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LEAN GOLD CERTIFICATION (LGC)

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 Gold Certification

Lean Gold Certification recognizes your education and training in all aspects of lean transformation across an entire enterprise. It represents career progression to a point of influence and authority over assets, processes, and people.

Individuals

Individuals may pursue the LGC 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 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 Gold Essential Body of Work** describes the tasks conducted by lean professionals and thus lays the groundwork for understanding and evaluating the Lean Certification requirements. The tasks are listed according to categories in the current Body of Knowledge. The EBW will help potential candidates to better envision their roles, encourage participation by individuals in those roles, and assist candidates in evaluating their readiness for certification.

[Lean Gold Essential Body of Work](#)

The **Lean Gold Blueprint** provides additional information useful information beyond the Body of Knowledge. The Body of Knowledge specifies the competencies, topics, and subtopics required by different types of lean professionals. The Blueprint goes one step further by specifying the segments of the relevant Body of Knowledge covered by the specific professional certification and provides detail on the level of proficiency expected for each certification. The Blueprint codifies the content that Lean Certification addresses in terms of terminal learning objectives (TLOs) and enabling learning/certification objectives (ELO's).

[Lean Gold 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 core reference material

Exam questions are based on specific core reference material selected by knowledgeable and experienced individuals.

[Lean Gold Recommended Reading](#)

3. Review the exam preparation tips

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

Lean Gold Certification (LGC)	Online Exam Pricing
Nonmember	\$800
SME Member and Partners (AME, Shingo Institute)	\$640

[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 Membership](#)

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. 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 Gold (LGC) exam is a three-hour, open book and open notes exam. It consists of approximately 150 multiple-choice questions mapped to the Body of Knowledge.

To pass the Lean Gold (LGC) Certification exam, you will need to score 75% or higher.

7. Exam results

How will I find out my exam results?

If you take the online exam, you will learn your results immediately.

When will I receive my results?

You will receive your 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. There is a reduced fee each time you retake the exam.

What happens if I pass the exam?

After passing the gold exam you will have three years to submit your gold accomplishment record. Your next phase in obtaining certification is to submit your accomplishment record which can be submitted anytime during the three-year period.

8. Mentoring

Lean Gold Certification candidates are expected to seek out others in their lean journey to help them grow and develop. This activity must be demonstrated, and measurable outcomes must be included, in your Lean Gold Certification Accomplishment Record.

9. Submit your Lean Gold Accomplishment Record

After passing your exam, to receive your Lean Gold Certification (LGC) you must complete an Accomplishment Record. The Accomplishment Record examines how candidates have applied their lean knowledge and skills to actual real-world situations.

Your Lean Gold Certification Accomplishment Record will ask you to provide a narrative of your accomplishments for each competency needed by a Lean Gold Certification candidate. You will emphasize the quality of your accomplishments and the results you achieved rather than the jobs you have held or the tasks you have completed.

In addition to completing your Accomplishment Record, you will need:

- 240 hours of education and training requirements. If you have previously obtained the Lean Bronze and/or Lean Silver Certification, you can apply the education and training hours you earned toward this requirement.
- Mentoring and/or Coaching activities.

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

[Lean Gold Accomplishment Record Documents](#)

10. Accomplishment record review process

The Accomplishment record is assigned to two reviewers, 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 reviewers. If your reviewers have questions, they will contact you for clarification. When the review is complete, you will receive a confirmation email. If your accomplishment record passes, you will move onto the next step, which is an interview. If your accomplishment record does not pass, you will receive feedback and an opportunity to speak with your reviewers. You will have an opportunity to resubmit your accomplishment record for an additional review.

11. Gold Interview

The final step in earning your Lean Gold Certification (LGC) is an interview with a team of Lean Certified professionals and/or the Certification Oversight and Appeals Committee. SME will schedule the interview and with the gold interviewers and interviewee. Upon passing your Accomplishment Record review and interview, you will earn your Lean Gold Certification (LGC).

12. 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.

[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/>

