

Q&A on the Application of the “Guidelines for Certification of Cooking Skills for Japanese Cuisine in Foreign Countries” (Established on April 1, 2016, 27 Food Industry Affairs Bureau No. 6094 Notification from the Director-General of the Food Industry Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries)

July 1, 2025

**Global Market Development Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Application/Management Bodies**

■ Introduction

The purpose of this Q&A is to resolve questions regarding the operation of the Guidelines for Certification of Cooking Skills for Japanese Cuisine in Foreign Countries (established on April 1, 2016, 27 Food Industry Affairs Bureau No. 6094 Notification from the Director-General of the Food Industry Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); hereinafter referred to as the “Guidelines”) and ensure their effective operation by the Application/Management Bodies and Certification Bodies, and thereby promote the further extension of the cooking skills certification system. This Q&A has been created by the Overseas Demand Development Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, MAFF, and the Application/Management Bodies listed below.

This document will continue to be updated as needed.

Application/Management Bodies

Organization to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO)

TSA Carrier Ltd.

Japan Association of Training Colleges for Cooks

VIDA Co., Ltd.

Japanese Cuisine and Dietary Culture Development Committee (JCDC)

■ Revision history

Date of revision	Revised sections	Revision details
April 24, 2025	Questions 1 to 6	Newly created
July 1, 2025	Cover page, Introduction	Export Policy Planning Division → Overseas Demand Development Division

1. Certification requirements

Q1. Regarding “(1) Those who took lessons and acquired knowledge and skills regarding Japanese cuisine specified in Article 2, Section 2 for approximately one year (approximately 150 hours) at any cooking schools located in Japan or overseas, and then graduated from or completed said school,” which is one of the certification requirements for Silver, would completing approximately 150 hours over several months also satisfy the requirement? (Related to Article 2, Section 1 of the Guidelines)

The Guidelines assume that the time required to complete subjects related to the “knowledge and skills to be acquired” specified in Article 2, Section 2 of the Guidelines within a typical one-year Japanese food curriculum at cooking schools and similar institutions is approximately 150 hours. This 150 hours refers specifically to the time required to complete the subjects related to the knowledge and skills stipulated in Article 2, Section 2 of the Guidelines, not the total time required for all subjects taken at any cooking school. Based on this understanding, please determine whether the examination requirements are met.

2. Content of examination

Q2. Is it acceptable for the Certification Body or Application/Management Body to freely determine the content of the examination? (Related to Article 2, Section 2 of the Guidelines)

The examination consists of two types: a practical skills test and a written test.

The Bronze certification examination (practical skills test) will require candidates to perform “*sanmai oroshi* (three-piece filleting of fish)” and “*katsura-muki* (thinly slicing into a long strip)” as mandatory tasks. For the Silver certification examination (practical skills test) and Gold certification examination (practical skills test), we will continue to coordinate with the Application/Management Bodies in collaboration with MAFF to ensure uniform standards of certification examination.

For the written test, it shall be the principle to set at least 20 questions concerning the matters stipulated in Article 2, Section 2 of the Guidelines, and to require a score of 70% or higher on these questions.

3. Appraisal and evaluation

Q3. Are there any criteria or standards for appraising or evaluating each task during the practical skills test? (Related to Article 2, Section 2 of the Guidelines)

In principle, the practical skills test of the Bronze certification examination will be conducted for the purpose of appraisal, evaluation, and pass/fail determination according to the “JATCC Practical Skills Testing Manual” (Japan Association of Training Colleges for Cooks (JATCC)). The evaluation criteria and passing standards may be modified as necessary, but any changes require agreement among the Application/Management Bodies.

For Silver and Gold certification examinations, we will continue to coordinate among the Application/Management Bodies in collaboration with MAFF to ensure uniform standards of certification examination.

4. Examination supervisor

Q4. Who is qualified to determine the pass/fail status of examinations conducted by the Certification Body? (Related to Article 2, Section 1 of the Guidelines)

Those qualified to determine the pass/fail status of examinations conducted by the Certification Body (hereinafter referred to as “examination supervisors”) shall be as listed in the right column of the following table.

◆ Examination supervisors at the Certification Body

Type of certification	Examination supervisors
Silver	(1) Foreign nationals: Those who have obtained Gold certification Japanese nationals: Those recognized by the Application/Management Body as having acquired knowledge and skills equivalent to or exceeding Gold level
	(2) Chefs serving as Japanese Cuisine Goodwill Ambassadors

	<p>(regardless of nationality)</p> <p>➤ <u>Two persons are required: either two persons who meet any of section (1) above; or one person who meets any of section (1) and one person who meets section (2).</u></p> <p>* If the Certification Body is a Japanese cooking school or Japanese cooking training facility offering a Japanese food course, one or more instructors from that cooking school or facility may serve as examination supervisors.</p>
Bronze	<p>Foreign nationals: Those who have obtained Silver or Gold certification</p> <p>Japanese nationals: Those recognized by the Application/Management Body as having acquired knowledge and skills equivalent to or exceeding Silver level</p> <p>➤ <u>At least one person who meets any of the above requirements is required.</u></p> <p>* If the Certification Body is a Japanese cooking school or Japanese cooking training facility offering a Japanese food course, one or more instructors from that cooking school or facility may serve as examination supervisors.</p>

* For the Gold certification examination, we will continue to coordinate with the Application/Management Bodies in collaboration with MAFF to ensure the consistent application of the Guidelines.

Q5. There is no person in the Certification Body who qualifies as the examination supervisor (see Q4). In that case, how can the appraisal and certification be conducted?

(Related to Article 2, Section 1 of the Guidelines)

A Certification Body (tentatively named Certification Body A) lacking a qualified examination supervisor may, with the approval of the Application/Management Body to which Certification Body A belongs, conduct appraisal and certification as Certification Body A by receiving a qualified examination supervisor from another Certification Body (tentatively named Certification Body B) under the umbrella of the same Application/Management Body to conduct the examination.

Furthermore, even within the Certification Bodies under the Application/Management Body to which Certification Body A belongs, if no person qualifying as an examination supervisor is available (within a reasonable travel distance for the examinee), Certification Body A may conduct appraisal and certification by receiving a dispatched examination supervisor from another Certification Body (tentatively named Certification Body C) under a different Application/Management Body.

However, the above application in the Bronze examination shall be limited to a maximum of two years from the initial implementation. The Silver examination has no specified validity period.

5. Others

Q6. Regarding the “knowledge and skills to be acquired,” are there any official materials available for preparing for the practical skills test? (Related to Article 2, Section 2 of the Guidelines)

There are no official materials.

As reference texts, there are *Complete Japanese Cuisine* published by the Japanese Culinary Academy and various teaching materials published by the Japan Association of Training Colleges for Cooks.

- *Complete Japanese Cuisine* (Kyoto Prefectural University website) (Japanese and English versions, freely available)
https://www.kpu.ac.jp/jp_cuisine_ebook/
- Materials of the Japan Association of Training Colleges for Cooks (Japanese version only, sold for a fee)
https://www.jatcc.or.jp/works/teaching_materials/