

Section 13

Food Cost and Quality Control



After completing this section, you will be able to:



Demonstrate a basic understanding of food cost and quality control cycle.

Culinary Operations,
3N0549, Learning Outcome
Number 14



Describe the impact of purchasing, storage, preparation and cooking and nutritional value.

Nutrition and Healthy
Options 3N0887, Learning
Outcome Number 7

Food cost and quality control

Catering facilities include hotels, restaurants, bars, canteens hospitals, nursing homes, crèches or any business that provides food to the public. Each catering facility will have a kitchen. Food cost and quality control in these kitchens are a very important part of the catering facility's success.

Commercial kitchens must be efficiently managed to be profitable. The popularity of television shows about running commercial kitchens has led to an increase in the number of people considering careers in the culinary trade. The people also face the challenges of running a commercial kitchen. Commercial kitchens must produce consistent food products, quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively.

To operate successfully, commercial kitchens need some key elements.

- ✓ An experienced manager to oversee a team of dedicated staff
- ✓ A team that knows its responsibilities and works diligently to fulfill them
- ✓ Professional-grade commercial appliances and equipment
- ✓ Management of food costs to ensure profitability
- ✓ Quality control cycles



Managing food costs

Food costs are the cost/price the business pays for the raw ingredients purchased. These ingredients are used to make the dishes the company provides. Ideally, this works out as a percentage of the total cost for producing the food.

Here are some tips to consider when looking at food costs and quality control cycles:



1. Make the best use of the kitchen space

Make the best practical use of the kitchen space. As well as complying with health and safety and building code requirements for the operation of commercial kitchens, you must ensure that the kitchen is set up to make best use of the space and equipment available. This is known as 'work flow'.

Speak with the kitchen staff and get their observations and recommendations. If they have worked in the kitchen for any length of time, they will know its pros and cons and will have ideas for improving it.

2. Do a kitchen inventory

Carry out an equipment inventory. Make sure you know exactly what equipment is in the kitchen and whether it works efficiently or not. If you have a number of items that need to be replaced, shop around commercial equipment wholesalers for the best prices. Consider leasing rather than purchasing expensive ovens, stoves and refrigeration units.

3. Meet your team regularly

Meet with your team regularly. It is important that everyone knows their specific duties and responsibilities and to whom they answer. From the head chef to the dishwashing staff, treat everyone equitably, firmly and fairly. Make your expectations clear and ensure that all members of staff are aware of the consequences of poor performance.

4. Review your products

Review your products. Whatever the kitchen produces - be it a high-end restaurant menu, meals for hospital patients or food products for retail sale - the quality must be consistent. Ensure that the head chef and sous chefs are all familiar with the recipes and processes required to produce your signature products. This will lead to good cost control.

Make sure staff always keep to 'Best Before and 'Use By' dates. This can prevent food poisoning and loss of money due to spoilage and decay.

5. Control spending on raw ingredients

Tightly control expenditure on raw ingredients. The profitability of a kitchen depends on purchasing quality ingredients at the best prices and using those ingredients most efficiently. According to www.RestaurantReport.com: 'a profitable restaurant typically generates a 28 to 35 percent food cost. Coupled with labour costs, these expenses consume 50 to 75 percent of total sales.' A commercial kitchen's profit margins are slim: you must control what is ordered, how it is used and prevent waste and theft.

http://www.restaurantreport.com/features/ft_inventory.html

6. Research your competitors

Research your competitors and keep ahead of culinary trends. Try to attend trade events and shows to get ideas and to compare your products to what is currently popular. Identify niches that are currently underserved in your location. If yours is a city full of steakhouses, you may want to specialise in fish. Discuss ideas with your team and encourage their suggestions.

Costing



There are several methods used for managing costing in kitchens:

- ✓ Batch costing
- ✓ Process costing
- ✓ Operation costing
- ✓ Multiple costing

Batch costing

The batch costing method determines the cost associated with each batch of product manufactured. Production batches consist of mostly standard products or components. What vary mostly are the size of batches and the timing of their processing.

Process costing

In the process costing method the costs are determined for various different manufacturing activities or processes. These costs are then assigned to different products on the basis of some criteria like 'quantity processed' or the time taken for processing.

This method of costing is suitable for manufacturing units that use continuous processes or mass-production techniques. It is particularly suitable where there are many different products and process routes, where output of one process becomes input for another.

Operation costing

Operation costing covers the day-to-day costs of running a kitchen; these are called 'overheads'. These include, among others, heating, electricity, gas, wages or insurance.

Multiple costing

Most organisations use a combination of different costing methods rather than just one method. Multiple costing refers to combinations of different costing methods.

Quality control



In food preparation, quality control relates to the entire process of managing the food service from delivery of goods to the finished product.

Quality assurance (QA) guarantees that food meets a clear, consistent set of standards. At key stages in working with food there should be **quality control checks** so staff and managers are alerted to any problems. The results of these checks are recorded. Checks can be done by hand or by computer.

Quality control checks includes;

- ✓ Food purchase
- ✓ Storage
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Processing

Quality control sample check list-

- ✓ **Weight checks** make sure food or ingredients are the required weight.
- ✓ **Visual checks** make sure the food product looks the way it should.
- ✓ **Temperature checks** make sure the food product is being kept at an appropriate temperature.
- ✓ **PH checks** make sure the food has the correct acidity/alkalinity.
- ✓ **Microbiological checks** make sure bacteria are not at harmful levels.
- ✓ **Chemical checks** guard against chemical contamination.
- ✓ **Metal checks** guard against contamination by metals (usually at the packing stage, using a metal detector).
- ✓ **Organoleptic checks** check flavour, texture and aroma by sampling the food product.

Quality control processes includes many (*depending on the size of the kitchen operation*) systems of control. These can include:

- ✓ A working HACCP food management system which keeps up-to-date records at all times
- ✓ A stock-rotation system such as FIFO ('First In, First Out') which makes sure that foods received or prepared first are used first
- ✓ Organisation chart
- ✓ Pest-control program
- ✓ Cleaning program

Quality control in kitchens is the collective responsibility of all members of staff.



Food cost and quality control

Vocabulary

commercial	oversee	profitability	quality control
maximise	inventory	leasing	spoilage
competitors	trends	batch	process
operation	multiple	mass-production	overheads
assurance	transportation	microbiological	organoleptic
stock-rotation	pest-control	sanitation	collective



Food cost and quality control

Worksheets

These worksheets are based on:	
Culinary Operations, 3N0549, Learning Outcome 14	Demonstrate a basic understanding of food cost and quality control cycle.
Nutrition and Healthy Options, 3N0887, Learning Outcome Number 7	Describe the impact of purchasing, storage, preparation and cooking and nutritional value.

Food cost and quality control – Worksheet 1 – Quiz

Answer the following questions.

1. Why are costing and quality control cycles so important when running a kitchen?

2. Explain what is meant by 'Best Before' and 'Use By' dates. Why are they so important?

3. List four methods of cost accounting in the kitchen and briefly describe each one.

Method name	Brief description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

4. Collect three shopping receipts for food supplies to a kitchen over three weeks. Fill in the amount spent for each week. Calculate the average food cost over three weeks.

Week	Amount spent
Week 1	
Week 2	
Week 3	
Total for weeks 1 - 3	
Average cost for weeks 1 - 3	

5. List some types of checks that are carried out in the kitchen as part of quality control.

Food cost and quality control – Worksheet 2 – Vocabulary

Can you find the 10 listed words in this word search?

o t c a y j x q y a c p w s r
d v c o m m e r c i a l r y i
b y e e a n b c i n b o c s b
d d w r u s o a v h t x h v e
m p v b h u s o t i u l v x i
d j q o n e z u t c y n u n u
c y t t q i a e r q h c v m h
e r i u h y p d x a x e g p d
u n v b e m d o s q n n b r e
g g w q o p u v q t k c b o o
m v v c x l i n o k w z e c r
y t i l a u q r u j v k b e v
m f b m i t y m s r g x y s c
m a x i m i s e d j l s j s s
h l f p i z t g s h k e g u n

inventory
competitors
overheads
batch
assurance
quality
accounting
process
maximise
commercial