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GUIDE TO BECOMING LCS APPROVED



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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Guide Content & Overview	3
1.2 LCS Approved & Purpose of the LCS	3
1.3 Lean Thinking	3
1.4 LCS Approved: Definition	4
1.5 Key Benefits of LCS Approved	4
1.6 LCS Approved: Criteria	4
2. LCS Approved – Application & Evaluation Process	5
2.1 Application & Evaluation	5
2.2 Application Stages	5
2.3 Fees	6
3. LCS Approved General Terms	7
Definitions	7
Validity	7
Fees	7
Quality Assurance	7
LCS Approved Product Changes	7
Communication	7
Continuous Improvement	8
Confidentiality	8
Termination	8
Contractual Relationship & Assignment	8
Other	8

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GUIDE CONTENT & OVERVIEW

This document explains what **LCS Approved Credential** is and details the process that results in a product gaining **LCS Approved** status for a two-year licence period.

Becoming LCS Approved requires the product owner to provide evidence on how the product supports lean practices and behaviours and delivers lean benefits for its users.

Being LCS Approved allows a product owner to state that its product is aligned with lean practices and behaviours and can help in developing a lean culture.

Note that the word **product** is used generically to refer to a product, service, technology or system.

1.2 LCS APPROVED & PURPOSE OF THE LCS

LCS Approved is aligned to the LCS purpose - in particular (i):

- i. To promote the adoption of lean thinking and related avenues of thought in organisations in order to help improve operational effectiveness and achievement of purpose.
- ii. To help employees better understand and apply lean thinking philosophy, tools and techniques so they can be more effective in continuous improvement activities.
- iii. To contribute to the development and understanding of lean thinking.

1.3 LEAN THINKING

The LCS interpretation of lean thinking, developed in the Lean Enterprise Research Centre, is one that promotes a holistic, 'systems' approach to continuous improvement, acknowledging that lean is much more than simply improving processes through the application of tools and prescriptive principles. Successful lean organisations employ lean strategies, lean leadership and understand the need for an engaged, empowered workforce.

In simple terms, lean is defined as **delivering appropriate customer and stakeholder value with the minimum of resources.**

Lean is used as the umbrella term for a continuous improvement philosophy that encompasses a variety of approaches, that include tools and techniques from the Toyota Production System, Six Sigma, Agile, Theory of Constraints and Systems Thinking. Other commonly used terms include business improvement, service improvement, process excellence, operational excellence, operational effectiveness, business excellence and lean six sigma.

The LCS accepts that there are many different continuous improvement methodologies and maintains that different organisations require their own, bespoke implementation solutions for sustained, cultural change – thus adopting a **contingent** approach.

1.4 LCS APPROVED: DEFINITION

LCS Approved is a status conferred on a product confirming that the LCS considers it is aligned with, and supportive of, lean thinking principles and so will support the lean practices and behaviours that underpin a sustainable lean culture.

1.5 KEY BENEFITS OF LCS APPROVED

For an organisation using an LCS Approved product, it provides reassurance that the product will support lean operational methods and behaviours and play a positive role in the journey to building a sustained, continuous improvement culture.

For an organisation providing LCS Approved products, it makes its offerings more attractive to companies committed to adopting lean thinking – providing assurance, reducing risk and it helps associate its brand with best-practice operational thinking.

1.6 LCS APPROVED: CRITERIA

To establish that a product qualifies to become LCS Approved, it needs to demonstrate it delivers lean benefits to its customers/users. The product owner lists the features and benefits of the product and indicates the quality, cost and delivery benefits these deliver

The product owner also indicates how the product aligns with the LCS **Lean Enterprise Characteristic Statements**¹ - see below.

A. LEAN ENTERPRISE PERSPECTIVE & CI CULTURE

1. Supports the long term objectives of the organisation and promotes constancy of purpose
2. Fosters the development of an extended enterprise beyond the operating unit in which it is implemented
3. Encourages the organisation to manage by data.
4. Supports a value stream perspective, process/systems thinking and scientific thinking.
5. Supports organisational alignment – clarity of purpose and connected goals.
6. Supports the pursuit of perfection, focus on long term solutions and simplification.

B. LEAN LEADERSHIP, POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT, RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

1. Facilitates senior management engagement in operations and Gemba activity.
2. Supports the development of staff capability competency in problem solving
3. Supports a leadership style characterised by humility and respect for every individual.
4. Encourages the development of a learning organisation, a questioning culture, and the promotion of new ideas.
5. Supports empowerment, trust and effective communications.

C. QUALITY, PROCESS FLOW & PULL

¹ These statements have been developed from a range of sources, including Womack and Jones' Five Lean Principles, the ten Shingo Model Principles and Liker's 14 principles of The Toyota Way.

1. Delivers improvements in productivity
2. Supports the presentation of visual controls and problem visibility
3. Facilitates demand responsiveness and pull systems.
4. Supports the levelling of workload, reducing unevenness
5. Supports quality at source and the delivery of “right first time” in both material quality and service quality
6. Delivers waste identification & removal
7. Supports the appropriate standardisation of processes

D. VALUE, CUSTOMER, STAKEHOLDER UNDERSTANDING

1. Helps the operation respond effectively to customer demand
2. Promotes customer focus and the creation of customer or stakeholder value

In order to validate the lean benefit assertions of the product owner, evidence from customers/users is collected through a variety of methods, the selection of which will depend on the product’s market status.

2. LCS APPROVED – APPLICATION & EVALUATION PROCESS

2.1 APPLICATION & EVALUATION

1. An application form is completed by the product owner, which collects information on the company and product.
2. The features of the product are listed, along with their associated lean benefits.
3. The applicant links the features with the LCS **Lean Enterprise Characteristic Statements** to demonstrate alignment with lean practices and behaviours.
4. The applicant proposes how customer feedback and evaluation information can be collected, either by primary research and/or by using secondary data.
5. Supporting material can be uploaded to the form - eg brochures, guides, flyers, webpage links etc

The LCS evaluates the product’s impact on a user organisation’s lean practices and operations, primarily through customer/user corroboration of the product owner’s claims.

2.2 APPLICATION STAGES

The **LCS Approved** process has six stages:

Stage #	Activity	Who
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1	Application form completed & sent	Applicant
2	LCS Review & feedback	LCS
3	Customer corroboration activity	LCS/Applicant
4	Final assessment	LCS
5	Sign off meeting	LCS/Applicant
6	Approval confirmation, certificate issued & invoicing	LCS

2.3 FEES

- First time LCS Approved: £1,450.00 / €1,675.00
- Renewal LCS Approved: £950.00 / €1,095.00

Notes:

- VAT is added to the fee, though will not be applicable if the product owner is based outside the UK.
- Fees are payable at the start of the LCS Approved period.
- Fees cover a two year period.

3. LCS APPROVED GENERAL TERMS

DEFINITIONS

'**LCS Approved**' refers to the status conferred on a product that confirms that the LCS considers it is aligned with, and supportive of, lean thinking principles, practices and behaviours.

The '**LCS organisation**' refers to the body that manages and controls the Lean Competency System and is encompassed with Lean Competency Services Ltd, the company that holds the Cardiff University LCS licence.

The '**Customer**' refers to the organisation that owns the product being LCS Approved.

VALIDITY

1. LCS Approved is valid for a period of **two years** from the date of issue, after which the customer may reapply. There is a renewal process, after which a further two-year licence may be issued.
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FEEES

2. The **LCS Approved Fee** is payable at the start of the two-year period.
 3. The fee covers a standard range of LCS Approved activities by the LCS assessor. Should additional activities be necessary, then additional charges will be made on a day rate basis. This will be agreed beforehand by the LCS organisation and the customer.
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QUALITY ASSURANCE

4. The customer is responsible for maintaining the integrity of its LCS Approved status, ensuring that appropriate quality assurance mechanisms and procedures are in place and enforced.
 5. LCS management reserves the right to inspect records and quality assurance information, scrutinise training materials and observe training activity.
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LCS APPROVED PRODUCT CHANGES

6. Should the customer make any significant changes to its LCS Approved Product during its licence period it should inform the LCS of the nature of the changes and state whether the changes have any impact on the product's ability to support lean practices and behaviours.
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COMMUNICATION

7. The customer can highlight its LCS Approved status in its marketing or communication activities and may use the LCS visual identity, which includes the LCS logo and the LCS Approved insignia. The use of Cardiff University visual identity is not permitted without the prior approval of Cardiff University.
8. The LCS Approved customer will be listed on the **LCS website**, unless it informs the LCS organisation otherwise.
9. An LCS Approved customer must **not** claim in its communications that its product(s) is endorsed by any entity other than the LCS Organisation.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

10. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the LCS organisation will occasionally make changes to the LCS Approved product and will ensure that customers are kept informed of these.

CONFIDENTIALITY

11. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times by the LCS Organisation with regard to the LCS Approved customer's application documents, materials and information that are scrutinised and held as part of the assessment process.

TERMINATION

12. The LCS organisation can terminate a customer's LCS Approved licence any time and without notice should it deem that these terms have been breached.
13. Should the customer wish to end its LCS Approved status and cease being linked to the LCS, then it should let LCS management know in writing. No refunds will be given in relation to the LCS Approved fee.

CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP & ASSIGNMENT

14. A licence from Cardiff University to operate, manage and develop the Lean Competency System is held by **Lean Competency Services Limited**, a company registered in England & Wales (Company Number 8624706). For all LCS accreditation and related matters, the contractual relationship is between the customer and Lean Competency Services Limited.
15. In the event of the termination of the agreement between Lean Competency Services Ltd and the University, Lean Competency Services Ltd will assign its contract with the customer to the University.

OTHER

16. The Cardiff University logo is a registered trademark of Cardiff University, all rights reserved. Lean Competency Services Limited uses this logo under licence, is not controlled by or an agent of Cardiff University and is not authorised to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of Cardiff University.
17. These terms may be updated periodically without prior notice.