

Manager's Corner

Quality Score Cards

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Theresa Stretch, MS, RDN, CP-FS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Aleshia Hall-Campbell, PhD, MPH



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Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Professional Standards

SERVING FOOD – 2200

Employee will be able to correctly and efficiently serve food portions to meet all USDA school meal pattern requirements and encourage healthy food selections including those for special diets.

2230 – Maintaining Food Quality and Appearance
Serve food to maintain quality and appearance standards.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Quality Score Cards is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff

Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:

- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Identify standards for a quality product using a quality score card.

Background information: Quality is achieved by the actions taken during every step of the preparation and service process. Before you can achieve quality in the preparation and service of meals, you must determine the standards of quality within your operation. Quality score cards provide quality standards you should aim to meet when determining how the finished food item should look and taste.

Why it is important: Quality standards and product evaluation are important aspects of food and nutrition and customer service. Food quality standards are the characteristics of food that are acceptable to consumers. This includes factors such as appearance (size, shape, and color), texture or consistency, and flavor and seasoning. It is important to have district-wide quality standards identified in advance.

Questions for Staff

- **What are some ways to evaluate the quality meals?**

Answer: Some ways to evaluate the quality of meals include reviewing the finished product for appearance, tasting the food item properly for flavor before serving, and utilizing a quality score card.

- **Are some quality standards more important than others?**

Answer: It is difficult to identify which quality standards are more important than the other. Program compliance, work, and food safety standards should never be compromised under any circumstances.

- **When is it appropriate to deviate from a quality standard?**

Answer: On rare occasions, deviations from quality standards may occur in an operation. Standard operating procedures and staff training are essential elements of ensuring quality standards are maintained in the operation. It is important to identify the quality standard and what would allow a substandard product to be served.

- **What are some characteristics of a quality product for a whole grain blueberry muffin?**

Answer: Things to consider when evaluating the quality of a blueberry muffin include:

- Appearance: Color is evenly light to golden brown.
- Aroma: So pleasant the students cannot wait to see the food item to which it belongs.
- Texture: Crumb is moist but not dry.
- Taste: No one flavor is overpowering.
- Temperature: Hot-holding temperature complies with food safety standards. This characteristic may not be necessary for a blueberry muffin, but it is a characteristic to consider.
- Overall acceptability: Received high acceptance rating during student taste testing.

Please note: The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.

Activity: Evaluate Blueberry Muffins

Activity materials included in this document:

- **Quality Score Card for Quick Breads**

Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:

- Copies of handouts
- Pens/Pencils
- A variety of blueberry muffin samples
- Small plates, forks, and napkins
- Serving utensils

Activity Instructions:

- Print the handouts.
- Distribute handouts and pens/pencils.
- Display of blueberry muffins.
- Ask the staff to sample and evaluate the muffins using the **Quality Score Card for Quick Breads**.
- Ask the staff to share their reasons for how they evaluated the muffins.
- Discuss the staff responses.
- Encourage the staff to dispose of the muffins in an appropriate manner.

Quality Score Card for Quick Breads

Using quality score cards is an excellent way to evaluate food products for quality. Consider assigning the employee responsible for preparing the menu item the task to score the finished product. One tool to help assure quality standards is a quality score card. A quality score card identifies characteristics of a product.

Date: _____ Name of Menu Item: _____

Proudly Prepared by _____

Quality Scored by _____

Directions: When the food is ready to serve, use this Quality Score Card to evaluate the quality. Mark **YES** when the food meets the standard and **NO** when it does not. Mark **NA** (Not Applicable) when a specific quality standard does not apply to the food being evaluated. Use the **COMMENTS** section to explain why a food does not meet a standard.

Remember, if a food does not meet the quality standards, it should not be placed on the serving line.

QUALITY STANDARD	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
APPEARANCE				
Color is evenly light to golden brown.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Sides are even and straight.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Muffins have slightly rounded tops with no cracks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Muffins have rough, pebbled tops.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Biscuits have level tops with no bumps.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXTURE OR CONSISTENCY				
Crust is tender.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Crumb is moist but not doughy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Texture is even without large holes or tunnels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Bread breaks easily without crumbling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
FLAVOR AND SEASONING				
Bread is fresh tasting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Bread is free from foreign flavors such as rancid fat or sour taste.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Flavor is light and pleasing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
SERVICE TEMPERATURE				
60 °F–120 °F	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

References

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2019). *School nutrition STAR: Meal preparation and service instructor's manual*. University, MS: Author.

United States Department of Agriculture. (2015). *Professional standards for school nutrition professionals*. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>



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