

Guidelines for Academy of Chocolate Awards 2026

Entrants – Filling Out Forms on Judgify

Before you can send us the products you would like to be judged at Academy of Chocolate 2026 awards, you need to register your organisation and details on the product(s) you would like to submit on Judgify, which is our awards management system: <https://www.judgify.me/aoc2026>

Please make sure you read through the information on the landing page, and you can also visit our awards section on the Academy of Chocolate website: <https://academyofchocolate.org.uk/how-to-enter/>

1 Tips for filling out Registration Form

You will need to fill out the registration form first to register your organisation before you can fill out the information on submitting your products.

Most of the questions should be self-explanatory but we would like to give you some more information on the following two questions:

- “Additional information to be included on invoice (if required)” - Please add any information you need to be included on the invoice for tax/customs purposes. This is important as the invoice will be included in your order confirmation email once you have paid your entry fees, and information in this field will be included on the invoice. For example, some countries require specific wording and tax numbers to be included on invoices – please make sure you include such information here.
- “Declaration for Student” – Please only check this box if you are a current catering student. You must use the catering organisation name and address on this form. Please do not check this box if you are representing a commercial organisation even if you are a part-time catering student. Make sure you enter your products in one of the two students categories in the submission forms.

2 Tips for filling out Submission Forms

Please fill in the submission form in English. If you need to translate from your local language, we suggest you use Google Translate <https://translate.google.com/> or DeepL <https://www.deepl.com/en/translator>

2.1 Deciding which category to enter

First, decide what category your product belongs to.

IMPORTANT: This will be the first question that determines what information we will need from you on your entry. If you submit this to the wrong category, we cannot change this for you later on because the information we ask will depend on the category you have specified. You will then have to contact us to have the incorrect entry withdrawn and you will have to enter the correct information as a new entry.

You can find the definition of each category in <https://academyofchocolate.org.uk/how-to-enter/awards-categories/>

If you are unsure which category to enter, email us at awards@academyofchocolate.org.uk and ask!

2.1.1 Chocolate Bars

There are 12 different categories for chocolate bars:

Category Heading	Category Name
Bean-To-Bar Chocolate Bars	[BPD] – Bean-To-Bar Plain Dark Chocolate Bar
	[BPM] – Bean-To-Bar Plain Milk Chocolate Bar
	[BPM] – Bean-To-Bar Plain White Chocolate Bar
	[BLD] - Bean-To-Bar Flavoured Dark Chocolate Bar
	[BLM] - Bean-To-Bar Flavoured Milk Chocolate Bar
	[BLW] - Bean-To-Bar Flavoured White Chocolate Bar
Couverture Chocolate Bars	[CCD] – Couverture Plain/Unflavoured Dark Chocolate Bar
	[CCM] – Couverture Plain/Unflavoured Milk Chocolate Bar
	[CCW] – Couverture Plain/Unflavoured White Chocolate Bar
	[CLD] – Couverture Flavoured Dark Chocolate Bar
	[CLM] – Couverture Flavoured Milk Chocolate Bar
	[CLW] – Couverture Flavoured White Chocolate Bar

2.1.1.1 Bean-To-Bar vs Couverture Chocolate Bars

- **“Bean-To-Bar”**: If you make your own chocolate (eg if you roast from dried cacao beans, or if you make the bars from nibs)
- **“Couverture”**: If you buy chocolate from someone else and you make the chocolate bars using this chocolate

2.1.1.2 Plain vs Flavoured Chocolate Bars

- **“Plain”**: If your chocolate bar has no added flavouring or infusion or inclusion, or if the only added flavour is an alternative milk or alternative sugar you use
- **“Flavoured”**: Anything else added except alternative milk or alternative sugar.

2.1.1.3 Dark vs Milk vs White Chocolate Bars

- **“Dark”**: If the chocolate you use contains a minimum of 60% cocoa solids and does not contain any milk or plant-based milk as ingredient
- **“Milk”**: If the chocolate you use contains a minimum of 30% cocoa solids and contains animal milk or plant-based milk as ingredient
- **“White”**: If the chocolate you use contains a minimum of 25% cocoa butter (with no cocoa liquor) and may contain animal milk or plant-based milk as ingredient

2.1.1.4 Examples

Example 1:

If you buy cacao beans from a distributor and you roast your own beans, and make a chocolate bar that contains 45% cocoa liquor and 20% cocoa butter (i.e. 65% cocoa solids), coconut milk and raw cane sugar only, then your product would belong to “[BPD] – Bean-To-Bar Plain Dark Chocolate Bar”

However, if you also add dried coconut pieces onto the same chocolate bar, then your product would belong to “[BFD] - Bean-To-Bar Flavoured Dark Chocolate Bar”

Example 2:

If you buy some dark chocolate from a bean-to-bar chocolate maker, and you melt that chocolate and you add nuts and dried fruits and create your own flavoured chocolate bar, then your product would belong to: “Couverture Flavoured Dark Chocolate Bar”.

2.1.2 Filled Chocolates

There are 5 different categories for filled chocolates:

- **[FPG] - Plain Ganache Bonbons & Truffles**
- **[FLG] - Ganache Flavoured With Alcohol, Fruit, Spices and/or Inclusions**
- **[FCB] - Caramel-Based Bonbons**
- **[FNU] - Nut-Based Chocolates**
- **[FPA] - Panned & Enrobed Products**

If you think your filled chocolate may fit into 2 different categories, please select one that you feel is most representative.

For example:

If you make a filled chocolate that has a caramel layer and a nut paste layer, and the more dominant flavour is the nut paste, then enter it in the nut-based chocolates category.

2.1.3 Chocolate Drinks

There are 2 different categories for Chocolate Drinks:

- **[DPC] - Plain Chocolate Drinks**: If your chocolate drink does not contain any flavouring
- **[DLC] - Flavoured Chocolate Drinks**: If your chocolate drink contains any flavouring

2.1.4 Spreads

There are 2 different categories for spreads:

- **[SDC] - Dark Chocolate Spreads:** If your chocolate spread contains dark chocolate and no milk product
- **[SMC] - Milk Chocolate Spreads:** If your chocolate spread contains milk chocolate or milk product in it

2.1.5 Brand Experience

There are 3 different categories for brand experience:

- **[XPB] - Chocolate Bar Wrapper Collection:** If your entry is for a collection of chocolate bars design with a theme
- **[XPC] – Product Collection Design:** This category is for a collection of bars that are packaged together or submitted as a selection; OR individual boxes of filled chocolates; OR a collection of other similar products (e.g. chocolate drinks, spreads, seasonal themed ranges: Easter, Christmas, Valentine etc).
- **[XPN] – Brand Presentation & Corporate Gifting:** This section is for any other brand experience products that do not fall into the other two categories

2.1.6 Students

There are 2 different categories which are exclusively for catering students.

- **[ZCB] – Students Category:** Flavoured Chocolate Bars
- **[ZFC] – Students Category:** Filled Chocolates

NOTE: If you are a commercial company (even if you are still a part-time student), you cannot enter in the students category. If you do, your entry will be disqualified and no refund will be provided.

2.2 Questions on the Submission Form

Please note that not all the questions are applicable to each category – once you have selected the category, you will see the questions that are applicable to that category.

2.2.1 Short Product Description

In no more than 15 words, give the judges an idea what your product is (e.g. similar to what you see on product display label at a shop). Please do not include your company name or brand name in this description, even if the official name of the product may include your company name or brand name that identifies your company.

You can put a more detailed description in the next field “Product Description”.

Examples:

- “85% Piura blanco”
- “55% cacao from Peru with oat milk, candied orange peels and chilli”
- “Fresh mint dark chocolate ganache with a lemon caramel and a sugar crunch”

2.2.2 Product Description

You can put a more detailed description of your product for the judges. Please do not include your company name or brand name in this description.

2.2.3 Ingredients List

Please list all the ingredients used in your product.

2.2.4 Does your entry contain any of the ingredients listed below?

This question is intended to help our team to ensure that judges with specific allergies / dietary restrictions do not judge the entries with these specific ingredients.

- “No” if your product does not contain any of the following ingredients:
 - Alcohol (flavoured or unflavoured, or ingredients soaked in alcohol)
 - Celery
 - Coriander
 - Crustaceans (e.g. prawns, crabs and lobsters)
 - Gluten (e.g. wheat, barley and oats)
 - Eggs
 - Fish
 - Lupin
 - Milk
 - Molluscs (e.g. mussels and oysters)
 - Mustard
 - Peanuts
 - Pork
 - Sesame
 - Soybeans (this includes soy lecithin)
 - Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if the sulphur dioxide and sulphites are at a concentration of more than ten parts per million)
 - Tree nuts (e.g. almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts)
- “Yes” if your product contains any of these ingredients, and make sure you check the ingredients that your product contains in the next question “If yes, please check all the boxes that apply”

2.2.5 Does your chocolate bar have a liquid, caramel, cream-based or nut paste filling?

- “No” if your chocolate bar does not have a liquid, caramel, cream-based or nut paste filling.
- “Yes” if your chocolate bar has a liquid, caramel, cream-based or nut paste filling.

2.2.6 Style

This question is intended to give the judges an idea of any of these particular styles in your chocolate bar. You can leave the boxes unchecked if none of these styles apply to your product:

- Raw / Unroasted – if your chocolate has not been roasted
- Low Roast – if you use a low-roast method for roasting your beans
- Rough-Ground – if your chocolate has a rough-ground texture
- Low Conch – if you use a low conch method

2.2.7 Alternative Sugar Used

- “No”: if your chocolate bar uses contains cane sugar, or no sugar at all (for 100% cacao bar)
- “Yes”: if your chocolate bar uses any other sugar, and please specify what type of sugar.

2.2.8 Alternative Milk Used

- “No”: if your chocolate bar uses contains cow’s milk, or no milk at all (for dark chocolate bar)
- “Yes”: if your chocolate bar uses any other milk, and please specify what type of milk.

2.2.9 Total Cocoa %

Please check the total cocoa percentage (cocoa liquor and cocoa butter) in the chocolate. You can be more specific about the exact % in your product description field.

2.2.10 Cocoa Country of Origin

For bean-to-bar chocolate, we would like to know where your beans are grown – I,e, “Primary Cocoa Country of Origin”.

You can include additional Information on Cocoa Origin (Region or other countries if more than one cocoa country of origin) in the next question, or you can leave this blank if you don’t have any specific region from a country or if your chocolate is only made with cocoa beans from one single country.

If your chocolate is made from more than one country, please specify one that is most representative of your chocolate in the “Primary Cocoa Country of Origin”, and enter the other country/countries or specify the region in the "additional information on cocoa origin" field.

2.2.11 Processed at Cocoa Country of Origin

“Yes” if you are a cacao grower and the chocolate bar is made in the same country as you are growing the cacao

2.2.12 Are you involved with the farm-level processing (fermentation and drying) of the beans

“Yes” if you are a cacao grower yourself and ferment/dry your own beans, or if you work with specific farmers who use your protocol in fermentation/drying.

2.2.13 Do you start your bar-making process from unroasted dried beans?

“Yes” if you start your bar-making from unroasted dried cocoa beans.

“No” if you start your bar-making process from nibs, roasted beans from someone else, or any forms other than unroasted dried cocoa beans.

2.2.14 Describe what you have done to the couverture(s) to create this chocolate bar

For plain/unflavoured couverture bars, we would like to know what you have done to create this chocolate bar.

For example, if you have blended 2 different chocolates together to create your own chocolate bar, you can describe it here on which couvertures you have used in the blending – we don’t need to know the exact recipe (i.e. we don’t need to know the ratio of the different couvertures you have used)

2.2.15 Directly Trade

“Yes” if you buy your cacao beans directly from the farmers, without any middlemen involved.

2.2.16 Base for preparing chocolate drink

For your chocolate drink, please specify the base you would like us to prepare the drink for the judges – the choices are:

- Water
- Dairy - Whole (3.25%) Milk
- Dairy - Semi-skimmed (2%) Milk
- Dairy - Skimmed (0.1%) Milk
- Oat Milk
- None - Please only check this if your drink does not require adding any water or milk

2.2.17 Please submit instructions to indicate how consumers would be expected to prepare this chocolate drink using the base specified above, if applicable

Please only submit one set of instructions for the base you have selected in the previous question, so we know how to prepare the drink for the judges.

Please do not submit more than one set of instructions, even if your product may have multiple serving suggestions.

Note that if your product is intended to be served as a hot drink, we will be preparing it using a velvetiser.

If you do not provide any instructions, we will prepare the chocolate drink using our standard protocol of: chocolate vs whole milk in a 1:3 ratio in weight.

2.2.18 Please explain steps taken to ensure the packaging keeps the product in optimum condition

If you have any URLs linking to files that are available online (e.g. videos), you can add them in this section also.

2.2.19 Please provide documentations on any specific certifications/claims such as organic status etc

You can submit up to 3 digital files.

2.2.20 Product Name (To appear on certificate)

This is the product name you want to use on your certificate, if you win a Gold, Silver or Bronze award.

There is no need to include your company name here, as the certificate will also include your company name.

3 After the Judging

3.1 Feedback

The feedback will give you some ideas on what the judges like, and what you may need to work on. The feedback is an aggregate of comments from multiple judges, and so there may sometimes be conflicting information.

Judging is very subjective. Just because your neighbours or customers love something, doesn't mean the judges will. We try to recruit judges from a diverse range of backgrounds. This allows for a broader range of tastes and preferences to be considered, making the judging process more inclusive.