



39th AEHT ANNUAL CONFERENCE & COMPETITIONS
2nd – 7th November 2026.
Ferrara, Italy



RESTAURANT SERVICE COMPETITION
Competition details

Please note that the General AEHT Competition Rules are applicable. They are available on the AEHT website. Reading them is compulsory.

Objective

In the Restaurant Service Competition, working as a team, students must complete several tasks that simulate a waiter's duties in front of a jury acting as guests.

Goals

- Increase the importance of team work and develop social and interpersonal skills in a spirit of learning and sharing knowledge
- To assess the skills of Hotel and Tourism students from across Europe with a pedagogical approach
- To promote the art of table service and highlight its importance in the hospitality and catering industry.

Team & Language

Language

English (both oral and written) is the mandatory language for all competition phases, including briefings, written work plans, and communication with teammates and judges during tasks. The minimum required English proficiency is Level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Please be aware that if there is serious doubt about a competitor's English proficiency, and it hinders communication between teammates, the competitor may be disqualified.

Teams:

Teams will consist of two students from different schools and countries, drawn on the day of the briefing. A team of three students may be formed in any of the following situations:

- The total number of candidates is uneven.
- A competitor is disqualified.
- A competitor withdraws at the last minute

Day of the briefing

- The Head Judge will brief competitors and announce the teams.
- Following the announcement, each team will begin drafting their work plan for the various competition steps. This exercise helps assess competitors' communication skills; while it is not mandatory to finish the work plan immediately, it must be presented to the judges at the start of the team's competition.
- Afterward, competitors will sit as a team for a written test. The test includes a combination of questions (e.g., multiple choice, mix and match) covering Restaurant Service techniques, Restaurant Organization, and local/European gastronomy and products.



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- During the test, external contact is strictly prohibited, and teachers are not allowed in the briefing room.
- Competitors will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the competition area during a guided tour after the briefing.

Days of the competition

- The competition takes place over two consecutive days, with each team competing on only one of those days.
- Each team must arrive 30 minutes before their starting time for a mandatory attendance check according to schedule specified on the day of the briefing.
- Each team will compete for a maximum of two hours, with no extra time permitted. Teams will compete in groups of three teams in the same room, every two hours.

Step 1: Welcome and aperitifs

- Set up in the competition area.
- Welcome and seat three guests (the judges) in the lounge area.
- Suggest, prepare, and serve aperitif drinks. Guests will select their drinks from the following list:
 - Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG. Brut Millesimato - Jeio Bisol 1542 <https://jeio.it/en/>
 - A selection of cocktails/mocktails:
 - Spritz Emiliano (*90 ml Prosecco, 60 ml Aperol, Splash of Soda water*)
 - Dry Martini (IBA) ,
 - Aviation (IBA) ,
 - Espresso Martini (IBA)
 - Virgin Basil Smash (*fresh basil leaves, lemon juice, cane sugar syrup, sparkling water or tonic*)
 - Virgin Amaretto Sour (*50ml amaretto free alcohol, 30 ml fresh lemon juice, 20 ml sugar syrup, drops of egg white*).

Step 2: Order Taking & Table Setup

While the guests enjoy their aperitifs in the lounge, competitors will continue their tasks. Teams may execute the following sequences in any order they prefer:

- Set the table for 3 guests using a style of their choosing. The jury does not expect a specific setup style.
- Tableware (cutlery, plates, glassware, etc.) is already clean and requires only a quick check.
- Lay the tablecloth, fold napkins demonstrating 3 different styles, and set the table.
- Seat the guests at their table
- Take food and drink order from a menu with multiple options.

Food: Menus are provided by the host school. Guests will order two different dishes from the list



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below that correspond to ***restaurant service technical skills*** (Dishes 1 & 2). Guests may choose to combine salted and sweet dishes. Both dishes must be prepared and served simultaneously.

Drinks: Prior to the competition, each student must create a personalized drinks menu and bring 3 printed copies for the guests. The drinks menu must include:

- A minimum of seven different wines (international options and, if possible, selections from the student's home country). This list must feature the following 2 local wines provided by the school:
 - Sauvignon IGP Emilia: <https://cortemadonnina.it/it/shop/tutti/bianchi/sauvignon-del-bosco-eliceo/>
 - Fortana del Bosco Eliceo D.O.P. Fermo: <https://cortemadonnina.it/it/shop/tutti/rossi/fortana-del-bosco-eliceo-d-o-c-fermo/>
- Two mineral waters from the student's home country (*one still, one sparkling*).
- Two Italian mineral waters provided by the local school: San Pellegrino (*sparkling*) and Acqua Panna (*still*).

The host school will provide the local drinks and waters; exact details will be confirmed no later than the briefing day. Students are not required to travel with or provide any beverages themselves. The drinks listed on the students' personal menus are solely for pairing suggestions, not for actual service.

Step 3: Service Execution (Free Sequence Combination)

Competitors must seamlessly adapt the table setup based on the guests' order, prepare their stations for technical skills, and prepare the dishes using a gueridon.

- Prepare Dishes 1 & 2 in front of the guests (one dish is for two guests, the other for one). Each student will use their own station.
- Serve the prepared dishes to the guests. Both competitors must demonstrate silver service skills for any ingredients of their choice.
- Serve bread and water.
- Serve one bottle of the wine previously ordered by the guests at the appropriate moment, based on the team's judgment.
- Clear the table and plates.
- Take the order for hot drinks.
- Serve hot drinks in the lounge area and present the bill.

Step 4: Feedback and Conclusion The competition concludes in the lounge area with a 10-minute feedback session from the judges.



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List of dishes selected for order taking & technical skills.

List of Selected Dishes for Order Taking & Technical Skills

Technical Skills: The guests will order two dishes (starters, main courses, or desserts) to be prepared and served live by the competitors. Dishes marked with an asterisk (*) represent **"technical skills"**.

Starters

- **Plate of Italian Delicacies (*)** (for 1 guest): Prosciutto di Parma, Mortadella di Bologna, and Coppa Piacentina DOP. Cheeses: Parmigiano Reggiano block, Squacquerone (fresh cheese), and Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano DOP. Accompaniments: Mostarda Bolognese (fruit jam with mustard essence), walnut kernels, fresh grapes, Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, figs, and honey.
Bread: Local bread "*Coppia Ferrarese*".
- **Flambéed Gamberoni (*)** (for 2 guests): Peeled king prawns, Vecchia Romagna italian brandy, olive oil, salt, pepper, freshly chopped shallots, dry white wine, shellfish stock, crème fraîche, and freshly chopped dill and parsley .
- **Caprese Salad:** San Marzano tomatoes, mozzarella di Bufala Campana, fresh basil leaves, high-quality extra virgin olive oil, Sea salt
- **Vitello Tonnato:** Veal meat (carved in front of the costumer) with tuna sauce prepared in the kitchen and finished tableside with lemon juice, olive oil and cooking broth. Garnish: Capers
- **Bruschetta:** Typical appetizer, symbol of Italian tradition
Ingredients: Toasted bread, tomato, olive oil, and oregano. Garnish: Basil leaves

Main Courses

- **"Romagnola" Beef Tartare (Cold) (*)** : Local beef tartare, seasoned à la minute to the guest's preference.
Ingredients: Knife-minced beef, capers, shallots, mustard, extra virgin olive oil, egg yolk, Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, salt, pepper, crostini, Tabasco, Worcestershire sauce, and basil.
Garnish: Serve a side of French fries using silver service.
- **Rump Steak with Balsamic Vinegar and Green Pepper (*)** : Flambéed beef cut, sliced at the guéridon, and coated with its reduced sauce .
Ingredients: Rump steaks (seared rare by the kitchen), crushed green pepper, butter, veal stock, cream, Italian brandy, Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, mustard, and white wine.
Garnish: Seasonal vegetables.



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- **Grilled Eel (Anguilla):** with Flambé Finish (Italian Stravecchia Branca Brandy), it is a classic preparation inspired by the tradition of the lagoons of Comacchio, adapted for elegant tableside service. Ingredients (initial preparation would be in kitchen): Fresh eel, (cleaned and cut into pieces), extra virgin olive oil, butter, lemon juice, fresh parsley, bay leaf. Garnish : Grilled polenta and bitter greens (chicory)
- **Tortellini "Mantecati" with Parmigiano Reggiano**
Description: Traditional stuffed pasta from the Bologna region, bound à la minute in a creamy sauce.
Ingredients: Hot tortellini delivered from the kitchen, crème fraîche or meat broth, butter, aged grated Parmigiano Reggiano, and nutmeg.

Desserts

- **Emilia-Romagna PGI Pears Flambéed with Nocino (*)** : Fresh whole pears (Abate Fetel or Williams PGI varieties), butter, sugar, pear juice, lemon, Nocino liqueur, vanilla ice cream scoops, and crushed roasted walnuts .
- **Zuppa Inglese "Composée Minute" (Cold):** An elegant assembly of the traditional dessert from Ferrara and Bologna, plated in front of the guest .
Ingredients: Ladyfingers (Savoardi), Alchermes (traditional liqueur), vanilla pastry cream, chocolate pastry cream, and dark chocolate shavings.
- **Emilia Peaches Flambéed with Amaretto (*)** : A fruity dessert flambéed with the famous Italian almond liqueur .
Ingredients: Peach halves in syrup, butter, sugar, orange juice, Amaretto di Saronno liqueur, vanilla ice cream, and sliced almonds.
- **Affogato alla vaniglia:** A Typical italian after-meal dessert, with a perfect contrast of hot coffee and cold ice cream, creating a creamy balance of bitterness and sweetness.
Ingredients: Vanilla ice cream with an espresso.

Important notes

- Teams will be evaluated on professionalism, work skills, social skills, and teamwork (see grading document below).
- Teams must present their work plan sheet to the jury (these sheets are provided on the briefing day).
- Competitors must strictly adhere to the general timing ; judges will notify teams if they fall



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behind schedule.

- Competitors must wear their full professional uniform, conforming to the standards of high-quality restaurant service.
- All necessary equipment will be provided. However, competitors may bring personal tools (e.g., corkscrew, white gloves, crumb collector), subject to authorization by the Head Judge. Competitors must adapt to the materials and equipment provided to them.
- While creating the work plan on briefing day, team members must ensure they can effectively communicate with each other in English. If there is significant doubt, the team must report it to the Head Judge immediately. Subsequent complaints regarding language barriers will not be accepted.
- The use of cell phones, smartwatches, or any other connected electronic devices is strictly prohibited during the competition. Devices must be left in bags, plane mode.
- All rules and regulations, including the General AEHT Competition Rules, must be followed.
- The Head Judge's decision is final.

CEFR Level B1 Language Skills Reference

According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), a Level B1 user is capable of the following:

- Understanding the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, or leisure.
- Dealing with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken.
- Producing simple, connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.
- Describing experiences, events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions, and briefly giving reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

Assessment Criteria

Check grading document attached next page



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		Not mastered 0	Low mastery 1	Average 2	Satisfactory 3	Total mastery 4
Setting the table	20					
Organization work method (hygiene, logic, fluidity)	M I N U T E S					
Table covering (technic & result with tablecloth)						
Choice of tableware (cutlery, glassware...) & alignment						
Napkins folding (3 different foldings expected)						
Extra equipment required on the table (salt/pepper, side plates, table number, decoration...)						
Global Impression on set up (hygiene, symmetry, esthetic)						
Welcome the guests & aperitives	20					
Greeting & sitting the guests	M I N U T E S					
Suggesting drinks for aperitives, taking the order						
Preparing the drinks: set up the station						
Preparing the drinks: work method, use of equipment						
Serving the drinks to the guests						
Quality: visual, decoration						
Quality: tasting						
Drinks correspond to standards (right products, quantity...)						
Taking orders & competitor's drink lists	20					
Presentation / introduction of the menu to the guests	M I N U T E S					
Knowledge of the dishes/recipes/products						
Argumentation/Responding to questions about dishes						
Competitors drinks list(s): presentation of the document (layout aesthetics, readability)						
Competitors drinks list(s): strategic relevance of the wines selection						
Drinks suggested: wine / other local drinks matching & pairing						
Up selling						
Preparing and serving the 2 selected dishes - drinks						
Dish 1	4					
Hygiene, safety and neatness of the workstation before, during & after the preparation	M I N U T E S					
Global work method & mastery of the preparation						
Show food: technical mastery (Flambé, carving...)						
Tasting of the dish - At the guests taste?						
Quality of the plate: Final presentation of the plate(s) nice and clean						
Selection & use of ingredients in a sustainable approach (waste management, use of ingredients)						
Communication with guests						
Dish 2	4					
Hygiene, safety and neatness of the workstation before, during & after the preparation	M I N U T E S					
Global work method & mastery of the preparation						
Show food: technical mastery (Flambé, carving...)						
Tasting of the dish - At the guests taste?						
Quality of the plate: Final presentation of the plate(s) nice and clean						
Selection & use of ingredients in a sustainable approach (waste management, loss prevention)						
Communication with guests						
Service	4					
Serve bread and/or water	M I N U T E S					
Bottle presentation & Opening of wine						
Wine service: Guest tasting/Protocol						
Wine service: Right quantity/No dropping						
Silver service: Professional technique used for the service of the ingredients, tong handling						
Clearing the table (plates, cutlery, glasses, discretion...)						
Hot beverage service and billing presentation						
In general:	4					
Behave with professionalism: posture, movement & body language, self confidence, stress management, discretion	M I N U T E S					
Personal hygiene, professional clothing & equipment						
Time management						
POINTS Steps 1 to 4		0X 1 =X 2 =X 3 =X 4 =
Team's coordination, quality of teamwork /20 points		Not mastered 0-4	Low mastery 5-8	Average 9-12	Satisfactory 13-16	Total mastery 17-20
TOTAL POINTS						