SHS+ EST.95 INSTITUTE OF CULINARY ARTS



Higher Certificate in Professional Cookery

LEARN THE CRAFT. LEAD THE BUSINESS.

Programme Level:
Higher Certificate in Professional Cookery
SAQA ID: 101856
NQF Level: 5
Credits: 120

Programme Details:
Duration: 1 year, Full-time
Intake: August

Programme Entry:
National Senior Certificate,
NQF Level 4, with access to Higher Certificate studies.

Is this for you?

You'll suit this programme if you:

- Want to start a career as a chef or professional cook.
- Enjoy practical kitchen work, food preparation and service pressure.
- Want a one-year route into the culinary industry.
- Can work with discipline, timing, hygiene rules and professional kitchen standards.
- See yourself working in restaurants, hotels, lodges, catering, bakeries or your own food business.

This programme is for students who want focused culinary training, practical kitchen exposure and a recognised foundation for entry into professional cookery.

What you will learn

Year 1: Professional cookery foundations

You build the practical and theoretical base needed to work in a professional kitchen.

Learning areas include:

- Professional culinary techniques.
- Food preparation and cooking methods.
- Dish presentation and finishing.
- Kitchen operations.
- Kitchen layouts and workflow.
- Hygiene and safety protocols.
- Food safety.
- Cost control.
- Specialised diets and nutrition.
- Religious and medical dietary requirements.
- Business communication.
- Entrepreneurial thinking.
- Work-Integrated Learning.

You learn how to prepare, cook and present dishes to professional standards. You also learn how a kitchen functions as a workplace, how to follow systems, how to meet service deadlines and how to work safely with people, ingredients and equipment.

The programme gives students a strong base in cookery while introducing the business and operational side of kitchen work

Hands-on training & other features

Students learn through theory classes, practical kitchen work, on-campus training and industry placement.

Key practical features include:

- Practical cookery training.
- Professional kitchen techniques.
- Food preparation and presentation.
- Kitchen operations.
- Food safety and hygiene.
- Cost control.
- Specialised diets and nutrition.
- Work-Integrated Learning.
- Industry placements in restaurants, hotels or catering environments.
- Exposure to real hospitality and food-service standards.

Kitchens

Culinary studies take place in SHS's kitchen and training spaces. Students use practical kitchen facilities to build technical skill, discipline, timing and consistency. Training includes ingredient preparation, cooking methods, hygiene, equipment use, kitchen organisation, plating and service readiness.

33 on Bond

33 on Bond is the school's student-run restaurant. It gives students exposure to guest expectations, service timing, food quality, teamwork and professional standards.
Students can connect kitchen training with live hospitality operations, front-of-house service and guest feedback.

Practical modules

The programme includes practical modules across:

- Food preparation.
- Cooking techniques.
- Dish finishing.
- Presentation.
- Kitchen workflow.
- Food safety.
- Hygiene.
- Special diets.
- Cost control.
- Professional conduct.

Work-integrated learning / internships

Work-Integrated Learning forms part of the programme. Students complete structured industry placements in professional kitchen, hotel, restaurant or catering environments. This helps students apply their training in real service conditions and gives them exposure to employer expectations, kitchen pressure, shift discipline, teamwork and professional standards.

Career outcomes

First-job paths

Most graduates start in junior kitchen roles where they build speed, consistency and section experience.

First roles may sit in:

- Hotels.
- Restaurants.
- Lodges.
- Catering companies.
- Function venues.
- Resorts.
- Coffee shops.
- Bakeries.
- Food production kitchens.
- Guest houses.
- Cruise or hospitality kitchens.
- Specialist food businesses.

Longer-term progression

With experience, graduates can move into:

- Demi-chef de partie roles.
- Chef de partie roles.
- Pastry or bakery support roles.
- Sous-chef roles.
- Head chef roles.
- Catering supervision.
- Kitchen supervision.
- Food business ownership.
- Further study in pastry, bakery, professional culinary arts, kitchen management or hospitality management.

The qualification can also support further study, subject to admission requirements and institutional approval.

Admission Info

Entry requirements

Applicants should have:

- A National Senior Certificate allowing access to Higher Certificate studies; or
- A Senior Certificate; or
- A National Certificate Vocational at NQF Level 4 allowing access to Higher Certificate studies; or
- An equivalent qualification accepted by SHS.

Applicants must also complete the SHS admissions process. Recognition of Prior Learning may apply in specific cases. Applicants with relevant culinary work experience may ask Admissions about RPL. RPL is assessed according to SHS academic policy and is not automatic.

Required documents

Applicants should prepare:

- Completed application form.
- Certified copy of ID or passport.
- Latest school report or final school-leaving certificate.
- Proof of relevant results, where available.
- Parent or guardian ID document, where applicable.
- Proof of payment for the application fee, where applicable.
- Study permit or visa documents for international students, where applicable.
- Any prior learning or work experience is evidence when applying through RPL

Final document requirements must be confirmed with Admissions.

Intake timing

The main intake takes place August each year. Students should apply early to allow time for interviews, acceptance, fee planning, funding applications and accommodation requests.

Financial info

Fees

Current annual tuition fee: **R125,500.00.** Students should request the latest fee schedule from Admissions before applying.

Payment terms

Payment options may include:

- Payment in full.
- Semester payments.
- Split semester payments.
- Student loan options.

Final payment terms are confirmed in the annual fee schedule and acceptance documentation.

What's included

- Scheduled theory classes.
- Practical kitchen training.
- Work-Integrated Learning support.
- Assessment.
- Access to scheduled campus learning facilities.
- Chef uniform.
- Knife set or required small equipment.
- Practical produce for scheduled classes.
- Restaurant Lunch Monday - Thursday.
- On-Campus WiFi & Parking.

What's excluded

- Chef shoes.
- Extra or replacement uniform items.
- Extra or replacement knives and small equipment.
- Accommodation.
- Transport.
- Personal stationery and devices.
- Printing.
- Exam rewrites or reassessment fees.
- Optional extras, events or excursions.
- Travel, visa, insurance and related costs for industry placements, where applicable.

Funding/loans/bursaries

- SHS can connect applicants with Student Hero for student loan support. Student Hero assists applicants by providing access to various registered credit providers through a single process.

- Limited bursary or sponsor-funded opportunities may be available through SHS partnerships, SETA linked funding or external funders. Availability changes each year. Applicants should ask Admissions about current funding options and apply early.

"SHS gave me hands-on experience at respected hotels & placements that shaped my skills & confidence."

Lara van der Merwe/ Professional Chef Programme Graduate

Student experience

Class size

SHS offers a smaller, specialist learning environment. Professional Cookery students benefit from lecturer contact, practical coaching and close feedback during kitchen sessions. Smaller practical groups help students build confidence, discipline, speed and accuracy in a professional setting.

Campus life highlights

Highlights include:

- Three culinary kitchens.
- Culinary workshops.
- Demo kitchen.
- Fully equipped commercial kitchen.
- 33 on Bond student-run restaurant.
- Fully licensed bar.
- Legit Brew coffee shop and snack bar.
- Organic kitchen and herb garden.
- Wine library.
- Lecture rooms.
- Games room.
- Campus events and restaurant weeks.
- Fast WiFi across campus.
- On-campus residences.
- 24-hour camera surveillance and rapid response.

Support

Students receive support through:

- Academic guidance.
- Practical kitchen coaching.
- Lecturer feedback.
- Work-integrated learning preparation.
- Internship and placement guidance.
- Student advisory support.
- Work-readiness feedback.
- Guidance on how study or personal challenges affect progress.

Accommodation

SHS offers on-campus accommodation through The Swiss Inn and The Swiss Chalet. Accommodation is subject to availability and should be requested early. Full accommodation information should link to the dedicated accommodation page.

"I loved every minute of studying at the Swiss Hotel School. The best part was that there were so many opportunities for practical training and experience, as I've always been someone who hates reading!"

Laura Moschini: Lodge Manager / Hospitality Management Graduate (2010)

FAQs

Is this internationally recognised?

The Higher Certificate in Professional Cookery is a South African higher education qualification at NQF Level 5. It is designed to provide a strong culinary foundation for students who want to enter the professional cookery industry.

For international use, recognition depends on the country, employer, institution or immigration body assessing the qualification. Students who plan to work or study outside South Africa should check the requirements of the specific country, employer or institution they want to apply to.

Are internships included?

Yes. Work experience forms part of the programme structure. Students complete structured industry placements in restaurants, hotels, catering environments or related professional kitchens. This gives students exposure to workplace standards, service pressure, teamwork, shift discipline, kitchen hierarchy, food safety and employer expectations.

SHS confirms placement timing, employer details and assessment requirements as part of the academic programme.

Can I visit the campus?

Yes. Prospective students and parents can book a private campus tour or attend an SHS Open Day. A campus visit gives you the chance to see the kitchens, 33 on Bond, lecture rooms, student spaces and accommodation options. You can also ask questions about the programme, practical training, Work-Integrated Learning, fees, funding and career paths.
Book a tour on our website click here.

What are the entry requirements?

Applicants should have a National Senior Certificate allowing access to Higher Certificate studies, a Senior Certificate, a National Certificate Vocational at NQF Level 4 allowing access to Higher Certificate studies, or an equivalent qualification accepted by SHS.

Applicants must also complete the SHS admissions process. Applicants with relevant prior learning or culinary work experience may ask about Recognition of Prior Learning.

Because this is a practical kitchen programme, applicants should understand the physical demands of chef training. These include standing for long periods, working with heat and equipment, following hygiene and safety rules, managing pressure and working as part of a team.

What funding is available?

SHS can connect applicants with Student Hero for student loan assistance. Student Hero helps applicants access registered credit providers through one process. Bursary or sponsor-funded opportunities may be available from time to time, but these are limited and depend on funder criteria, timing and availability.

Applicants should speak to Admissions early about current options.

What accommodation is available?

SHS offers on-campus accommodation through The Swiss Inn and The Swiss Chalet. Accommodation is limited and subject to availability. Students should request accommodation information during the application process and confirm costs, room options, house rules and payment terms before registration