Murray's Cheese Colin Ming Memorial CCP Scholarship:

Murray's Cheese is offering an ACS CCP certification scholarship to one individual in 2026. This scholarship will enable a qualified and deserving applicant who embodies Colin's characteristic traits of **inspirational leadership, kindness, warmth and professional poise** to take the CCP Exam and attend the annual American Cheese Society Conference.

Murray's will cover expenses for one (1) person outside of Kroger and Murray's to:

- Participate in Murray's signature CCP training program (remote participation welcome)
- Sit for the ACS CCP Exam
- Attend the ACS conference (including exam fees, conference attendance, travel to conference, and hotel accommodations.)

Application Next Steps:

- You are eligible for the scholarship if you meet ACS Eligibility Criteria (see pg. 2)
- Complete application. All application elements need to be completed. See checklist below.
- Estimated application completion time: 2 hours
- CCP Scholarship Application includes a series of four (4) unique quizzes, which contribute to an overall numerical score, and a personal statement.
- Work with peer & manager to obtain letters of support.
- Send all support letters to Scholarship@murrayscheese.com.
- See Expectations section for what to expect from training program should you receive the scholarship.

TIMELINE

Sunday 2/15: Murray's Scholarship Application Due

Week of 3/2: Scholarship Recipient notified

Mid-March: Training program begins

Friday, 3/27: ACS Application Due

Murray's Colin Ming Memorial Scholarship Application Checklist

Application is due on Sunday 2/15. See below for all elements of this application. Use checklist to help complete. Send all additional statements/letters to Scholarship@murrayscheese.com

	Personal Information + Eligibility Information
	Personal Statement
	Diagnostic Quiz
	Math Quiz
	Reading Quiz
	Lecture Quiz
	Peer Letter of Support (send to scholarship@murrayscheese.com)
	Manager/Employer Letter of Support (send to scholarship@murrayscheese.com)

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Expectations for Colin Ming Memorial Scholarship Recipient

- Please note that this application is the first step in applying to the Certified Cheese Professional program. Because ACS is a third party, scholarship recipient must formally apply through ACS to sit for the exam in addition to applying for the Murray's scholarship. ACS will review & validate your application within 30 days, via email. (NOTE: the Murray's scholarship application is set up to ensure a smooth process)
- Submit formal ACS application along with personal resume and any additional documentation necessary to ACS.
    - Acceptance to sit for the CCP Certification exam is at the discretion of ACS.
    - Eligibility is determined at the time an application is submitted, and all eligibility requirements MUST be attained at the time of application.
    - Estimated application completion time: 15 minutes
- Scholarship recipients may attend weekly study seminars from March 19, 2026 – June 26th, 2026. Seminars will be scheduled by a Murray's trainer to take place on Thursdays at 2pm ET/1pm CT/12pm MT/11am PT for one hour each.
- Scholarship recipients will participate in the CCP Exam in person unless otherwise discussed with Murray's trainer. Candidates should plan to arrive in Louisville 2 days prior to test day (7/5/2026).

ACS DEADLINES

Friday, 3/27: ACS Application Due

Friday 4/25: Deadline for deferral without penalty

Tuesday 7/7: Exam Day

Weekly meetings occur virtually on Microsoft Teams. Learn how to use this app on a store computer, or personal device.

Eligibility Criteria for ACS Certifications

Eligibility Criteria | American Cheese Society

Exam administration & oversight

- The American Cheese Society is responsible for administering the exam, and a committee consisting of ACS staff and cheese industry leaders reviews all applications for certification.
- If you meet the eligibility criteria, ACS will send you an email notifying you of your acceptance within 30 days of your application submission date.
- Acceptances are valid for two years past the soonest exam date (ex, if you have been accepted for the 2024 exam you may delay taking the exam until 2026). Beyond that time, the entire application process must be repeated. If there are any questions regarding your eligibility, we will contact you to further clarify your application and you will have 14 days to respond to the request.
- If, upon review of your application, the ACS determines that you fail to meet the eligibility requirements at the time of application, we will notify you by email. If you are denied eligibility to sit for the exam you may appeal the decision to the ACS Certification Appeals Committee (a sub-committee of the Certification Committee). You must submit your appeal in writing to the Appeals Committee within 30 days of receipt of the non-eligibility correspondence from ACS. The Appeals Committee will convene within 30 days of receipt of the appeals request and will email a notice of the Appeals Committee's final decision to you within 10 days of the decision.

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Requirements for Certification Exams

Four thousand (4,000) hours documentable paid or unpaid work experience in the cheese profession during the past six years. Acceptable examples are provided below.

OR

Two thousand (2,000) hours documented paid or unpaid work experience in the cheese profession during the past six years,
AND
Two thousand (2,000) hours of any combination of work experience and formal education, continuing education, or professional development. Acceptable examples are provided below.

Calculating Hours of Experience

4,000 hours = 40 hours/week x 50 weeks x 2 years = 2 years full time work equivalent, accumulated over the past six calendar years. If your job did not relate directly to cheese 100% of the time, then prorate your hours to reflect the time you worked with cheese. Documentation is requested at time of application and is subject to random audit.

Work Experience

Work Timeline	Year taking Exam
2017	2023
2018	2024
2019	2025

All acceptable work experience should be reported in hours of actual employment (whether full-time or part-time). Fractional responsibility (i.e. working in an establishment where 50% of work is cheese-related) should be pro-rated appropriately. Employer name and dates of employment for each claimed work experience should be listed separately, totaling a minimum of 2,000 and a maximum of 4,000 hours for this section of the application. Work that is unrelated to the cheese profession or is purely administrative or supportive service in the cheese field (e.g. custodial, clerical, accounting) is not acceptable.

Acceptable Work Experience Examples

- Cheese-making/manufacturing
- Cheese sales or commerce (retail, wholesale, importing, exporting, sales/account representative or food distributor)
- Cheese-related writing, consultation, or teaching at the professional level
- Trainer/educator in the cheese field
- Management of a cheese program or extensive work with cheese in a dining establishment

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Formal Education

Formal education includes credit-bearing college courses on cheese-related topics or those directly applicable to the cheese field (including cooking, gastronomy, dairy science, restauration) offered by accredited educational institutions (including universities, junior colleges, culinary schools, Wisconsin Cheese Master's program, other agricultural degree programs on cheese making). There is no time limitation on this type of education; it may have been earned at any time in the past.

All acceptable educational or professional development time should be reported in hours of actual classroom, service, or other activity time involved. Reasonable preparation time may be included in reported hours of involvement, as appropriate. Each activity should be reported separately, noting the name of the activity; provider, recipient of service, etc.; month and year of completion; and claimed hours. Hours claimed for this section may be between 0 and 2,000.

Continuing Education and Professional Development

Continuing education includes short courses of varying length on cheese-related topics or those directly applicable to the cheese field which are generally non-credit bearing, offered by knowledgeable persons in the cheese profession. Professional development includes engaging in activities in the cheese profession (other than work experience reported above) that demonstrate professional knowledge or commitment.

Continuing Education and Professional Development must have been earned within 6 years of the examination year.

Acceptable Continuing Education and Professional Development Examples

- Cheese education seminars and workshops
- Adult education programs
- Stand-alone classes
- Seminars at conferences
- Active mentoring of one or more developing cheese professionals
- Preparing and presenting occasional lectures or articles for professionals or public on cheese-related topics
- Teaching classes at any of the above-listed educational programs, if not creditable as "employment"
- ServSafe or similar certification of competence in cheese or related area
- Serving on &/or organizing panels for presentations at industry conferences
- Participation in educational sessions at industry conferences
- Volunteer work/committees/task forces for ACS or similar cheese-oriented organization
- Serving on boards or committees at cheese related organizations such as Cheese Guilds, ACS, NASFT, Milk Marketing Boards, etc.
- Publishing: books and articles on cheese related topics
- Media appearances on cheese-related topics
- Development of a cheese-related marketing plan
- Development of a new cheese-related product
- Development of a novel program (e.g. in-house Affinage, etc.)

********** *End ACS Eligibility Criteria* ********

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FAQ

What is ACS? The American Cheese Society (ACS) is a non-profit organization providing education, guidance & support for cheesemakers, farmers, and cheese professionals.

What is the ACS Conference? Every summer, ACS hosts an educational conference including professional certification exams and cheese judging and competition.

What is the Scholarship? Murray's offers a memorial scholarship to an individual outside of Murray's/Kroger to travel to sit for the ACS Certification exams. Recipients receive specialized training from Murray's Cheese to prepare.

Why is it important? Participating in an esteemed ACS certification exam is a unique career opportunity to pursue deeper networking and education in the specialty cheese industry.

Where/When does the conference take place? The conference venue changes annually. This year, it will take place in Louisville, KY week of July 6th, 2026. **Applicants should plan to be out of the office the week of the exam/conference (7/5-7/10).**

What is the CCP Exam? In 2012, ACS introduced the Certified Cheese Professional program for professional development & encourage improved standards of comprehensive knowledge and service among industry professionals. The letters of this title state that an individual has acquired thorough understanding and achieved a level of expertise that is demanded within the industry.

What type of studying is involved? The CCP Exam is likened to a collegiate level exam. Murray's training curriculum is designed to prepare the candidate to successfully pass the exam. We advise candidates to plan to self-study for at least 2 hours each week (in addition to the weekly seminar meeting) to keep up with the robust curriculum & feel confident with the material. Group studying is encouraged). Depending on how proficient an individual is, study time may vary.

Who is the ideal candidate? Someone who exemplifies the traits of leadership demonstrated by Colin Ming (as described on scholarship homepage), who is goal-oriented, driven to achieve results and highly self-motivated. They must also be able to process technical concepts and apply them in a test-taking setting.

Who is eligible? Any person outside of Murray's & Kroger who works in cheese & meets ACS requirements. ACS requires significant eligibility criteria to be met (i.e., experience in the cheese field equivalent to at least 4,000 hours/2 years in the past 6 calendar years). Full details: https://www.cheesesociety.org/certification/eligibility-criteria

How do I apply & when is the deadline? See pg. 1 for details.

When will I find out if I received a Murray's CCP Scholarship? Recipients notified week of 3/2

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