

CATERING SPECIALIST

Technical Diploma

Program Code: 31-316-4

Total Credits: 31

Mid-State's Catering Specialist program is ideal for students who enjoy food, creativity, and creating memorable experiences for others. Graduates are prepared for entry-level roles in catering, event production, and food service operations, with skills in food preparation, baking, customer service, and event support.

The program features hands-on learning in professional kitchen and event settings. Students practice food preparation, baking, menu planning, and event service while building real-world experience through labs, catered events, and an industry internship.

To learn more about this program, visit mstc.edu/programs.

ACADEMIC ADVISOR

To schedule an appointment with an academic advisor, call 715-422-5300. Academic advisors will travel to other campuses as necessary to accommodate student needs. For more information about advising, visit mstc.edu/advising.

NEW STUDENT CHECKLIST

Complete the following steps to prepare for your New Student Advising appointment with your academic advisor:

- Submit a Mid-State application at mstc.edu/apply.
- Send official transcripts to:
Mid-State Technical College
Student Services
500 32nd Street North
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at fafsa.gov. Mid-State's Financial Aid team is available to assist with your FAFSA application and to answer your financial aid questions. Contact Financial Aid or schedule an appointment at mstc.edu/financial-aid.
- Set up student MyCampus account at mstc.edu/mycampus-assistance.
- Schedule a New Student Advising appointment at mstc.edu/advising.

mstc.edu • 888-575-6782 • TTY: 711



Adams Campus • Marshfield Campus • Stevens Point Downtown Campus • Wisconsin Rapids Campus • Virtual Campus • AMETA® Center

Mid-State does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its program, activity, or employment. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Vice President – Human Resources; 500 32nd Street North, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494; 715-422-5325 • AAEO@mstc.edu. 3/2026-AC

CAREER PATHWAY



Career pathways help you build your education step by step. Each stage offers one or more credentials that are recognized by employers and lead to real jobs—and you can keep building toward your career goals as you go.

Begin at any point.

Prior Learning

Credit for Prior Learning

- Certifications and Licenses
- Military Experience
- National/Standardized Exams
- Transfer Credit
- Work and Life Experience

Learn about Credit for Prior Learning at mstc.edu/cpl.

High School Credit

- High School Dual Credit
- Mid-State Fast Track

Learn about High School Credit at mstc.edu/dc.

Certificate

- Culinary Foundations (9 Credits)

Technical Diploma

- Catering Specialist (31 Credits)
Start Your Career: Independent Caterer, Catering Coordinator, Banquet Server/Assistant, Nutrition or Menu Specialist

Associate Degree

- Culinary Arts (63-64 Credits)
Start Your Career: Food and Beverage Director, Food Service Manager, Head Chef, Restaurant Manager, Sous Chef

Bachelor's Degree

For those interested in continuing their education, Mid-State offers transfer guides with various four-year colleges and universities. For more information, visit mstc.edu/transfer.

Other Options

Related Programs: Hospitality Specialist, Hospitality Management, Culinary Production Line Cook

OUTCOMES

Employers will expect you, as a Catering Specialist graduate, to be able to:

- Apply principles of safety, sanitation, and nutrition in professional catering and food service operations to ensure compliance with industry standards and promote health-conscious menu design.
- Apply foundational culinary techniques in food preparation, baking, garde manger, and beverage management to produce high-quality presentations for catered events.
- Create innovative, balanced menus and catering plans that incorporate client preferences, nutritional guidelines, cost controls, and seasonal ingredients to deliver memorable event experiences.
- Evaluate food production processes, event execution, and client feedback to identify improvements in efficiency, quality, and customer satisfaction during catering operations.
- Create entrepreneurial strategies for catering ventures, including budgeting, marketing, and operational logistics, to support independent or small-business success in the hospitality industry.
- Apply professional customer service and communication skills in event coordination and service delivery to build positive client relationships.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Students enrolled in the Catering Specialist program must be able to meet the established technical standards identified below, which are reflective of those found in the profession.

- Ability to move or transport objects up to 50 pounds, potentially with occasional, frequent, or constant exertion.
- Ability to detect and respond to emergencies.
- Sufficient endurance, strength, mobility, balance, flexibility, and coordination to perform activities and emergency procedures.
- Sufficient sensory (auditory, visual, taste, smell, tactile) ability in order to detect temperature and/or environmental temperature, detect freshness or state of product, etc.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Visit mstc.edu/studenthandbook to view Mid-State's student handbook, which contains information about admissions, enrollment, appeals processes, services for people with disabilities, financial aid, graduation, privacy, Mid-State's Student Code of Conduct, and technology.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

The GPS for Student Success course is required for all Mid-State program students and is recommended to be completed before obtaining 12 credits. Some students are exempt from this requirement. Please see your academic advisor for more information.

ADDITIONAL COURSES AS NEEDED

The following courses may be recommended or required if the student does not achieve minimum placement scores.

College Reading and Writing 1 10831104

3 credits

Provides learners with opportunities to develop and expand reading and writing skills to prepare for college-level academic work. Students will employ critical reading strategies to improve comprehension, analysis, and retention of texts. Students will apply the writing process to produce well-developed, coherent, and unified written work.

Pre-Algebra 10834109

3 credits

Provides an introduction to algebra. Includes operations on real numbers, solving linear equations, percent and proportion, and an introduction to polynomials and statistics. Prepares students for elementary algebra and subsequent algebra-related courses.

MULTIPLE MEASURES

Students can place into courses using high school GPA and completed classes. Placement can be determined in the following ways:

- **Multiple Measures Writing (MMW)**
High school GPA of 2.6 & successful completion of 2.0 credits of high school writing courses with a "C" or better
- **Multiple Measures Reading (MMR)**
High school GPA of 2.6 & successful completion of 2.0 credits of high school literature courses with a "C" or better
- **Multiple Measures Math 1 (MMM_1)**
High school GPA of 2.6 & successful completion of 1.0 credit of high school math (Algebra 1 or equivalent) with a "C" or better
- **Multiple Measures Math 2 (MMM_2)**
High school GPA of 2.6 & successful completion of 2.0 credits of high school math including Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 with a "C" or better
- **Multiple Measures Science 1 (MMS_1)**
High school GPA of 2.6 & successful completion of 1.0 credit of high school lab science course with a "C" or better
- **Multiple Measures Science 2 (MMS_2)**
High school GPA of 2.6 & successful completion of 1.0 credit of high school chemistry with a "C" or better

Past high school and college transcripts are used in making course placement decisions.

SAMPLE PART-TIME CURRICULUM OPTION

Catering Specialist • 31 Total Credits

Term 10 Credits	Course Number	Course Name	CPL	Credits
	10316112	Sanitation for Foodservice Operations	Yes	1
	10316121	Food Science	No	2
	10316125	Introduction to Food Production	No	3
	10316146	Culinary Calculations	No	3
	10890102	GPS for Student Success	Yes	1
Term 10 Credits	Course Number	Course Name	CPL	Credits
	10316128	Introduction to Foodservice	No	3
	10102232	Entrepreneurial Foundations	No	1
	10316130	Introduction to Baking	No	2
	10316138	Garde Manager	No	3
	10316137	Beverage Management	No	1
Term 11 Credits	Course Number	Course Name	CPL	Credits
	10316131	Nutrition	Yes	2
	10316133	Dining Room Customer Service	No	1
	10316113	Catering Operations	No	3
	10316127	Menu Planning	No	3
	10316129	Culinary Internship	No	2

Please Note

- Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) options are available for some courses. You can visit mstc.edu/cpl or contact your academic advisor for details.
- This curriculum sequence is only for student planning. Actual student schedules will vary depending on course availability.
- Program completion time may vary based on student scheduling and course availability. For details, go to mstc.edu/schedule.
- Get the latest updates online at mstc.edu.

Beverage Management

10316137

1 credit

Students will learn to identify types of nonalcoholic beverages and alcoholic drinks. Students will learn to prepare and serve various beverages to meet established standardized recipes. Students will learn about responsible alcohol service by completing the ServSafe Alcohol training program. The ServSafe Alcohol® Training program is developed by the National Restaurant Association and experts who have direct experience with the risks involved in serving alcohol. This connection to the foodservice industry provides insights that help prepare students for difficult situations. Students will take the Responsible Alcohol certification exam at the end of the course.

Catering Operations

10316113

3 credits

This course equips students with the practical skills and technical knowledge required to plan, execute, and manage catering services across a variety of settings. With strong emphasis on operational workflows, food production systems, menu planning, cost control, and compliance with health and safety regulations.

Prerequisite: Sanitation for Food Service 10316112 and Food Science 10316121 and Intro to Food Production 10316125. Corequisite: Culinary Calculations 10316146

Culinary Calculations

10316146

3 credits

Applies the basic principles of culinary calculations involved in the purchase, preparation and use of goods related to the hospitality field.

Culinary Internship

10316129

2 credits

This internship provides students with practical knowledge and experience in the culinary industry through the lens of restaurant cooks and managers. Integrating the theories and techniques learned in previous courses with specific off-campus occupational experiences at selected training sites allows students to gain a real-world perspective of this segment of the industry.

Prerequisites: Admission to Culinary Arts program 103161, Sanitation for Foodservice Operations 10316112 and Introduction to Food Production 10316125

Dining Room Customer Service

10316133

1 credit

In this course, students will learn about table settings, various styles of dining room service and operations and become familiar with the importance of proper dining room guest service. Students will apply these techniques in the Restaurant Operations course later in the program.

Entrepreneurial Foundations

10102232

1 credit

Learners study entrepreneurial practices by exploring components of a startup business plan. This includes comparing ways of going into business as well as developing marketing, legal, financial, products/services, management, and operations plans for a small business of their choice.

Food Science

10316121

2 credits

Discover the science and history behind food preparation. Explore what happens when heat and/or cold are applied to foods and how different chemicals can manipulate the texture, flavor, and appearance of foods. This course will also address the hierarchy of culinary titles and what comprises a professional kitchen.

Garde Manager

10316138

3 credits

In this course, students will learn to prepare cold soups, cold sauces, cheese platters, charcuterie boards, pâtés and terrines, as well as salads and decorative fruit and vegetable displays.

Corequisite: Sanitation for Foodservice Operations 10316112

GPS for Student Success

10890102

1 credit

Integrate necessary skills for student success by developing an academic plan, identifying interpersonal attributes for success, adopting efficient and effective learning strategies, and utilizing Mid-State resources, policies, and processes. This course is recommended to be completed prior to obtaining 12 credits and is a graduation requirement unless you receive an exemption from your program advisor.

Introduction to Baking

10316130

2 credits

Students will learn baking theory through online and workbook exercises and then apply this theory in class by utilizing the equipment and ingredients used in commercial baking to prepare yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cakes, cookies and other products. The course will reinforce the knowledge and skills the student has learned in previous courses including practical kitchen safety & sanitation, mise en place, product identification, and scaling & product utilization.

Prerequisites: Introduction to Food Production 10316125 and Sanitation for Foodservice Operations 10316112 or ServSafe® Food Manager Certification

Introduction to Food Production

10316125

3 credits

Introduces quantity food production to the non-culinary student. Topics include the preparation of a variety of menu items, equipment use, cooking methods and terminologies, recipe conversion and the essentials of timing and coordination of service.

Corequisite: Sanitation for Foodservice Operations 10316112

Introduction to Foodservice

10316128

3 credits

In this course, students will practice the skills they learned in the Introduction to Food Production class by operating a noncommercial foodservice outlet serving guests through a la minute and batch cooking practices. Heavy emphasis is placed on safety & sanitation, knife skills and culinary theory.

Prerequisites: Sanitation for Foodservice Operations 10316112 and Introduction to Food Production 10316125

Menu Planning

10316127

3 credits

A hands-on approach to planning, creating, and maintaining effective menus. Discussions include menu items and placement, food costing and creative menu designs for visual appeal. Menu planning and design software may be utilized.

Nutrition

10316131

2 credits

This course covers key concepts in nutrition including nutrition basics, nutritional standards and guidelines, nutrition programs, market and menu assessment, cooking for health, allergens and special diets, and menu labeling regulations. As part of the course, students will complete a field project and have the opportunity to earn a ManageFirst® Certificate in Nutrition.

Sanitation for Foodservice Operations

10316112

1 credit

Students examine the causes of food-borne illness and apply techniques for preparing, storing, and serving hot and cold foods from a ServSafe® Certified Instructor/Proctor. Students also examine the role of management and workers related to sanitation regulations and standards. The ServSafe® certification test is administered in this course and students will need to hold this valid certificate for graduation and employment in the culinary industry.