

Recognise how all teams are dependent on each other and understand the importance of teamwork both back and front of house in achieving business objectives.

How local demographics (e.g. age, family group) may impact on the product range of the business.

Difference between customer necessity, choice and preference and the need to respect them all.

**Business**

How to identify, plan for and minimise risks to the food production, service and operation of the business resulting from adapting quality dishes to meet customer needs.

Understand the principles of profit and loss and recognise how adapting menus can impact on financial performance of the business.

**Performance Outcome 4: Produce quality dishes for large groups of people to be held for service over a specified period of time as a team member.**

This performance outcome requires students to interact with other team members providing the foundation to develop full occupation competence as team members after they gain employment. Team members could be peers, professionals or examiners.

Knowledge Specific to Performance Outcome	Skills
<p><b>Culinary</b></p> <p>How to apply preparation techniques (e.g. portioning, weighing and measuring) to different food groups when preparing for large scale events.</p> <p>Holding techniques and their effect on dishes.</p> <p>How to apply cooking and holding techniques (e.g. roasting, braising) to different food groups.</p> <p>How to apply finishing techniques (e.g. stacking, portioning) to different food groups.</p> <p><b>Kitchen operations</b></p> <p>How to use menu specifications and recipes to scale up and produce standardised items and dishes.</p> <p>Suitability of food production equipment for large-scale catering and how the equipment is operated.</p>	<p>Apply food preparation techniques from different food groups for holding.</p> <p>Apply cooking techniques from different food groups for holding.</p> <p>Apply finishing techniques for holding.</p> <p>Apply food safety practices.</p> <p>Interpret menu specifications and timings to meet scaled up production requirements.</p> <p>Set up food preparation, cooking and finishing equipment according to instructions.</p> <p>Adjust equipment following instructions.</p> <p>Monitor food temperatures throughout preparation, cooking and finishing.</p>

Alternative preparation and cooking methods (e.g. hand whisking, oven poaching) and associated equipment that could be used as a contingency in the event of equipment failure and how these are applied.

**Team working**

How a team member could be monitored (e.g. audits, performance reviews) for their understanding and compliance with all relevant industry specific regulations (e.g. food safety and equality), legislation and procedures.

Techniques used to update team members on product range and promotions e.g. briefings, newsletter.

Clean as you go.

Estimate resource requirements to meet number of dishes to be produced.

Maintain hot-held and refrigerated dishes within food safety and quality requirements.

Collaborate with other team members.

Communicate orally with other team members.

Demonstrate active listening.

**Performance Outcome 5: Produce quality dishes for a central production unit consumed in different types of locations**

Knowledge Specific to Performance Outcome	Skills
<p><b>Culinary</b></p> <p>How to apply preparation techniques (e.g. filleting, chopping) to different food groups and how this is affected by the equipment available and achieved with the equipment available.</p> <p>Holding techniques and their use in different destinations including hospitals, delivery systems, events, festivals, stadia, pop-ups, street, operational feeding.</p> <p>How to apply cooking techniques (e.g. frying, grilling) to different food groups.</p> <p>What makes good presentation (e.g. colour combination, garnishing) the techniques, practicalities and types of equipment that can be used.</p> <p>How different situations (e.g. location and customer requirements) impact on potential presentation of finished dishes and techniques and equipment required to achieve desired effect.</p> <p>Different types of packaging (including single/multiple use) used for food items and their suitability for different situations.</p>	<p>Operate technological equipment in the preparation, cooking and finishing of dishes.</p> <p>Apply food preparation techniques for different food groups.</p> <p>Apply cooking techniques for different food groups.</p> <p>Apply finishing techniques.</p> <p>Interpret menu specifications.</p> <p>Calculate resource requirements.</p> <p>Clean as you go.</p> <p>Sequence tasks to meet specified requirements.</p> <p>Minimise personal space.</p> <p>Apply food safety practices.</p> <p>Assess health and safety risks.</p> <p>Apply customer service skills.</p>

Different methods of transportation used for food items, the implications of their use, factors to be considered, and suitability for different situations.

**Culinary science**

Causes and symptoms of errors in menu items (e.g. wrong temperatures, not following recipe specifications accurately) and how these can be remedied.

**Kitchen operations**

How to adapt standardised menu items and dishes to meet locational requirements e.g. no access to utilities, limited space for storage.

How different preparation, cooking and finishing areas are organised in different types of locations.

Par levels and safe storage conditions for food items required to meet planned operations.

Checks to be made to ensure sufficient food and equipment resources are in place for service.

The correct use and preventative maintenance of food production equipment and its relative importance in different locations.

Solve problems associated with the location (e.g. offsite delivery to an event) and service requirements e.g. in multiple locations.

How technology supports production of dishes and menu items in a kitchen and its availability in different locations e.g. programmable combination oven, mixer.

How to adapt working practices to respond to challenging location requirements (including potential direct contact with customers) and meet time and quality standards.

Factors affecting timings of food for service e.g. quality of ingredients, weather conditions.

### **Health and safety**

Types of hazards specific to different types of locations and how associated risks can be mitigated.

The importance of considering the health and safety of customers and visitors in external locations.

### **People**

Principles of customer service and how they are applied when interacting with customers.

Relationships with different stakeholders and how these are developed and managed.

### **Business**

How to identify, plan for and minimise risks from food production in a central unit to the food production, service and operation of the business.

The principles of supply chain management and how to access resources in remote and difficult to access locations.

Factors to consider when evaluating a site including weather, logistics, physical conditions, access to utilities, access to customers, timings.

## Performance Outcome 6: Create quality dishes to meet a menu concept

Through this performance outcome, students should develop creativity, originality and flair.

Knowledge Specific to Performance Outcome	Skills
<p><b>Culinary</b></p> <p>How to apply preparation techniques (e.g. aeration, marinating) to different food groups.</p> <p>How to apply cooking techniques (e.g. sautéing, confit) to different food groups.</p> <p>How to apply finishing techniques (e.g. saucing, moulding) to different food groups.</p> <p>How existing technology (e.g. robotics, smart materials) can be adapted to support the production of quality dishes.</p> <p><b>Menu design</b></p> <p>Factors that influence the development of dishes and menus e.g. seasonality, provenance, the global environment.</p> <p>How technology supports the efficient development of dishes and menu items e.g. social media.</p> <p>Factors that contribute to menu engineering including psychology, finance, marketing and design.</p>	<p>Operate technological equipment in the preparation, cooking and finishing of dishes.</p> <p>Apply food preparation techniques for different food groups.</p> <p>Apply cooking techniques for different food groups.</p> <p>Apply finishing techniques.</p> <p>Plan production of dishes.</p> <p>Manage own time to achieve objectives.</p> <p>Clean as you go.</p> <p>Apply food safety practices.</p> <p>Use positive language to promote menu items.</p> <p>Use digital software to calculate and maintain information on resource requirements.</p> <p>Calculate menu costings within budgetary constraints.</p>



Techniques for positive written communication (e.g. use of persuasive and descriptive language) and how they are applied to the development of menus.

### **Culinary science**

Causes and symptoms of errors in menu items (e.g. ingredients with low acidity, alternative setting agents) and how these can be remedied.

Scientific processes, additives and their effect on texture, aesthetics, nutritional value and taste.

Effects of physical and technological techniques (e.g. sous vide, thermostatically controlled food processing) in preparation and cooking of food.

### **Nutrition**

How to maximise the nutritional contribution of food items to a dish.

The importance of the nutritional contribution of food items to the development of a dish e.g. for meeting delegates who need to be creative after lunch, for a new breakfast menu item.

Types of activities customers may want to engage in (e.g. active, creative).

- the types of nutrients and foods that support activities

Risk assess situations for potential profit reduction.

Design menu items to meet a given concept.

Maximise yield from ingredients.

Synthesise ideas to create menu items.

- how they are combined to design a menu

Customer nutritional requirements and how they affect menu design.

### **Kitchen operations**

How to work in a challenging, quality focussed, timebound environment.

### **Business**

The relationship between the business strategy, business culture, business constraints, customer profile and the development of creative, profitable and competitive menus.

The principles of profit and loss and how they are applied in menu design and dish development.

How to cost menu items (e.g. food costs, gross profit) and how to measure it against budgetary requirements.

The principles of marketing and the concepts of a sales mix in menu development.

