



## **Certification Guide**

### **Overview of Certification with RBA**

We are very pleased to know your commitment to professional growth and development. Certification will challenge you and demand you be your very best. The RBA's certification program is recognized throughout the industry as a standard for excellence in skills and knowledge.

Bakers achieve certification based on education, experience and successful completions of written and practical exams. The RBA offers three baking certification levels and two cake decorating certification levels. Each level's eligibility is based on education and work experience. All levels of RBA certification require a written exam, which is conducted online, and many require a practical exam, which are scheduled periodically throughout the year at various locations across the country.

## **RBA Overview**

Founded in 1918, the Retail Bakers of America (RBA), a 501c6 not-for-profit trade association is committed to the success of the retail baking industry.

We foster the community of retail bakeries providing a forum for exchange of industry and business information, as well as networking, learning opportunities and mentoring among bakers, future and existing. We also create industry standards through professional certification, industry research and school programs.

RBA members bring consumers quality bakery foods from supermarket bakery departments, independent bakeries and food service facilities. Baking instructors, students and suppliers of ingredients, equipment, supplies and services are also proud members of RBA. Together, these individuals are redefining the industry - and they are willing to trade ideas through networking, sharing resources and knowledge

## Benefits of Certification

The purpose of the RBA Certification Program is to verify professional competency in the baking industry. Certification establishes a peer-evaluated level of knowledge about professional baking. When a baker chooses to certify, she or he chooses to enhance their influence, credibility, and effectiveness in an organization. For these reasons, there are many benefits of certification with The Retail Bakers of America:

- **Gain a Competitive Advantage**
  - RBA Certification confers a new status on professional bakers that sets them apart as skilled and motivated. Employers look for bakers and chefs who demonstrate an enthusiasm for personal growth and learning. Certification adds this value to your resume. Pursuing RBA certification proves that you value lifelong learning and will uphold an industry standard for excellence.
- **Increase Earning Potential**
  - Employers need qualified professionals with proven competency. Certification verifies the level of work, skill and knowledge professional bakers bring to the marketplace. It allows you the power to negotiate for yourself and market yourself.
- **Update Knowledge and Skills**
  - RBA certification helps you stay current in the industry. Having gone through the study and hard work of certification, you've mastered important, up-to-date industry competencies that you can soon put into use! Certification exposes you to skills and ideas, perhaps outside of your work experience that give you a broader understanding and appreciation of your craft.
- **Build Professional Credibility**
  - RBA certification demonstrates your commitment to upholding industry standards and continued learning. Certified bakers at all levels are recognized and acknowledged as among the best by their peers.

## Certification Levels

### Certified Journey Baker (CJB)

A baker at this level assists in the preparation and production of pies, cookies, cakes, breads, rolls, desserts or other baked goods for a commercial bakery. Duties may include stocking ingredients, preparing and cleaning equipment; measuring ingredients, mixing, scaling, forming, proofing, oven tending, and product finishing. He/she must demonstrate a basic knowledge about the principles of sanitation.

#### Qualifying Criteria

- Education: no mandatory requirement.
- Work Experience: a minimum of one year (2,000 hours) of verifiable commercial/retail baking experience, or a minimum of one year combination of education and commercial/retail baking work experience of which at least 1,000 hours must be work experience.
- Written Test: achieve a passing score of 75%.

## **Certified Journey Decorator (CJD)**

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A decorator at this level assists in the preparation and production of pies, cookies, cakes, breads, rolls, desserts or other baked goods for a commercial bakery. Duties may include stocking ingredients, preparing and cleaning equipment; measuring ingredients, mixing, scaling, forming, proofing, oven tending, and product finishing. He/she must demonstrate a basic knowledge about the principles of sanitation.

### **Qualifying Criteria**

- Education: no mandatory requirement.
- Work Experience: a minimum of one year (2,000 hours) of verifiable commercial/retail baking experience, or a minimum of one year combination of education and commercial/retail baking work experience of which at least 1,000 hours must be work experience.
- Written Test & Video Submission: achieve a passing score of 75%.

## **Certified Baker (CB)**

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A Certified Baker prepares and produces baked goods while assisting with general commercial bakery operations. He/she has considerable responsibility and autonomy and participates in a broad range of both complex and routine work activities, including supervision of other staff and allocation of resources. He/she must demonstrate a basic knowledge of bakery sanitation, management, retail sales/merchandising and staff training.

### **Qualifying Criteria**

- Education: must have a verification of the Serv-Safe certification or the completion of a 30-hour sanitation course offered by a school, government agency or association.
- Work Experience: a minimum of four years of verifiable full-time commercial/retail baking experience, or a CJB plus three years of verifiable full-time commercial/retail baking experience.
- Written Test: achieve a passing score of 75%.
- Practical Test: achieve a passing score of 75% for a one-day practical test administered by RBA.

## **Certified Decorator (CD)**

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A decorator at this level and for this designation prepares and finishes sweet baked goods for a commercial bakery. Duties include preparing icings, decorating a variety of cakes using various techniques, seasonal displays and specialty designs, and working with customers. He/she demonstrates a basic knowledge about sanitation.

### **Qualifying Criteria**

- Education: must have a verification of the Serv-Safe certification or the completion of a 30-hour sanitation course offered by a school, government agency or association.
- Work Experience: a minimum of four years of verifiable decorating experience working in a commercial/retail bakery or a CJD plus three years of verifiable full-time commercial/retail baking experience.
- Written Test: achieve a passing score of 75%.
- Practical Test: achieve a passing score of 75% for a one-day practical test administered by RBA.

## Certified Master Baker (CMB)

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A baker at this level and for this designation participates in a broad range of complex, technical or professional work activities, performed in a wide variety of contexts with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and allocation of resources is present. He/she must have the technical and administrative skills necessary to operate and manage the production area of a full-line independent or in-store commercial bakery. He/she must produce high quality bakery foods, and demonstrate a basic knowledge about the principles of sanitation, management, retail sales/merchandising and training.

### Qualifying Criteria

- **Education:** must have verification of the Serv-Safe certification or the completion of a sanitation course offered by a school, government agency or association. The CMB also requires a total of 30 contact hours of professional development courses/seminars or workshops in supervision (focused on human relations, team work, and supervision) or bakery management and production. Candidates must submit a portfolio of her/his work.
- **Work Experience:** all candidates must have achieved a Certified Baker (CB) designation plus have a minimum of an additional three years (36 months) of verifiable full-time commercial/retail baking experience, **or** over ten years of verifiable full-time commercial/retail baking experience without a Certified Baker designation.
- **Written Test:** achieve a passing score of 75%.
- **Practical Test:** achieve a passing score of 75% for a two-day practical test administered by RBA.

### Professional Development and Continuing Education Requirement

Candidates may fulfill the professional development or continuing education requirement in many ways. RBA recognizes formal (educational institution based) and informal (seminars, workshops, distance learning) educational experiences as well as trade shows and affiliate programs.

1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) would equal 10 contact hours for any program offering CEUs.

## Affordability

A check, money order or credit card information must accompany an application. There is non-refundable application fee of \$25. Once an application has been approved, candidates are charged the exam fee, which covers one scheduled written test and one practical test. A final registration fee is due at the time a candidate registers for a practical exam at a specific test site.

	<u>RBA Member</u>	<u>RBA Non-Member</u>	<u>Test Site Registration</u>
Certified Journey Baker	\$75	\$100	N/A
Certified Journey Decorator	\$75	\$100	N/A
Certified Baker	\$400	\$500	\$50
Certified Decorator	\$400	\$500	\$150
Certified Master Baker	\$1000	\$1,250	\$150

*\*Group discounts may be available for qualified candidates.*

# Exams

## The Online/Written Tests

Approved candidates must take the online and performance tests within two years of RBA's acceptance of the application. If this is not done, the candidate loses his/ her "approved" status and must submit a new application. Previous filing fees are not refunded; they are forfeited.

Most exams will be given via an online link. The RBA staff will schedule your online exam and send you a link to the test. You will need to find a quiet space and give yourself the full time allotted. Once you click on the link for the exam, you are NOT able to stop and go back in, so it is very important to block out a time for you to test. *The written examination for Certified Baker, Certified Decorator and Certified Master Baker must be taken and passed prior to taking the practical examination.*

RBA study guides for written exams are provided for CB and CMB candidates. The information contained in study guides are a foundation and initial step to preparing for the online exam. Candidates are also expected to read and study baking references and texts, such as those on the suggested RBA reading list. CJB and CJD certifications contain common knowledge questions that you should be able to answer as an industry profession and there is no official study guide available.

## The Practical Tests

Practical tests are typically conducted on Saturday and Sunday at a school or facility with adequate workstations and equipment. RBA uses 3 to 5 judges, and a test administrator or on-site test coordinator. Candidates must achieve the minimum passing grade (75%) for each test segment and a 75% for the test overall. CMBs take a two-day practical test; CB's and CDs take a one-day practical test.

A minimum of five (3) candidates is required to hold a practical exam. Examinations will be held at locations that can accommodate up to ten (10) candidates, has the proper equipment available and does not charge for the use of the facility. Test results will be provided to candidates at the test site, immediately following the exam. It is the objective of the RBA to provide a fair standard of scoring. Each product being graded has a detailed grading rubric that candidates will have access to prior to the exam.

Study guides and recipes are provided for practical exams. Candidates are provided with RBA recommended recipes but may choose to use their own recipes. If a candidate chooses to use his or her own recipes, the RBA Coordinator or an RBA judge must be notified at least 30 days prior to the practical. ***A candidate's practical study guide is unique to her or his exam test site, as the categories, products and formulas may change for each practical.***

## Re-Testing Process

A candidate who fails one or two product segments may re-test on those segments. The re-test will include the failed items plus two (2) additional products to allow for scoring on time management. A candidate who fails three or more product segments must re-take the entire practical exam. (The math/Baker's percentage portion of the practical exam will be included as one of the failed items).

The fee for the re-test is \$150.00 per item (CMB)/ \$50.00 per item (CB/ CD).

- If a candidate fails the written or practical test, in whole, the candidate must wait a year from the date of the second failed test before reapplying to take the test.
- If a candidate fails the practical test in part (1-2 items), the candidate must wait 3 months before retesting.
- The candidate must submit documentation of 3 practice rounds of the product prior to retesting.
  - o This documentation will include emailed pictures of the practice production process and the final products. Candidates will receive a list of necessary pictures based on the product to be retested.
- The test must take place during a regularly scheduled test, or when two or more CMB judges are available for scoring (one judge may virtually present).
- If a candidate does not retest during a regularly scheduled exam, the candidate will be responsible for any travel and lodging of out-of-town judges, up to \$200 per judge. These costs will be paid through the RBA. The RBA will do its best to find CMB judges within a close vicinity to the retesting candidate.

## Certification Checklist

- Complete and submit the application form with \$25 application fee.
- Upon acceptance of the application, submit the full certification fee to secure your candidacy status.
- Study for the written exam using the RBA written study guide, and recommended reading list.
- Complete the online exam via Exambuilder.com using a provided exam link.

*For CB, CD & CMB:*

- Register for practical exam test site and submit registration fee. (Candidates must register for a practical exam within 2 years of the application being accepted).
- Study for practical exam using the practical exam guidebook specific to your test site and provided RBA formulas
- Connect with RBA judges assigned to your practical exam. Feel free to submit questions to the judges prior to the test.
- 30 days prior to the exam, submit any candidate's choice items and extra ingredient lists to the judges (Candidates will NOT have access to ingredients outside of the provided formulas unless specified prior to arrival at the test site).

## RBA Recommended Reading List

These are suggested titles you may wish to read or acquire for your professional library.

*Professional Baking*, Wayne Gisslen.

*Practical Baking*, William J. Sultan

*Professional Pastry Chef*, Bo Friberg

*The Baker's Manual*, J. Amendola.

*Professional Baker's Manual*, George Rudolph.

*Baking: The Art and Science*, Claus Schunemann

*Applied Foodservice Sanitation*, NIFI (NRA)

*Serving Safe Food (ServSafe)*, NRA

*HACCP Food Safety Manual*, Loken.

*How Baking Works*, Paula Figoni

*On Food and Cooking*, Harold McGee