

Process for Obtaining a Large Seat Limit for a BJCP Exam Site

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Problem

There is an incredible demand for BJCP Exam seats. Currently, 12 seats are available per normal exam site. In many areas exam prep classes are filled with people eager to take the exam and become part of the BJCP. Unfortunately, the next available exam site slot is nearly 24 months away and sites are not allowed to register more than 24 months into the future.

Note that the BJCP does not see an exam site registration as belonging to a single club or organization. With continual complaints about a lack of exam seats it reflects poorly on local administrators when sites do not use all their allocated seats because they considered the exam a private thing and did not reach out to other people in the area interested in taking the exam.

Solution

The first part of the solution was rolled out in the latter part of 2012. That process offers a way for sites to increase the limit to 20 seats.

The second part of the solution is a procedure for allowing sites to increase the limit to as high as 48 seats. The process for getting more than 20 seats is more onerous and requires more lead time than the process for getting to 20 seats.

Both procedures require the local administrator to identify graders to support the ongoing exam grading process. These graders **MUST** complete their scheduled grading assignments before the site is allowed to use the extra seats beyond the normal 12 seats. The current exam grading flow indicates that it takes 10 to 11 weeks after the graders receive their exams to grade for the graders to complete the portion of the process that is needed to increase the seat limits. Further, there is a lag between when a site requests an increased seat limit and when the graders will actually receive the exams for grading – this lag can amount to several months. It is unreasonable for a site administrator to assume the seat increase can be accelerated or that it will automatically happen.

To obtain a higher seat limit for a BJCP Exam the local exam administrator needs to recruit some graders for the BJCP. The administrator needs to identify the teams of graders; a team consists of a lead grader and a second grader. The lead graders need to be experienced graders that are qualified to be lead graders. The second graders can be novice graders. The graders must meet the normal requirements for becoming an exam grader. These graders will not be grading the associated site's exams and their grading work has to be completed before the site's exam date. The identified graders may or may not be

assigned as a team – that is at the Exam Directors’ discretion. The identified graders cannot be retroactively claimed from the existing grading schedule – they must be new grading assignments. The graders will be identified on a special form that needs to be submitted to the Exam Directors. For the purposes of earning the increased seat limits, a site could identify a team that consists of two lead graders rather than one lead and one second.

The lead grader’s assignment is considered finished when the completed RTPs are submitted to the Associate Director. The second grader’s assignment is considered finished when the grading team submits their consensus scores to the Associate Director and the Exam Director. For the purposes of earning an increased seat limit, if a lead grader is identified in the second grader’s role, their grading assignment is considered finished when the consensus scores are submitted. However, that grader would still be responsible for the generation of the RTPs but that part of the grading is not part of the seat limit increase process. In the extreme case this means that a single grader could be used four times to earn a 20 seat limit for a site.

There are several restrictions related to increasing the seat limits:

- The graders must complete their grading assignment within one month of the scheduled completion date for their set or they earn no credit.
- The graders must complete their assignment at least three weeks prior to the scheduled exam date.
- The quality of the RTPs produced cannot be subpar in the judgment of the Associate Director and the Exam Director handling the set.

If the graders do not meet the above restrictions then the site does not receive credit to expand their seat limit. If the seat limit is not increased, only original limit’s worth of exams will be graded from the site. If a site submits more exams for grading than their seat limit allows the Exam Director will randomly pick from the submitted exams the ones to be graded and the rest will be discarded (never graded)

Process for a 20 Seat Limit

To obtain a 20 seat limit for a BJCP Exam, the local exam administrator needs to recruit some graders for the BJCP. The administrator needs to identify the equivalent of two teams of graders; two lead graders and two second graders.

Local site administrators must not assume that their seat limit will be automatically increased. Just because they have people to fill the extra seats does not waive the requirements.

Process for an Even Larger Seat Limit

Getting a site’s seat limit raised above 20 seats is more complicated than getting it raised to 20 seats. Again, the local administrator needs to recruit graders but a lot more graders will be needed. The graders are asked to take on a set of exams over and above their normal grading duties so as to not impact grading of other scheduled exams. The easy way for the Exam Directors to see that the graders identified here are handling grading beyond their norm is if they each sign up for two sets as part of this application.

The possible larger seat limits available are; 24, 36, and 48 seats. For 24 seats the admin needs to recruit two teams of graders. For 36 seats the admin needs to recruit three teams of graders. For 48 seats the admin needs to recruit four teams of graders. With each grader taking on an extra set of exams.

Where this gets a little complicated is in considering what is an extra set of exams; for a novice grader the norm is zero sets of exams so one set is sufficient for them. The lead graders need to be experienced graders that are qualified to be lead graders. The graders will be identified on a special form that needs to be submitted to the Exam Directors – the form takes the names of up to four lead graders and up to four second graders. The lead graders will each be used twice to grade exams. If the second graders are experienced they will be used twice, if the second graders are novices they will only be used once.

Since the graders need to cycle through grading two sets of exams a long lead time is required to earn the larger seat limits.

Graders need to complete their grading assignments before the Exam Directors will raise the seat limits for a site – the BJCP Grading Process document describes how long the grading flow takes for a set. Because of the complexity of managing up to four teams each grading twice there are some fallbacks for the process. For example, if a site was trying to earn 48 seats but one of the four teams fails to complete their assignments then the site would only get to 36 seats. If two teams fail then the limit drops back to 24 seats and if three or more fail the limit drops back to 12 seats.

Tracking Progress of the Graders

Behind the scenes the Exam Directors maintain a detailed grading schedule that shows the graders and the progress of exams through the grading flow as described in <http://www.bjcp.org/docs/ExamGradingProcess.pdf>. The Exam Directors are also tracking which graders' activities are associated with which future exam site. The Exam Directors will use this data to indicate to a local administrator when the seat limit can be raised for a site - when the associated graders have completed their assignments.