

**IOC International Course for Panel Leaders**  
**Sensory Analysis of Virgin Olive Oil (13 – 17 October 2025)**

Madrid, 14 July 2025

Dear Member Representatives and Assessors,

The Executive Secretariat of the **International Olive Council (IOC)** is pleased to inform you of its intention to organise the next edition of the **international course for panel leaders on the sensory analysis of virgin olive oil**, to be held from 13 to 17 October 2025 at the headquarters of the **International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM)** in Zaragoza, Spain.

This training course aims to address the need for qualified technical experts capable of leading official olive oil tasting panels. It is specifically tailored to professionals already engaged in organoleptic assessment and is not suitable for individuals without prior experience in this domain—particularly those unfamiliar with the different categories of olive oil, statistical data analysis or Microsoft Office software.


We kindly invite your country to nominate, in order of preference, up to three candidates for consideration—panel leaders or deputy panel leaders—by no later than **24 August 2025**. The nominees must be **professionals or technicians currently involved in the sensory analysis of virgin olive oil** and capable of potentially managing or supporting national tasting panels.

Further details regarding the course content, participation requirements and the course programme are provided in the attached documents.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the IOC Executive Secretariat.

I look forward to receiving your nominations and thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely,

  
e-Signed by Jaime Lillo  
IOC Executive Director  
Date: 15-07-2025, 10:58:12  
**Jaime Lillo**

Executive Director

Representatives and Assessors

Member Countries

of the International Olive Council

## IOC International Course for Panel Leaders

### Sensory Analysis of Virgin Olive Oil (13 – 17 October 2025)

#### I. General Information

The IOC plans to hold its **international course for panel leaders on the sensory analysis of virgin olive oil** from **13 to 17 October 2025** at the headquarters of the **CIHEAM** in Zaragoza, Spain.

This course is intended to strengthen national capacity by training technical officers with the skills required to lead olive oil sensory tasting panels. In accordance with the IOC method for the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oil ([COI/T.20/Doc. No 15/Rev. 11/2024](#)):

“The panel leader must be a suitably trained person with an expert knowledge of the kinds of oils which he or she will come across in the course of their work. They are the key figure in the panel and responsible for its organisation and running. The work of the panel leader calls for basic training in the tools of sensory analysis, sensory skill, meticulousness in the preparation, organisation and performance of the tests and skill and patience to plan and execute the tests in a scientific manner. They are the sole person responsible for selecting, training and monitoring the tasters in order to ascertain their level of aptitude. They are thus responsible for the appraisal of the tasters, which must always be objective and for which they must develop specific procedures based on tests and solid acceptance and rejection criteria. (...)”

Reading **Article 8.1** of the above-mentioned method is recommended.

This course is **not suitable** for individuals with no experience in organoleptic assessment, nor for those unfamiliar with different categories of olive oil, statistical analysis or Microsoft Office software.

#### II. Nomination of Candidates

Countries intending to operate one or more olive oil tasting panels are invited to nominate, in order of preference, **up to three candidates** (panel leaders or deputy panel leaders) by **24 August 2025**. Candidates must be professionals or technicians currently engaged in the sensory analysis of virgin olive oil.

Nominations must include:

**1. Specification of the test room(s):**

Indicate the location(s) of the test room(s) equipped in compliance with the IOC method where the panel(s) will conduct the testing sessions.

**2. For each candidate:**

- A copy of their passport
- A detailed curriculum vitae (CV)

Geographical diversity will be considered during the selection process. The submission of nominations does not imply any obligation for the IOC to retain proposed candidates.

Candidates who have previously participated in IOC panel leader courses will not be considered.

**III. Conditions of Participation**

By nominating candidates, Members commit to supporting the nominated panel(s) and to participating in future IOC check tests within the framework of the panel recognition scheme.

The IOC will cover travel and accommodation expenses for selected candidates participating in person, or provide the necessary access for virtual attendance.

Participants are responsible for taking out medical insurance and for covering all other incidental expenses during their stay.

The IOC reserves the right to exclude certain candidates and to request additional information if necessary.

#### **IV. Programme (Draft)**

##### **Monday, 13 October 2025**

08:45-09:00: Arrival of participants

09:00-09:30: Course opening and presentation of the attendees

09:30-9:45: Structure and functions of the IOC

9:45-10:30: [The IOC Trade Standard Applying to Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils](#) and international standardisation

10:30-11:00: [IOC Panel software](#)

11:00-11:30: *Coffee break*

11:30-13:30: [Sensory analysis of olive oil: the IOC method for the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oil](#)

13:30-14:30: *Lunch*

14:30-15:45: [Sensory analysis: general basic vocabulary](#)

15:45-17:00 Basic guarantee mechanisms of the IOC method

##### **Tuesday, 14 October 2025**

09:00-11:00: [Requirements of Standard ISO 17025 on sensory testing laboratories with particular reference to virgin olive oil](#)

11:00-11:30: *Coffee break*

11:30-13:30: [Selection and training of virgin olive oil tasters](#)

13:30-14:30: *Lunch*

14:30-17:00: [Internal quality control guidelines for sensory analysis laboratories](#)

**Wednesday, 15 October 2025**

09:00-11:00: Accreditation and the accreditation process

*11:00-11:30: Coffee break*

11:30-13:30: Statistical tools

*13:30-14:30: Lunch*

14:30-16:00: Test conditions

16:00-17:00: Taster improvement and motivation

**Thursday, 16 October 2025**

09:00-11:00: Virgin olive oil composition

*11:00-11:30: Coffee break*

11:30-13:30: Critical points during olive growing and olive oil production

*13:30-14:30: Lunch*

14:30-16:00: Organoleptic assessment

16:00-17:00: Factors affecting sensory measurements

**Friday, 17 October 2025**

09:00-11:00: Requirements to be recognised by the IOC

*11:00-11:30: Coffee Break*

11:30-12:15: Marios Solinas Quality Award and national competitions

12:15-13:15: Harmonisation of international standards

13:15-13:30: Closure