



WWW.LEANCOMPETENCY.ORG

SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES TRAINING PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION GUIDE

Version: 1702.1



Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Purpose of the LCS	3
1.2 Aim of this Guide	3
1.3 Standard & SME Accreditation	3
2. Overall Accreditation Process	4
2.1 Key Stages	4
2.2 Stage Details	4
2.3 Information Required in The Submission Form	6
3. Course Knowledge Assessment	8
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 Assessment Process Overview.....	8
3.3 OnLine Knowledge Test Procedure	9
4. Accreditation Responsibilities & Terms.....	10
4.1 LCS Certificates	10
4.2 Communications & Promotion	10
4.3 Accreditation Terms	10
4.4 Ongoing CommuniCation & Interaction.....	11
4.5 Practitioner Membership.....	11
5. Fees.....	11
5.1 Structure	11
5.2 Rates for 2017	11

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE LCS

For organisations:

The LCS offers a solution for an organisation that wants its continuous improvement training accredited and endorsed, its staff to be rewarded and recognised for their lean knowledge and practical capability, reassurance that its lean training approach is robust, technically sound and well managed and that wants a flexible, university developed, lean qualification framework that offers a universal standard that is adopted widely.

For individuals:

The LCS offers a solution for the continuous improvement practitioner who wants an acknowledged and relevant lean qualification, a framework around which his or her lean competency can develop and improve, access to a practitioner community for networking and peer-to-peer learning and recognition for his or her lean expertise.

1.2 AIM OF THIS GUIDE



This guide details the **SME** (small and medium enterprise) **accreditation process** that results in a company's lean training programme being accredited by the **Lean Competency System (LCS)**¹.

This will enable it to hold a two year licence to deliver LCS accredited training, allowing its training course participants to receive **LCS Certificates of Lean Competency**, providing they have successfully completed an LCS assessment.

The accreditation process involves scrutinising the applicant's lean training programme, to ensure that it has the capability to deliver effective lean training and meets LCS standards that can be adhered to over the two year licence period.

This document needs to be used in conjunction with several other LCS documents and information, in particular, the **LCS SME Terms** and the [Detailed LCS Level Descriptions](#).

Visit the LCS website for more information and to download key documents that support accreditation. www.leancompetency.org

1.3 STANDARD & SME ACCREDITATION

There are two main types of LCS accreditation – **Standard** and **SME**.

With Standard accreditation, an organisation has responsibility for managing all elements of its lean training system. With SME accreditation, an organisation has responsibility for

¹ see Appendix III for a description of the LCS structure & Appendix VI for key knowledge for each level

managing the course delivery element of the system, but not the knowledge test or certification elements, which are undertaken centrally by the LCS organisation.

The table below highlights the main differences between the two types:

Aspect	Standard Accreditation	SME Accreditation
Designing and delivering courses aligned to the LCS	Yes	Yes
2 year licence to operate the LCS	Yes	Yes
Quality assurance responsibility	Yes	Yes
Issuing LCS certificates	Yes	No
Administering tests, exams	Yes	No
Single up front accreditation fee and no other costs	Yes	No
Low up front accreditation fee plus additional pay-for-use costs	No	Yes
Fee paid to LCS for each person tested & certified	No	Yes

SME accreditation is suitable for start-ups or smaller organisations that have a small resource base and aim to carry out accredited training on an ad hoc basis and for start-up businesses that are not fully established. There is no requirement for a significant up-front investment and assessment costs are covered by income already received from customers.

2. OVERALL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

2.1 KEY STAGES

The main stages in the SME accrediting process are shown below:

Stage	Activity	Who
1	Accreditation documents sent to applicant	LCS
2	Registration form sent to LCS	Applicant
3	Gap analysis; portfolio assembly commences	Applicant
3a	Draft reviews (quantity and nature to be discussed)	LCS/ Applicant
4	Final portfolio submitted	Applicant
5	Accreditation sign off meeting	LCS/ Applicant
6	Final approval letter & welcome pack sent. Invoice sent to the applicant.	LCS

2.2 STAGE DETAILS

2.2.1 TRAINING PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

Once the decision to accredit has been made and the relevant documents sent, the **registration form** is submitted, marking the formal start of the accrediting process.

A **gap analysis** may be required where an existing system is being accredited; this identifies the scope of work required to produce the submission portfolio and help with planning and timetabling. A template is available for this.

The main part of the process is the construction of the **training programme portfolio**, which should be submitted using the **SME Submission Form**; Section [2.3](#) below provides details.

Drafts submissions may be made and feedback is provided through Progress Checklist Reports. A final accreditation meeting will not be arranged if any issues are unresolved.

Note that an organisation can elect to become accredited to any level and can change its accreditation to encompass additional levels at any point once it is accredited. For example, the initial accreditation could cover just Level 1a, or Levels 1a, 1b and 1c. It can also upgrade its accreditation type to Standard if circumstances dictate.

The seven levels of the LCS framework is shown below:

1-Fundamental	Level 1a	Awareness
	Level 1b	Diagnosis & Analysis
	Level 1c	Improvement & Implementation
2- Technical	Level 2a	Implementation & Design
	Level 2b	Implementation & Leadership
3- Strategic	Level 3a	Strategic Enterprise
	Level 3b	Strategic Supply Chain

The length of time the whole process should take between one and three months.

2.2.2 ALIGNMENT MATRIX

Unit of learning	1a Lean Awareness						Total
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	
Course 1	1	2	2	0	1		6
Course 2	1	1	0	2	2	2	8
Course 3	2		0	1	1	1	5
Session 1						1	1
Session 2							0
Session 3							0
Session 4					2	1	3
Module 1							0
Module 2							0
Module 3							0
Module 4							0
Module 5							0
etc							0
							0
Total	4	3	2	3	6	5	23

For applicants with an existing or planned training system, the completion of an **Alignment Matrix** is a key component of the submission; this should demonstrate its alignment with the LCS framework.

To complete the matrix, the applicant lists 'units of learning' in the first column and then assigns a value for each knowledge component, where

0=no coverage, 1=partial coverage and 2=full coverage.

In the example shown on the left, **course 1** is partially aligned to **A1** (origins and

1a Lean Awareness Knowledge	
A1	Origins and evolution of lean thinking and continuous improvement
A2	Underpinning and related concepts and approaches
A3	Key lean/CI principles and frameworks
A4	Core elements of lean and CI
A5	Awareness of the human and strategic dimensions of lean thinking

evolution of lean) and fully aligned to **A2** (underpinning and related concepts).

When completed, the matrix will provide a clear overview of the degree of alignment, highlighting areas of strength and any gaps. A training system is not required to achieve full coverage in all areas, but it should demonstrate a good breadth of coverage, while also reflecting the methodology, priorities and preferences of the applying organisation.

The matrix is available in MS Excel or MS Word versions and both are embedded in the Submission Form, so can be extracted and completed.

Full details of the LCS Levels are on an [LCS website page](#) where a PDF document can be downloaded.

2.2.2 ACCREDITATION SIGN OFF MEETING

Once the submission is considered complete and in order, an **accreditation sign off meeting** will take place which marks the formal submission by the applicant. This will review the overall submission, discuss processes to ensure courses are aligned to assessments, agree on candidate testing procedures and set up administration and communication procedures. This can be a virtual or physical meeting, though preferably the latter.

2.2.3 FINAL REPORT

Following this meeting, the LCS assessor will produce a final report on the application confirming accreditation and noting conditions and terms.

A certificate is issued to the company indicating its accredited status.

2.3 INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SUBMISSION FORM

Information on the training system should be provided using the **SME Submission Form**, the section headings of which are shown below. If any aspects of the form are not applicable to the organisation's training system, this should be stated.

Guidance on the information requirements for each section is contained in the submission form, which also contains several embedded documents that need to be completed.

- Typical questions that will be addressed in the LCS assessment are shown for each section in this style

ORGANISATION DETAILS

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- Is the organisation background summary sufficient?
- Is the structure of the training organisation clear and appropriate?
- Is there a clear description of the components of the lean training system?
- Is the practical application of knowledge in the workplace part of the training system?

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, AIMS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Are aims and learning outcomes clearly defined?
- Are the appropriate topics covered in courses?
- Does contact time align to recommended levels?
- Do topics link to learning outcomes?

ALIGNMENT

- Is there effective alignment between the organisation's lean training programme and the LCS levels?
- Has an LCS alignment matrix been completed?
- Are courses aligned with the different LCS levels (where appropriate)?
- Is it clear with which LCS levels the training system is aiming to align?

TRAINING MATERIAL

- Is there a clear account of how the training material has been developed and sourced?
- Have sufficient examples of material been provided?
- Is the training material understandable, of good format and presentation quality?
- Does training material help enable the achievement of the learning outcomes? Are there appropriate participant handouts and supporting material?
- Have material sources been appropriately referenced?
- Are there sufficient details of practical activities?
- Is any online training element used technically sound, effectively constructed with the appropriate safeguards?

ASSESSMENT

- Is there an adequate assessment plan in place that ensures learning outcomes have been achieved?
- Is the practical application of knowledge in the workplace part of the assessment plan?

DELIVERY, TEACHING METHODS & STAFFING

- Do appropriately qualified and experienced people deliver training?
- Are the teaching methods adequately described and suitable for the target audience?
- Has a delivery capability matrix been produced?
- Are the credentials of all training deliverers' available (internal, external)?

ADMISSIONS

- Are there clearly defined selection criteria so that appropriate participants attend courses?

QUALITY ASSURANCE & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Are there mechanisms in place for evaluation of the training?
- Has questionnaires evidence been seen?
- Is there an appropriate feedback process to participants and delivers?
- Is there evidence of pre-delivery testing and continuous improvement activity after courses have been delivered and evaluated?
- Is there appropriate control over the training system when it is used on an international basis?

TRAINING SUPPORT & ORGANISATION

- Is there evidence of appropriate training management and support?
- Are there appropriate information resources available to support learners?
- Have examples of training records been seen?
- Is there an effective database system in place to record individuals training history?
- Are training facilities appropriate?

ONLINE TRAINING ELEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- Is an appropriate, technically sound learning platform being used?
- Do learners flowing a logical path from registration to course completion?
- Has the online material been sourced appropriately and developed effectively?

- Have sufficient examples of online material been provided?
- Is the online assessment approach robust, with appropriate safeguards and checks in place?
- Have examples of online tests been provided?

3. COURSE KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

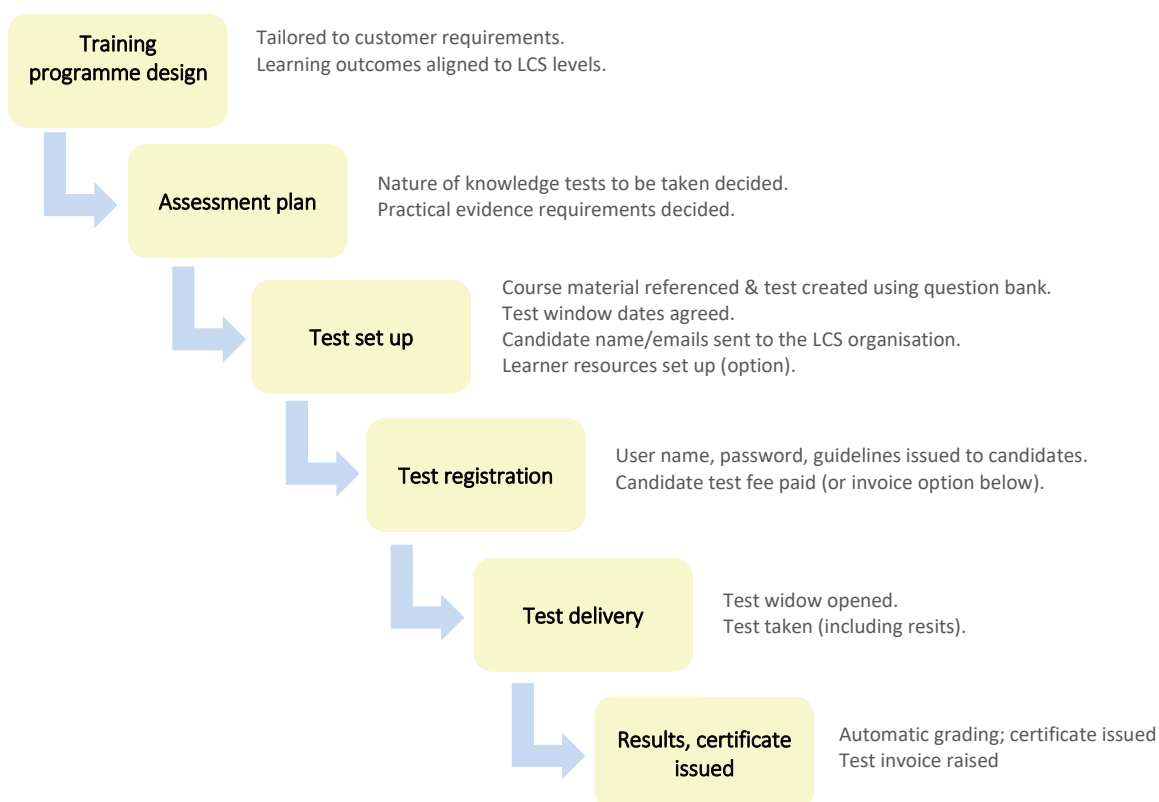
Training programme knowledge tests are managed centrally by the LCS organisation and there needs to be close coordination in setting these. Tests are taken online via the LCS assessment centre.

The LCS has a bank of questions that can be used to create specific tests, though the final set of questions needs to reference the actual course material delivered and any other contextual information.

Note that the practical aspect of the assessment is managed by the accredited organisation.

3.2 ASSESSMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

The overall process for organising and delivering tests is shown below:



The training programme design should ensure that its learning outcomes are aligned to the LCS framework. An assessment plan will confirm the type of assessment to be used and also how evidence of practical application will be captured.

A knowledge test will be created, based on a standard LCS test for a particular level, though this will be tailored around the specific training being delivered. This will involve examining

the course material delivered (eg presentations) to ensure it is correctly aligned and contextualised. The time period for candidates to take the test is agreed; note that tests are normally taken in a one week test window and the test should be taken within about a week of the course ending.

Candidate details are passed to the LCS organisation (name, email), that then issues them with guidelines, plus a username and password to enable access to the LCS Assessment Centre. The candidate test fees can be paid at this point paid if self-funded by candidates.

Candidates take the test in the test window; they are allowed one failure and then resit the test within the window. A second failure will require some intervention by the trainer before a third attempt is permitted, that may be in a new test window. An additional fee will not be required for a third test attempt.

Test grading is automatic and the result immediately communicated to the candidate after the test. Certificates of Lean Competency can be delivered directly to successful candidates by the LCS or these can be sent to the accredited business for onward communication.

PAYMENT FOR TESTS

The accredited company will normally pay the candidate test fee when the process has been completed, though there is an option for candidates to pay for the fee individually.

3.3 ONLINE KNOWLEDGE TEST PROCEDURE

Knowledge test details are as follows:

- Learners are sent usernames and passwords to access the test website, as well as pre-test advice.
- A 'test window' is opened (usually one week in length) for candidates to take the test.
- Tests consist of mainly multiple choice questions and are effectively be 'open book' – ie learners are allowed to use reference material when attempting questions.
- Tests are timed (eg 45 minutes for a 50 question test); a test has to be completed in one sitting and cannot be paused. Once the time period has been reached, the test is stopped and submitted for marking.
- Questions appear one at a time and in random order; the learner is not told whether an answer submitted is correct or not.
- The standard pass mark is 66%. Negative marking is not normally used. Two attempts are permitted in a test window.
- There is an option for a resource area on the LCS website to support learners when preparing for tests.

4. ACCREDITATION RESPONSIBILITIES & TERMS

4.1 LCS CERTIFICATES



Learners who successfully complete an accredited training programme and its assessment will receive a Certificate of Lean Competency from the LCS organisation.

The example show illustrates the fields that are completed for each certificate issued.

The accredited training programme's company logo and authorising signatory may be placed on the certificate.

The accredited company will receive a certificate indicating accredited status.

4.2 COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTION

The accredited company may communicate its LCS status via standard channels (eg brochures, website, PR etc) and use the LCS logo and accreditation insignia where appropriate.

Prior approval must be obtained from Cardiff

University for any use of the University logo.

The accredited company will feature on the LCS website and be mentioned in the LCS newsletter.

4.3 ACCREDITATION TERMS

Accredited companies need to abide by a set of terms – see the document **SME Accreditation Terms**.

A company's accreditation will be valid for 2 years from the date of accreditation on its certificate.

It is likely that the training system will undergo continuous or incremental change over the period, for example as a result of participant feedback, knowledge advances, new initiatives, etc. There is no requirement to inform the LCS of every change, however, if major changes are made, then the organisation should inform LCS management and discuss implications prior to the changes being implemented.

There is not a strict definition of what constitutes a major or significant change; examples could include wholesale course material changes, extending to higher LCS levels, expanding the system's geographical scope, structural changes to learning outcomes, etc.

The company can renew its accreditation after 2 years, following successful completion of a renewal process, which involves a reapplication review.

The LCS organisation may withdraw accreditation at any point during the period should it consider that the accredited company has breached the LCS conditions.

4.4 ONGOING COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

The LCS organisation will not schedule inspection visits over the licence period, though will welcome opportunities for Gemba visits which, for example, could involve observing the training system in operation, or undertaking specific supporting activities or projects, such as performance reviews, process confirmation, material development or investigatory research.

There is also an opportunity for collaboration with Cardiff Business School and University in several areas, which can be discussed during the accrediting process.

4.5 PRACTITIONER MEMBERSHIP



Recipients of LCS certificates will be eligible to join the LCS *practitioner member* community free of charge through the LCS website, which provides a platform to encourage lean practitioners to continue their personal and professional development.

The facility promotes peer-to-peer learning and includes teaching resources, topical articles, networking facilities, collaboration groups, discussion forums and events signposting.



The LCS will provide the accredited organisation with a **Practitioner Membership Factsheet** for distribution to certificate holders that provides information on its features and benefits, as well as registration instructions.

Note that managers and administrators of accredited systems will also be eligible for membership of the LCS community.



A range of promotional and recognition insignia are available for members' use, included the digital signature badges illustrated, as well as enamel pin badge versions.

5. FEES

5.1 STRUCTURE

There are two parts to the fee structure:

1. An accreditation licence payment.
2. A fee for everyone who undertakes an assessment.

The licence payment is payable after the company's training programme has been accredited, while the assessment fees are payable when learners take knowledge tests.

5.2 RATES FOR 2017

The 2017 fees are as follows:

- Initial accreditation fee for a 2 year licence: **£1,750**
- Renewal 2 year licence accreditation fee: **£1,250**

Multiple choice tests and reports:

- LCS tests for 1a, 1b, 1c: **£75 pp**
- LCS tests for 2a, 2b: **£95 pp**
- LCS test and implementation project report assessment: 2a, 2b: **£185 pp**

Note the above are exclusive of VAT; VAT may not be applicable if the company is based outside of the UK and no training is delivered in the UK.