

How Long Does It Take to Become a Certified Mixologist? - Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

There is no such thing as a certified mixologist in Australia, in the sense of a licence or a protected title. Nobody registers mixologists, and no unit and no qualification on the national register carries that name.

That is worth knowing before you pay for something advertised as certification. "Mixologist" is a job title. It is not a credential, and there is nothing to be certified in.

The useful question underneath it is: how long does the real credential take? That has a precise answer, and it is not measured in days.

What actually exists

| Category | What it is | | --- | --- | | Legally required | RSA — SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol . You need it to serve alcohol in a licensed venue, in every state | | Nationally recognised | Bar and beverage units in the SIT training package, the skill sets that package them, and the qualifications that contain them | | Non-accredited | Most courses advertised as "mixology" — real skills, no unit code, no national credential | | Not a thing | A statutory "certified mixologist" title. There is no licence, and the title is not protected |

The nearest accredited outcomes are SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails , SITHFAB023 Operate a bar , and a Certificate III in Hospitality carrying them as electives. Everything below is about how long those take.

The real answer: SITHFAB030 cannot be done in a day

The accredited cocktail unit is SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails , and its performance evidence is the most concrete answer available to "how long does this take".

You must prepare and present at least two different cocktails using each of six methods:

blended

built

floated

muddled

shaken

stirred

That is a minimum of twelve preparations — and they must be spread across at least three service periods , using organisational-specific and traditional recipes , presented with accompaniments and garnishes decoratively , with consistent quality, volume and appearance , using the correct equipment, ingredients and standard measures , and working to commercial timeframes .

Three service periods is the part that sets the floor. The unit is deliberately not assessable in one sitting, because consistency across separate sessions is the thing being tested. Skills must be demonstrated in an operational commercial bar — an industry workplace or a simulated industry environment set up for assessment with the required fixtures, stock and glassware. There is no paper-only or single-afternoon route through it.

And those three service periods are not the start of the clock. SITHFAB030 carries three prerequisites — SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005 — which makes it one of the deepest units in the food and beverage stream rather than an entry point into it. The shortest honest route is SITXFSA005 , then SITHFAB023 , then SITHFAB030 , with RSA in hand as well.

So: anyone advertising cocktail "certification" completed in an afternoon is not assessing SITHFAB030 .

The unit that covers the actual job takes longer still

SITHFAB023 Operate a bar is the broader credential, and it has two prerequisites : SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol and SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety . Neither can be skipped, so the sequence itself adds time — and because SITHFAB030 sits behind SITHFAB023 , clearing this unit is also what opens the cocktail unit.

Its own performance evidence requires you to set up, operate and close down a bar across at least three service periods including at least one peak , preparing alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages within required timeframes, using correct equipment, ingredients and standard measures, and interacting with a diverse range of customers.

Its knowledge evidence is broad: types of bar and bar service across sectors and for events; mise en place ; electronic and non-electronic ordering systems, manual or electronic registers and EFTPOS; bar set-up; the major beverage types; the types of bar service — cash drinks, dry till, inclusive packages, open bar, pre-set drinks, set limits; customer preferences across brand, garnish, glassware, ice, mixers, strength and temperature; equipment features, safety and hygiene for dispensing systems, glass-washers, ice machines and refrigeration; handover of customer information including drink preferences and customer problems, beverage quality issues and stock requirements; and safety content including AS5034 Installation and use of inert gases for beverage dispensing and the specific dangers of the inert gases used in beer and post-mix systems.

One more detail that tells you something about the seriousness of the assessment: assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations' requirements for assessors and have worked in industry for at least three years applying the skills and knowledge of the unit.

How the prerequisites stretch the timeline

This is the part that catches people out when they are counting weeks. SITXFSA005 is the gateway unit for the food and beverage stream: within that stream it is a prerequisite to nine units — SITHFAB022 , SITHFAB023 , SITHFAB024 , SITHFAB025 , SITHFAB026 , SITHFAB027 , SITHFAB030 , SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 . Do it first, and nine units open behind it. Keep that figure scoped to the food and beverage stream: across the wider SIT package the same unit also sits in front of cookery, patisserie and kitchen units, so a package-wide total would be a different number about a different set.

SITHFAB021 reaches exactly as far. RSA is a prerequisite to nine units of its own — SITHFAB023 , SITHFAB029 , SITHFAB030 , SITHFAB031 , SITHFAB032 , SITHFAB033 , SITHFAB034 , SITHFAB037 and SITHFAB039 — so the licensing unit gates as many units as the food safety unit does.

Four units in the stream carry two or more prerequisites: SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 carry two, while SITHFAB030 and SITHFAB039 carry three. And four carry none at all — SITHFAB021 ,

SITHFAB028 , SITHFAB036 and SITHFAB038 . The cocktail unit is not one of them, which is why it cannot be the first accredited thing you do.

SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage carries the same pair as SITHFAB023 : SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005 . So RSA is an academic prerequisite as well as a licensing one — SITHFAB021 gates those units regardless of the venue's licence status or which state regime you work under. The register explains why when it separates the two service units: SITHFAB034 covers higher-order service techniques for senior food and beverage attendants while SITHFAB027 covers fundamental technical skills for casual dining, a difference "reflected in the additional prerequisite requirement for alcohol service in SITHFAB034 ".

The second chain worth knowing runs the other way from RSA: SITHFAB021 opens SITHFAB032 Provide advice on Australian wines and SITHFAB033 Provide advice on imported wines , and those two together with RSA are the three prerequisites to SITHFAB039 Manage the sale or service of wine . That is a sommelier path four units deep, and it is the longest sequence in the stream.

Useful shortcut: SIT30722 carries both SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005 as core , so those prerequisites are included. Students still need to complete them; enrolment alone does not satisfy them. It does not clear all of them — SITHFAB030 additionally needs SITHFAB023 , and SITHFAB039 additionally needs SITHFAB032 and SITHFAB033 .

The one part that is compulsory

RSA is a legal prerequisite , not a career enhancer, and it is also a prerequisite to SITHFAB023 and to SITHFAB030 itself. It is state-based, with no national credential:

| Jurisdiction | What you need | Expiry | | --- | --- | --- | | Victoria | Use a current Victorian RSA certificate. Eligible interstate holders can apply for free bridging: approved original training within three years, with the online-course residence condition. Specific exemptions apply at qualifying producer events. Victorian RSA Refresher every three years. | Victorian RSA Refresher every three years. | | New South Wales | Eligible temporary interstate workers can use approved interstate RSA. Permanent movers and security or RSA marshal roles must meet NSW training and competency-card requirements; eligible holders can use bridging instead of the full NSW RSA course. NSW competency card: five years. Interstate concessions have separate eligibility and certificate-age requirements. | NSW competency card: five years. Interstate concessions have separate eligibility and certificate-age requirements. | | Queensland | Accepted where the evidence is a Statement of Attainment for the nationally accredited Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol course. An attendance certificate is insufficient. Valid RSA training generally has no expiry; training completed before 2002 must be replaced. | Valid RSA training generally has no expiry; training completed before 2002 must be replaced. | | Western Australia | Provide the RSA certificate showing completion of the nationally accredited course. An interstate RSA card alone is not accepted as evidence. Keep the RSA certificate as training evidence; approved-manager cards have separate renewal requirements. | Keep the RSA certificate as training evidence; approved-manager cards have separate renewal requirements. | | South Australia | Check provider approval and training date. Training from 1 November 2020 must be through a Commissioner-approved RTO. Earlier RSA training need not be repeated solely because of that approval change. No routine RSA renewal period stated in the cited CBS guidance; check applicable licence conditions. | No routine RSA renewal period stated in the cited CBS guidance; check applicable licence conditions. | | Tasmania | Interstate certificates can be accepted under the Commissioner's conditions. Requirements differ for employees and liquor licence holders; check the appropriate role. No RSA expiry date in the regulator's FAQ; an employer may request updated training. | No RSA expiry date in the regulator's FAQ; an employer may request updated training. | | Northern Territory | Certificates from an RTO registered to deliver RSA are accepted, including interstate certificates. Check certificate age and the NT refresher requirements. NT guidance gives a three-year limit for interstate certificates and directs holders to a refresher; check current renewal guidance. | NT guidance gives a three-year limit for interstate certificates and directs holders to a refresher; check current

renewal guidance. | | Australian Capital Territory | Valid interstate RSA certificates are recognised, subject to the ACT's three-year currency limit and ACT-approved refresher requirements. Three years from course completion, then an ACT-approved refresher. | Three years from course completion, then an ACT-approved refresher. |

Current regulator guidance: NSW , VIC , SA , QLD , WA , NT , ACT , TAS .

A specific warning relevant to this page: in Queensland and Western Australia there is no approved-provider register at all , so a provider claiming to be "OLGR-approved" or "DLGSC-approved" is describing a scheme that does not exist. That is the same species of claim as "certified mixologist" — an invented endorsement.

Victorian course content also runs wider than the unit alone: Victorian liquor laws, drink spiking , ID checks and preventing secondary supply, the use of prone restraint , harm minimisation, and compliance and enforcement.

See the RSA page , how to get an RSA certificate and how long does an RSA last . Do this before anything else.

The nationally recognised route

If you want a credential that counts, look for a unit code rather than a title. We hold relevant skill sets on our scope of registration — 17 current qualifications , 81 current skill sets and 579 units in total, all at the extent "Deliver and assess":

| Skill set | Units | | --- | --- | | SITSS00071 Responsible service of alcohol | The licensing unit — note that SITHFAB021 is the unit and SITSS00071 is the skill set that packages it. They are not the same thing, and both are on scope | | SITSS00075 Beverage Advice | SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB031 beers, spirits and liqueurs, SITHFAB032 Australian wines, SITHFAB037 food and beverage matching | | SITSS00094 Sommelier | SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB031 , SITHFAB032 , SITHFAB033 imported wines, SITHFAB039 manage the sale or service of wine | | SITSS00080 Espresso Machine Operation | SITHFAB025 , SITXCCS014 , SITXFIN007 , SITXFSA005 | | SITSS00070 Hospitality Compliance | SITHFAB021 , SITXFSA005 , SITXFSA006 | | SITSS00068 Food Handling | The prerequisite that unblocks the bar units | | SITSS00069 Food Safety Supervision | The supervisor-level food safety route |

Each produces a Statement of Attainment showing the unit code and the RTO number, linked permanently to your USI , and credit-transferable into SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality or SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House) later. Neither qualification has entry requirements.

If what you want is depth on drinks rather than the word "mixologist", Beverage Advice and Sommelier are the actual specialist routes, and they are more substantial than anything a non-accredited cocktail course offers.

A non-accredited mixology course produces a certificate of attendance. That is not worthless — the teaching may be excellent — but it does not credit-transfer, and no liquor regulator recognises it.

What actually takes time

The accredited unit takes at least three separate service periods, by design, plus its prerequisites — and for the cocktail unit that means three of them.

Three to six months of regular service is roughly what it takes to get speed, consistency and the ability to hold a station through a rush. Note that the units themselves are written this way: three service periods for SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB030 , five including one peak for SITHFAB027 , twelve for SITHFAB034 with full menu advice in every one, and ten specified beverages on three occasions each for SITHFAB025 . Industry wrote those numbers, and they reflect how long competence actually takes

to demonstrate.

Years gets you the palate to balance a drink you have not made before, and the product knowledge — spirits, styles, production — that separates a bartender from someone following recipes.

The bottleneck is the same as for baristas: repetitions under pressure, which only service provides.

And then the paperwork clock

There is one interval that is actually fixed. Where you have been assessed as competent, completed the training product and paid all agreed fees, the RTO must issue the certification documentation within 30 calendar days of the completion of the assessment . An RTO must not issue certification documentation to anyone it has not assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product, which is the other half of the same rule.

Two record-keeping periods are worth knowing if you ever need a replacement: assessment records are retained for two years , and records of the certification documentation issued for thirty years . So the certificate stays recoverable long after the evidence behind it does not.

Watch for

"Certification" with no unit code. Ask which unit. If there is not one, it is non-accredited. That is fine provided you know that is what you are buying. Where an RTO advertises a training product it is required to include the code and title as published on the National Register, and it may only represent that completion leads to a licensed or regulated outcome where the relevant industry regulator has confirmed it.

A cocktail credential offered in a single session. SITHFAB030 requires three service periods, and three prerequisite units before them. One session cannot be it.

A "Certificate of Achievement" or "Certificate of Completion" with no unit code and no RTO number. Not nationally recognised, whatever it covered. A real VET statement of attainment carries the RTO's name, registration code and logo, the full title and national code of each unit as listed on the National Register, the NRT logo , an authorised signature, and the organisation's seal, corporate identifier or unique watermark.

Anything claiming to replace RSA. Nothing does. RSA is state liquor law.

Check the provider and credential. A missing USI request alone does not prove that training is unrecognised, because exemptions can apply. For nationally recognised training, a USI is generally required before a qualification or Statement of Attainment can be issued, unless an applicable exemption applies. See the official USI exemption guidance . A USI is free; recover an existing one rather than creating another. Your USI must not be printed on the credential. See RSA course checks .

Where to start

RSA first, because it is the legal gate and a prerequisite to nine units in the stream, the bar and cocktail units among them. Then food handling , because SITXFSA005 is a prerequisite to nine units of its own, from SITHFAB022 through to SITHFAB035 — and because bar staff handling ice, cut fruit or unpackaged garnishes are food handlers anyway.

Then the bartending course , and after that consider SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House) , where RSA and cash handling are core rather than elective, or SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality , which is smaller and more flexible on electives.

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au

or +61 3 9654 1554 .

We are on Liquor Control Victoria's in-person list of approved RSA course providers and not on its separate self-paced online list. No approval by any liquor regulator outside Victoria is claimed here — we are not approved by Liquor and Gaming NSW.

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

Source records and further guidance

We link the unit records and regulator guidance relevant to this page below. Check the current source before making an enrolment, licensing or employment decision.

SITHFAB021 Provide responsible service of alcohol

SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails

SITHFAB023 Operate a bar

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety

SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Victoria)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (New South Wales)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Queensland)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Western Australia)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (South Australia)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Tasmania)

Responsible Service of Alcohol training requirements (Australian Capital Territory)

Food Standards Code — Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.2A (food safety practices and food safety management tools)

Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 (MA000009)

Restaurant Industry Award 2020 (MA000119)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 — Standards 1 to 11

Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 (full text)

Unique Student Identifier (USI) requirements for RTOs

Assessment wording clarified on 2 October 2026. SITXFSA005 unit record .

Is mixologist a protected title?

No. Anyone can use it, there is no licence behind it, and nothing on the national register certifies it.

So is "mixologist" meaningless?

Not as a description of what someone does. It is meaningless as a credential, which is the only sense in which the word "certified" would mean anything.

What is the closest accredited equivalent?

SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails, plus SITHFAB023 Operate a bar, plus a Certificate III in Hospitality carrying them as electives. For drinks knowledge specifically, the SITSS00075 Beverage Advice and SITSS00094 Sommelier skill sets.

Do I need RSA to make cocktails?

To serve them, yes, in every state. It is also a formal prerequisite to nine units in the food and beverage stream, SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails and SITHFAB023 Operate a bar among them, which makes it an academic prerequisite as well as a licensing one.

Can I do the cocktail unit in one day?

No. The unit requires twelve preparations across at least three service periods, in an operational commercial bar, and it carries three prerequisite units of its own. Anyone offering it in a day is offering something else.

Why three service periods?

Because the thing being assessed is consistency, and consistency is not observable in a single session. The unit specifies consistent quality, volume and appearance to commercial timeframes.

Which units have prerequisites, and how much time do they add?

Most of them. Fifteen of the nineteen current units in the stream carry at least one; only SITHFAB021, SITHFAB028, SITHFAB036 and SITHFAB038 carry none. SITXFSA005 alone unblocks SITHFAB022, SITHFAB024, SITHFAB025, SITHFAB026, SITHFAB027 and SITHFAB035. SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 each need SITHFAB021 and SITXFSA005. SITHFAB030 needs SITHFAB021, SITHFAB023 and SITXFSA005, and SITHFAB039 needs SITHFAB021, SITHFAB032 and SITHFAB033. Sequencing SITXFSA005 and SITHFAB021 first is what stops the prerequisites adding time twice.

Is a non-accredited course a waste?

Not if the teaching is good. Just know it does not credit-transfer, produces no Statement of Attainment, and carries no standing with any regulator.

Do I need food safety training to make cocktails?

You are handling ice, cut fruit and unpackaged garnishes, so yes, you are a food handler. SITXFSA005 is also a prerequisite to nine units in the food and beverage stream, and SITHFAB030 is one of them, so it is not optional if the accredited cocktail unit is the goal. Food handler training under Standard 3.2.2A does not have to be accredited, mandates no refresher period and need not be recorded by the business, but the accredited unit is what unblocks the rest — it buys portability and proof, not permission. The five-year clock belongs to the separate Food Safety Supervisor certificate.

What is the fastest legal route to bar work?

RSA for your state, then food handling, then get behind a bar. Build the practical units while you are working, because they are assessed across service periods you will be doing anyway.

How long after the assessment does the certificate take?

Up to 30 calendar days from the completion of the assessment, where you have been assessed as competent, completed the training product and paid all agreed fees. If you lose it later, records of certification documentation issued are kept for thirty years.

Does experience count instead of the units?

It can, through recognition of prior learning. RPL is a genuine assessment against the same evidence requirements, not a waiver, so you still have to demonstrate the twelve preparations and the rest. Raise it at the pre-training review, required under Standard 2.2 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs, before you enrol.

Will a cocktail credential get me paid more?

A single unit, not directly. A completed qualification is the lever. Under the Hospitality Industry (General) Award MA000009, the Restaurant Industry Award MA000119 and the Registered and Licensed Clubs Award MA000058, a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher, used at work, sets a minimum classification of Level 4. The Fast Food Industry Award MA000003 has no equivalent provision. Three distinctions, since this is a pay entitlement rather than a courtesy. MA000009 and MA000119 (both at clause 18.1) require you to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from those Certificate III competencies, so it is not automatic on completion. MA000058 (clause 18.3) omits the words "or higher" and adds that the Fair Work Commission may require you to demonstrate that you utilise the relevant skills. And if it is disputed the routes differ: MA000009 clause 40, MA000119 clause 34, and for MA000058 referral to the Fair Work Commission. It is also worth knowing that "appropriate level of training" has three limbs, not one: a training program meeting the requirements of a qualification or one or more appropriate units of competency; or assessment by a qualified skills assessor as having at least equivalent skills; or, as at a specified date, having been doing the work of that classification for at least three months. Which award applies is decided by the premises, not the job title. No dollar rates are printed here because award rates re-set every 1 July — use the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool with the right award code. This page also does not state casual loading, penalty rates, minimum engagement or casual conversion; take those to the Fair Work Ombudsman too.

Is there an accredited flair or showmanship unit?

No. Nothing in the assessment requirements for the bar units mentions flair. What they mention is standard measures, consistency, commercial timeframes and decorative garnishing.

Where should I look this up myself?

training.gov.au, the National Register. Search the unit code, and check it is on your intended provider's current scope of registration. See why formal certifications are so important (/news/why-formal-certifications-are-so-important/) and what a bartending course actually teaches (/news/our-bartending-courses-teach-more-than-just-how-to-pour/).