

WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines

Website FAQ | WineWise BeNeLux

You are considering the WSET Diploma. Naturally, you want to know what to expect, how the programme works and what choices you have along the way. Below you will find answers to the questions prospective students ask us most often.

How can I start the WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines?

Every student at WineWise starts with the Start Module. For administrative purposes, this includes D1 Wine Production, D2 Wine Business and D6 Independent Research Assignment. D1 must be the first examination you sit. After that, you can continue with the other units according to the WineWise programme.

What prior knowledge do I need?

You must have passed the WSET Level 3 Award in Wines, or the former WSET Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits.

How does D1 Wine Production work?

D1 covers viticulture and vinification. The classes are delivered online and there is no tasting examination. WineWise determines the examination date and location, so students do not choose their own examination date. D1 must be the first Diploma examination you sit. You do not need to have passed D1 before continuing with the other units.

How does D2 Wine Business work?

D2 is delivered online and does not include a tasting examination. WineWise communicates which examination date is offered within the programme. The examination takes place in Breda.

How does D6 Independent Research Assignment work?

For D6, you write one 3,000-word research paper. Each year, two topics are released on 1 August: one for the January submission and one for the July submission. WineWise deliberately sets an earlier internal deadline, in early January or early July. This means we only register you once your paper has been submitted on time, helping you avoid unnecessary additional examination fees. D6 is administratively part of the Start Module, but you do not have to complete the paper immediately. Once you have sat your D1 examination, you can submit D6. You may also postpone it to a later academic year, although we do not recommend this.

How does D3 Wines of the World work?

D3 is the largest unit of the Diploma and combines theory and tasting. The classroom programme consists of five blocks of two days each. Depending on availability, you can study D3 in the classroom, online or through a blended format. If you start in March, you sit the examination in October of the same year. If you start in October, you sit the examination in May of the following year. The examination always takes place in Breda over two consecutive days: day 1 is theory and day 2 is tasting, with a total of 12 wines tasted blind.

How do D4 Sparkling Wines and D5 Fortified Wines work?

WineWise offers D4 and D5 at least twice a year. If there is sufficient demand, an additional group may be scheduled. The classroom course consists of one teaching day. Depending on availability, you can study in the classroom, online or through a blended format. The examination always takes place in Breda and lasts 90 minutes, with open-response theory questions and a blind tasting of three wines.

Where do the examinations take place?

D1 is scheduled by WineWise at the location communicated to students. D2, D3, D4 and D5 examinations always take place in Breda. D6 is submitted digitally and therefore has no physical examination location. This applies to Belgian, Dutch and international students.

Can I postpone my examination?

Yes. You may postpone an examination once free of charge, but only before the WSET registration deadline. WineWise will send you an automated email in advance asking you to confirm whether you will attend. If you wish to postpone, you can indicate this in your reply. If you do not select a specific new date, we will automatically move you to the next available examination. A second postponement is subject to a fee. Once you have been registered with WSET, the strict WSET rules apply and a standard postponement is no longer possible.

What happens if I do not pass?

You can resit any unit you have not passed. Resits are subject to a fee. You cannot resit a unit you have already passed in order to improve your score.

How long does the Diploma programme take?

The WineWise programme is structured so that you can complete the Diploma in approximately 24 months if you follow the recommended schedule. Your official WSET registration is valid for three years. After that period, re-registration may be required and WSET will assess the validity of previously passed units against the Specification in force at that time.

How much study time should I allow?

WSET estimates the total study time at 500 hours: 128 hours of guided learning and examinations, plus 372 hours of private study. The Diploma therefore requires a significant time commitment. This is precisely why we recommend following the suggested programme and avoiding taking too many units at the same time.

Can I combine or postpone units?

Yes, but WineWise strongly advises against doing so. The schedule is deliberately designed to spread the workload and make it realistic to complete the Diploma in approximately 24 months. Frequently changing the schedule or combining units increases the likelihood that the programme will take longer to complete.

Not sure which programme best fits your schedule?

We recommend following the suggested WineWise programme. This spreads the workload and makes completing the Diploma within approximately 24 months a realistic goal.