



**LEAN**<sup>TM</sup>  
CERTIFICATION  
AME • SHINGO INSTITUTE • SME



# LEAN BRONZE CERTIFICATION (LBC) PROCESS GUIDE 2025

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## What is certification?

Earning a professional certification is a voluntary process by which candidates are assessed against predetermined and standardized criteria for knowledge, skills, competencies, and/or abilities required of a profession. Those successfully completing certification requirements are granted a time-limited credential. To retain your certification, recertification is required after a specific period and involves continuing training and development.

## [Code of Ethics](#)

## Why become certified?

Whether you are just starting out, or a seasoned professional, certification can help you become a high-value commodity to your employer and be among the most sought-after individuals in your industry. Certifications not only help you attain knowledge, they prove it. Certifications are recognized and respected industry credentials. Professional certifications:

- Validate your knowledge against industry standards.
- Provide a portable, industry-recognized credential that travels with you throughout your career.
- Enhance your career opportunities — certification can provide a competitive advantage in the job market.
- Improve your marketability by demonstrating your commitment to continuous learning.

## SME certification standards

As a certifying body, SME is held to rigorous standards to ensure certification integrity. SME's Certification Oversight & Appeals Committee, composed of member volunteers representing industry and academia, routinely evaluate all exam questions for performance, relevance, currency, and integrity.

## Lean Bronze Certification

To achieve Lean Bronze, you are able to tactically implement lean to drive improvements and measurable results. You deploy and apply lean principles, concepts, methods, and tools within a work cell, work group, and/or value stream.

## Groups

To inquire about certification for groups (companies, schools, etc.) please contact Tooling U-SME at [info@toolingu.com](mailto:info@toolingu.com) or 866.706.8665.

## Individuals

Individuals may pursue the LBC as part of their own professional development journey. Individuals must identify a proctor to monitor the individual while taking the exam. You may apply for the exam directly online or contact [certification@sme.org](mailto:certification@sme.org) with questions.

## Process to Earn Your Certification

### 1. Assess your knowledge and experience

The **Body of Knowledge** or BOK is a detailed content outline that focuses on documenting the topics, subtopics, importance, competency level and weighting of each content area. A completed BOK is utilized to build the certification exam. The BOK is a guide to what content areas will be tested and the weighting determines how much coverage from each content area will be presented on the certification exam.

#### [Lean Body of Knowledge](#)

The **Lean Bronze Essential Body of Work** describes the baseline knowledge, skills, and abilities required by lean professionals and lays the groundwork for understanding and evaluating the Lean Bronze Certification requirements. It will help you better envision your role and evaluate your readiness for certification.

#### [Lean Bronze Essential Body of Work](#)

The **Lean Bronze Blueprint** provides additional information beyond the Lean Certification Body of Knowledge by going a step further and specifying relevant segments of the Body of Knowledge and providing additional details on the proficiency expected for Lean Bronze Certification.

#### [Lean Bronze Blueprint](#)

The **Lean Certification Competency and Behavior Model** is intended to help identify the minimum competencies and behavior expectations in your pursuit of a specific level of Lean Certification.

### [Lean Competency and Behavior Model](#)

## 2. Purchase the recommended reading materials

Exam questions are based on specific recommended reading materials selected by knowledgeable and experienced individuals.

### [Lean Bronze Recommended Reading](#)

## 3. Review the Exam Preparation Tips

The LBC exam is open book and notes. You can bring your recommended reading materials into the exam room. Sharing books, notes, and other materials during the exam is **not permitted**.

You may use an eBook of the recommended reading; however, it should be accessed on a **separate device** other than the device being used for your online exam.

You may bring a quiet, hand-held, and non-broadcasting or receiving calculator. **You MUST clear all programmable memory from the calculator before you begin and after you complete the exam.**

Tab sections of your books/materials to make it easier to find information during the exam. You will not have time to look up every answer, so be thoughtful about what you want to access quickly and easily.

Some key areas you might want to tab/identify include:

- Glossaries, Indexes, Tables, Concepts, and Formulas
- Topics that you think have a high probability of being on the exam based on the Body of Knowledge weightings for the exam that you are taking

### [Exam Preparation Tips](#)

#### 4. Apply for the Exam, Schedule and Take the Exam

The Lean Bronze exam is offered in online format only. You will have six months to take the exam from the date you apply.

Lean Bronze Certification (LBC)	Online Exam Pricing
Nonmember	\$600
SME Member (AME, Shingo Institute)	\$440

[Apply Here](#)

#### SME Membership

At SME, we are committed to offering an extensive range of membership options tailored to suit the diverse needs of our members. From entry-level to experienced professionals, SME Membership is your partner in every phase of your manufacturing career lifecycle.

With a wealth of resources, networking opportunities and professional development programs, SME Membership is your key to advancing in the world of manufacturing. Join or renew now and invest in a thriving future for your manufacturing career.

Discover the power of partnership between SME and AME (the [Association for Manufacturing Excellence](#)). Access exclusive discounts and a wealth of benefits and join AME's premier platform for exchanging knowledge in enterprise excellence, focusing on lean thinking and innovative improvement methodologies.

[SME Member Benefits](#)

## 5. Secure an Exam Proctor

Individuals must identify a proctor to monitor the individual while taking the exam. Your exam proctor can be your manager, supervisor, Human Resources representative, or a key administrator. They can also be a member of an SME chapter, or AME region, staff at your local college/university, library, or an authorized facilitator at the exam after a review program. All exam proctors must be approved by SME in advance. The proctor form should be completed and submitted at least two weeks before taking the exam. Your online exam details will be provided to your proctor directly and they will provide you with the information on the day of your exam.

Individual examinees may also request to have your exam scheduled with an online/virtual proctor. **This service is not available for groups.** Arrangements would be made through SME on your behalf. Please send your inquiry to [certification@sme.org](mailto:certification@sme.org). There is a \$55 proctor fee for this service. Please note: There is a \$8.00 fee you will be responsible to pay if you are a no-show on the date and time of your scheduled exam. Reschedule if needed.

[Proctor Form](#)

## 6. Take the Exam

The Lean Bronze exam is a three-hour, open book and open notes exam. It consists of approximately 165 multiple-choice questions mapped to the Body of Knowledge.

To pass the Lean Bronze exam, you will need to score 75% or higher.

## 7. Exam Results

**How will I find out my exam results?**

When you complete the online exam, you will learn your results immediately.

**When will I receive my results?**

You will receive your official results within 30 days from your exam date.

**If I do not pass the exam, how soon may I retake it?**

If you do not pass your exam, you may retake it 30 days from your original exam date. Candidates may use this time to study and prepare for the retake at a reduced fee.

## What happens if I pass the exam?

Upon passing the exam you will earn your **Lean Knowledge Certificate (not a certification)** that serves as a base in your pursuit of Lean Bronze Certification. Your Lean Knowledge Certificate is valid for three years and is not renewable. Your next phase in obtaining certification is to **submit your bronze portfolio** which can be submitted anytime during the three-year period that your Lean Knowledge Certificate is valid. Please see the portfolio information below.

### 8. Submit your Lean Bronze Portfolio

To earn your Lean Bronze Certification, you must demonstrate your ability to apply lean principles and tools. This is accomplished through the development of your Lean Bronze Portfolio. You have three years from receiving your Lean Knowledge Certificate to submit your Portfolio, which must document and include:

- 80 hours of Education and Training Requirements (See Education and Training Requirements document for guidance on documenting the 80 hours)
- Three tactical projects where specific lean principles and tools were applied (events, projects, activities)
- A reflection statement that captures your lean journey and what you have learned through the certification process.

**You must have passed the Lean Bronze examination in order to submit your Bronze Portfolio.** To submit your Portfolio, log into your SME Customer Account, or create a new account, in the upper right hand corner of the homepage (sme.org).

[Lean Bronze Portfolio Documents](#)

### 9. Portfolio Review Process

The Portfolio is assigned to a portfolio reviewer, based on availability. You will receive an email confirming so. A reviewer is given 30-45 days to complete. Education and Training and project work will be scored by your reviewer. If your reviewer has questions, they will contact you for clarification. When the review is complete, you will receive a confirmation email. If your portfolio passes, your certification will be active for 3 years. If your portfolio does not pass, you will receive feedback and an opportunity to speak with your reviewer. You will have an opportunity to resubmit your portfolio for an additional review.



## 10. Recertification

Keeping the credentials you worked hard for is just as important as earning them. Recertification requires that you participate in ongoing lean activities, which can take many forms. Whether you recertify at Lean Bronze, Lean Silver, or Lean Gold, you will need to document a minimum of 60 recertification credits over a three-year period from receiving your certification or last recertification.

You will receive an email notification with the option to recertify online 90, 60, and 30 days prior to your expiration date. If you are renewing multiple certifications, you will receive an email notification for each certification that is expiring. If you have met the credit requirement, please click on the “click here” link in each notification email to add the certification you are renewing to the shopping cart. The shopping cart will provide you your discount when you check out.

[Lean Recertification](#)

## Certification Appeals

[Certification Appeals](#)

[Recertification Appeals](#)

For more information about SME’s other certification programs please visit:

<https://www.sme.org/training/certifications/>

For Certification FAQ’s please visit:

<https://www.sme.org/training/certification-resources/>