



North Highland College University of the Highlands and Islands

Food Preparation & Cookery – SVQ 1 (SCQF 4)

Overview of course

Students will learn how to work in a professional kitchen by cooking for North Highland College's Café at Morven customers. They will have the chance to meet many local chefs and visit hotel and restaurant kitchens.

Entry requirements/criteria

- Demonstrate an interest in cooking
- Preference will be given to pupils who already have a part-time job in the hospitality industry
- Willingness to work with the public

Additional attributes North Highland College UHI would look for

Students will be expected to -

- Be prepared to work hard all session
- Catch up on work missed if they are absent
- Ask for help if they need it
- Reflect on learning
- Prepare for practical lessons
- Work as part of a team
- Revise throughout the session
- Access and use the virtual learning environment

Therefore, the following attributes and skills are important for applicants –

- Motivation for learning
- Commitment to take personal responsibility for learning
- Confidence to ask questions
- Basic IT skills
- Independent study skills

Why would pupils choose to study Professional Cookery or Hospitality?

There are many employment opportunities in the hospitality industry, in kitchens and front of house in hotels, restaurants, private houses, lodges, contract catering companies, airlines, cruise liners and abroad in ski lodges and holiday complexes. Several previous students have spent several years

travelling abroad financing themselves working in hotels and restaurants across the world. Every year the college gets many requests from employers for chefs, waiters and housekeepers for hotels and restaurants across the highlands. Promotion can be rapid for keen hospitality employees, and salaries as good as in most other industries for the key people in the business.

SVQs are the professional qualifications for chefs, general assistants and front of house supervisors. If a chef was to undertake a chef apprenticeship at work they would complete SVQ Level 2 Professional Cookery (SCQF Level 5) followed by SVQ level 3 professional cookery (SCQF Level 6), along with core skills at SCQF Level 4. Front of house students would complete SVQ Level 2 Hospitality followed by SVQ Level 3 Hospitality Supervision and Leadership. Progression from these courses would be into HNC professional Cookery or Hospitality then BA in Hospitality Management. North Highland College currently has five students who started at SVQ Level 2 Professional Cookery and who are now on the 2nd year of the Hospitality Management degree programme. (It is possible to go straight onto year one of the BA Hospitality Management with three Scottish Highers at grade C or above).

Full-time courses at college follow the same pattern, so students coming from school with three national 4s and two national 5s would go straight onto SVQ Level 2 Professional Cookery, and progress to SVQ Level 3 Professional Cookery after a year. They will be given a work placement in their first year which they should continue during the summer season between courses, and we find that as well as improving skills levels this usually leads to a full-time job waiting for them when they leave college. Other students chose to go south to progress their career and we have links with many five star hotels and Michelin star chefs who would be willing to give a career start to our final year students. Alternatively, students can opt to stay in full-time education and progress onto the HNC and degree programmes.

Each level of course builds on skills learned (and then practiced) on each level of course, therefore it would be very unusual for anyone to be able to come directly on to the SVQ Level 3 or HNC courses without first completing SVQ Level 2. The only people we would expect to be able to do this would be those who have worked in a professional kitchen or in a front of house position. HNC Professional Cookery for example does not teach people how to cook, but how to manage an area of a professional kitchen, including supervising other chefs, ordering, costing and time management. None of this can be done if the student does not already have the required level of cookery skills.

In preparation for a career in the hospitality industry, our school link courses are also SVQ courses, and most pupils, irrespective of academic ability at school, would start at SVQ Level 1 Food Preparation and Cooking, which provides an ideal induction into working in a professional kitchen and introduces pupils to some SVQ Level 2 units. Any pupil who achieves a pass at SVQ Level 1 will gain automatic entry to SVQ Level 2 in either Professional Cookery or Hospitality, irrespective of any other school qualification. Pupils who are studying at national 5 and higher level at school will find they very quickly progress onto some SVQ Level 2 units. All our VQ qualifications are carried out in a real or realistic working environment, and prepare pupils to hit the ground running at whatever stage they chose to move from school link pupil to full time student or hospitality employee. As part of the course they will get to know the majority of our local hospitality employers giving them an advantage when looking for full or part time work in the industry.

The SVQ Level 1 programme consists of eight units, the SVQ Level 2 and Level 3 Professional Cookery have 14 units each. A full-time student will take six months to achieve the Level 1 and a year to achieve both Level 2 and Level 3.