BQF Academy

Lean Six Sigma Body of Knowledge

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Introduction

This document contains the Lean Six Sigma Body of Knowledge for all four levels of certification.

- Yellow Belt
- Green Belt
- Black Belt
- Master Black Belt

Each section contains

- A description of the audience
- An overview of the certification process
- Expectations for the practical assessment

This document should be used as a basis when preparing for certification

We appreciate that every project is different and not all tools are applicable to all situations. We do expect to see a clear rationale for which tools were selected in each situation.
Our certifications are assessed by a range of licensed associates, each of whom will have variations on the outlined process, so please discuss specifics with your provider before your certification.

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Please get in touch with bqfacademy@bqf.org.uk if you have any questions

Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certification Criteria

Certification Audience

A Yellow Belt is a leader of DMAIC team-based problem solving projects which bring about business process improvement leading to benefits at a local level.
or
A Yellow Belt is an active member of a green or black belt project team, is involved in the end to end project, and can demonstrate facilitation of a range of aspects of the project.
Approximately 6 months' relevant experience

Certification Process

1. Exam passed as set by licenced organisation

2. 1 Project with small scope completed end-to-end, leading a team, with demonstrable success against a Y-Metric or Green or Black Belt project actively participated in end-to-end, leadership demonstrated on some aspects (e.g. process mapping, brainstorming, data analysis) and demonstrable success against a Y-Metric

3. 30 minute review of project portfolio with Q&A by a licenced organisation - portfolio to be submitted in advance

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certification Criteria

1. Expected Base Knowledge

A range of basic Continuous Improvement concepts such as:
· The concepts of variation reduction and Y=f(x)
· The importance of listening to and understanding the Voice of the Customer
· The importance of Gemba and experiencing the work first hand
· Concept of improving flow by identifying and eliminating of waste using concepts such as the lean wastes and value add/non value add analysis
· Awareness of the fundamental 5 lean principles and associated concepts
· Workplace organisation and standardisation using concepts such as 5S and Visual Management
· The fundamentals of quality, the cost of poor quality and the importance of defect reduction and mistake proofing (Poka Yoke)

What makes a good yellow belt project
· Having a narrow scope, with an unknown root cause and potential for data to be collected
· Following a strong improvement project framework including project roles such as sponsor and coach, project planning, use of tollgates and story boards
· Application of basic change management principles and understanding the necessity of managing change proactively
· The use of a cross-functional team of relevant skills to ensure diversity of thought

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certification Criteria

2. Demonstrate application of a DMAIC project including the following

note; not all tools and techniques need to appear in the phase they are listed, as long as they make sense in the context of the project.
Where the yellow belt was a member of a project (rather than the leader), they need to demonstrate understanding of how the tools and techniques impacted the outcome of the project and be able to highlight the specific elements they led on

Define
1. Develop the project charter and plan
· Establish a basic business case (including benefits)
· Develop the problem statement
· Develop the goal statement
· Define the project scope
· Set project milestones
· Define project team roles and responsibilities
2. Create the process SIPOC
3. Identify Critical to Quality requirements

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Measure
1. Understand how the current process operates
· Use process mapping tools and techniques such as spaghetti diagrams, process stapling, gemba, functional deployment mapping (swim lanes) and customer journey mapping
· Identify and capture quick win opportunities; wastes, duplication, variation, pinch points, rework, inconsistencies and non-value add process steps
2. Collect accurate data to understand current process performance
· Identify your Y measure making sure you have clear operational definitions
· Ensure data accuracy has been taken into consideration
· Develop a measurement plan
3. Use data to understand process performance
· Use basic graphs such as histogram, run chart and pareto to baseline, summarise and segment the data
4. Narrow the scope of your problem using focused problem statements

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Analyse
1. Identify potential root causes to your focused problems
· Identify potential causes using cause and effect analysis tools such as fishbone, waste analysis, process observation, or further data interrogation
· Use root cause analysis tools like 5 whys to dig into the potential root causes for your problems
2. Validate your potential root causes
· Use process observation or basic graphs like histograms, run and pareto charts to validate your root causes
3. Prioritise your top root causes for solution development

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Improve
1. Use team-based creativity tools and techniques to generate a list of possible solutions
2. Use appropriate tools and techniques (such as effort/ impact, multivoting) to prioritise the best solution for the root causes
3. Test your solution, confirm it works and refine it
4. Plan the implementation of the process solution
· Assess potential risks and error proofing opportunities
· Think about the people impacted and how you will communicate the change

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Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Control
1. Create a control plan and regular monitoring to ensure the sustained performance of the main Y-metric
2. Implement the solution
· Standardise the process supported by visual management
· Use data to confirm that the solution has addressed the problem and met the goals of the project. This must include a comparison against the baseline data obtained in Measure clearly evidencing the improvement and its magnitude.
3. Assess the overall project benefit
· Assess the project benefits resulting from the improvement
· Compile and review lessons learnt
· Identify replication opportunities and recommendations for future improvements
· Hand over project to the process owner
· Finalise the project storyboard

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Criteria

Certification Audience

A Green Belt is a leader of DMAIC team-based problem solving projects which bring about business process improvement leading to significant benefits.
Note: There is no requirement for Green Belts to be able to use specific statistical software such as Minitab, nor to understand the advanced statistical concepts that underpin it. Hence topics such as hypothesis tests, regression analysis and DoE are required at the awareness level only so the candidate should be aware that these tools exist, when it might be prudent to ask for Black Belt help in running them and sufficient understanding of the concepts and jargon to be able to define what they need and to understand the results the Black Belt gives them.
Approximately 6 months' relevant experience

Certification Process

1. Exam passed as set by licenced organisation
2. 1 Project completed end-to-end, managing a team, with demonstrable success against a Y-Metric
3. 1-hour review of project portfolio with Q&A by a licenced organisation (see link) - portfolio to be submitted in advance

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Criteria

1. Expected Base Knowledge

A range of strategic Continuous Improvement tools such as Value Stream Mapping, Strategy Deployment, Lean Leadership
The fundamentals of process excellence such as:
· The concepts of variation reduction, Y=f(x), and process sigma
· The importance of listening to and understanding the Voice of the Customer
· Customer demand and takt time
· The importance of Gemba and experiencing the work first hand
· Identification of waste using concepts such as the lean wastes and value add/non value add analysis
· The concept of flow: push vs pull, batch size reduction, reducing inventory/ WIP, theory of constraints, heijunka
· The importance of process set up or changeover time
· Workplace organisation and standardisation using concepts such as 5S and Visual Management
· The fundamentals of quality, the cost of poor quality and the importance of defect reduction and mistake proofing (Poka Yoke)

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Criteria

What makes a good DMAIC project
· Approaches to project scoping, prioritisation and selection including an understanding of benefits analysis
· The improvement project framework including project roles such as sponsor and coach, project planning, risk management, use of tollgates and story boards
· Basic change management principles and the necessity of managing change proactively
· Project communication using storyboards as a concise and clear means of conveying the key points of the project effectively
· The use of a cross-functional team of relevant skills to ensure diversity of thought

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Criteria

2. Demonstrate application of a DMAIC project including the following

note; not all tools and techniques need to appear in the phase they are listed, as long as they make sense in the context of the project

Define
1. Develop the project charter and plan
· Establish the business case (including benefits)
· Develop the problem statement
· Develop the goal statement
· Define the project scope
· Set project milestones
· Define project team roles and responsibilities
· Identify project risks
2. Create the process SIPOC
3. Create the stakeholder map and plan
4. Identify Critical to Quality requirements
· Gather the Voice of the Customer supported by tools like customer segmentation and Kano analysis
· Translate the VOC into CTQs

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Criteria continued

Measure
1. Understand how the current process operates
· Use process mapping tools and techniques such as spaghetti diagrams, process stapling, gemba, functional deployment mapping (swim lanes) and customer journey mapping
· Identify and capture quick win opportunities, wastes, duplication, variation, pinch points, rework, inconsistencies and non-value add process steps
2. Collect accurate data to understand current process performance
· Identify Y and X measures taking into account data types and ensuring clear operational definitions
· Ensure data accuracy and consistency by applying measurement systems analysis principles including gauge R&R and attribute agreement analysis
· Develop a measurement plan for the identified Y and X measures with an appropriate sampling approach and sample size
3. Use data to understand process performance
· Use basic graphs such as histogram, run chart, pareto and summary statistics to summarise and segment the data
· Use the XmR control chart to understand your process variation and have an awareness of other control chart types, e.g. X bar-R and attribute charts
· Establish the baseline process performance against the customer specification using appropriate tools such as DPMO, histograms or process capability (Cp / CpK) methods
4. Narrow the scope of your problem using focused problem statements

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Analyse
1. Identify potential root causes to your focused problems
· Brainstorm potential causes using cause and effect analysis tools such as fishbone, FMEA, or process observation
· Use root cause analysis tools like 5 whys to dig into the potential root causes for your problems
2. Validate your potential root causes with data
· Use data to perform graphical analysis using tools such as histograms, run and pareto charts
· Use scatter plots to understand the relationship between your root cause Xs and your main Y metric
· Be aware of statistical tools such as Hypothesis Testing, Correlation and Regression analysis, and Design of Experiments and how they are used to validate root causes
3. Quantify the effect of the root causes on your main Y metric and estimate the potential benefits
4. Prioritise your top root causes for solution development

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Improve
1. Use team-based creativity tools and techniques to generate a list of possible solutions leveraging your knowledge of Lean techniques
2. Use appropriate tools and techniques to prioritise the best solutions for the root causes
· Define prioritisation criteria
· Apply solution selection techniques (such as effort/ impact, Pugh matrix, multivoting)
3. Plan and trial your solution in a controlled environment, review the impact it has had, and refine it. Use simulation where appropriate.
· Develop the to-be process to incorporate the solutions
· Conduct experiments or a pilot to validate and refine your solution (e.g. rapid PDCA, DOE)
· Analyse the impact of your solution on your overall process metrics to ensure there is no unintended negative impact
4. Plan the implementation of the process solution
· Conduct a risk analysis and come up with suitable mitigations, refinements and error proofing using appropriate tools such as FMEA and poka yoke
· Use appropriate change management tools and techniques to ensure your stakeholders are willing and ready to adopt the change (such as force field analysis, change readiness planning, comms & training planning)
· Use appropriate project management tools and techniques to ensure your improvements are delivered to time, quality and budget (such Gantt charts, action plans and cost benefit analysis)

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Lean Six Sigma Green Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Control
1. Establish and implement a system of controls for sustaining the solution
· Create a control plan supported by visual management and regular monitoring to ensure the sustained performance of the main Y metric (and root cause Xs where appropriate)
· Establish a response plan with an escalation pathway
2. Implement the solution
· Standardise the process and establish a system for ongoing monitoring, using Control Charts
· Use data to confirm that the solution has addressed the problem and met the goals of the project. This must include a comparison against the baseline data obtained in Measure clearly evidencing the improvement and its magnitude.
3. Assess the overall project benefit
· Assess the project benefits resulting from the improvement
· Compile and review lessons learnt
· Identify replication opportunities and recommendations for future improvements
· Hand over project to the process owner
· Finalise the project storyboard

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria

Certification Audience

A Black Belt is a leader of complex DMAIC problem solving projects which bring about business process improvement leading to significant benefits. They are able to support and coach greenbelts with their projects. Approximately 2-4 years' relevant experience

Certification Process

1. Exam passed as set by licenced organisation
2. 2 Projects (minimum one at green belt*, one at black belt level) completed end-to-end, managing a team, with demonstrable success against a Y-Metric
3. 2-hour review of project portfolio with Q&A by a licenced organisation (see link) - storyboard(s) to be submitted in advance

*Note: Existing BQF greenbelts only need demonstrate the black belt project

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria

1. Expected Base Knowledge

A range of strategic Continuous Improvement tools such as Value Stream Mapping, Strategy Deployment, Lean Leadership
· The concepts of variation reduction, Y=f(x), and process sigma
· The importance of listening to and understanding the Voice of the Customer
· Customer demand and takt time
· The importance of Gemba and experiencing the work first hand
· The importance of Lean Leadership concepts such as policy deployment and daily management routines
· Identification of waste using concepts such as the lean wastes and value add/non value add analysis
· The concept of flow: push vs pull, batch size reduction, reducing inventory/ WIP, theory of constraints, heijunka
· The importance of process set up or changeover time
· Workplace organisation and standardisation using concepts such as 5S and Visual Management
· The fundamentals of quality; the cost of poor quality, the importance of defect reduction and mistake proofing (Poka Yoke)

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria

Application of a variety of statistical methods to measure and analyse process performance
· Ensuring data quality
· The different approaches to sampling and when to apply them
· Use of data visualisation, SPC and capability analysis
· Use of appropriate hypothesis testing
· Use of regression analysis
· Use of design of experiments

The fundamentals of people and change management such as:
· Communication planning
· Stakeholder analysis
· Influencing techniques; understanding personalities and leadership styles and the best strategies for engaging them in sustainable change
· Facilitation skills
· Coaching skills
· The importance of pulling together a cross-functional team of relevant skills to ensure diversity of thought

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria

What makes a good DMAIC project
· Approaches to project scoping, prioritisation and selection including an understanding of benefits analysis
· The improvement project framework including project roles such as sponsor and coach, change and project planning, risk management, use of tollgates and story boards
· Project communication using storyboards as a concise and clear means of conveying the key points of the project effectively

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria

2. Demonstrate expert application of a DMAIC project including the following

note; not all tools and techniques need to appear in the phase they are listed, as long as they make sense in the context of the project
note; the Black Belt must give confidence that they are have robust practical experience at using DMAIC to allow them to coach green belts

Define
1. Project Selection
· Work with process owners and stakeholders to select a project of appropriate scope and complexity
2. Develop the project charter and plan
· Establish the business case (including benefits)
· Develop the problem statement
· Develop the goal statement
· Define the project scope
· Set project milestones
· Define project team roles and responsibilities
· Identify project risks and mitigations
3. Create the process SIPOC
4. Create the stakeholder map and plan
5. Identify Critical to Quality requirements
· Gather the Voice of the Customer supported by tools like customer segmentation and Kano analysis
· Translate the VOC into CTQs

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

Measure*
1. Understand how the current process operates
· Use process mapping tools and techniques such as spaghetti diagrams, process stapling, gemba, functional deployment mapping (swim lanes) and customer journey mapping
· Identify and capture quick win opportunities, wastes, duplication, variation, pinch points, rework, inconsistencies and non-value add process steps
2. Collect accurate data to understand current process performance
· Identify Y and X measures taking into account data types and ensuring clear operational definitions
· Ensure data accuracy and consistency by applying measurement systems analysis including gauge R&R and attribute agreement analysis as relevant
· Develop a measurement plan for the identified Y and X measures with an appropriate sampling approach and sample size
3. Use data to understand process performance
· Use graphs such as box plots, histogram, run chart, pareto and summary statistics to summarise and segment the data
· Use the appropriate control chart to understand and explain your process variation e.g. XmR, X bar-R and attribute charts
· Understand the distribution of your data, explain the insights gained and any resulting actions
· Establish the baseline process performance against the customer specification using appropriate tools such as DPMO or process capability (Cp / CpK) methods, taking into account your data distribution and statistical assumptions
4. Narrow the scope of your problem using focused problem statements

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

Analyse*
1. Identify potential root causes to your focused problems
· Brainstorm potential causes using cause and effect analysis tools such as fishbone, FMEA, or process observation
· Use root cause analysis tools like 5 whys to dig into the potential root causes for your problems
2. Explore your potential root causes using the relevant statistical tools
· Use data to perform graphical analysis using tools such as scatter plots, box plots, histograms, run and pareto charts
· Use Hypothesis Testing to prove or disprove your hypotheses
· As appropriate use DoE to isolate and understand the factors and interactions affecting the Y-metric
· As appropriate use regression analysis to understand relationships between your Xs and your main Y-metric
3. Quantify the effect of the root causes on your main Y-metric and estimate the potential benefits
4. Prioritise your top root causes for solution development

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Improve
1. Use team-based creativity tools and techniques to generate a list of possible solutions
2. Use appropriate tools and techniques to prioritise the best solutions for the root causes
· Define prioritisation criteria
· Apply solution selection techniques (such as effort/ impact, Pugh matrix, multivoting)
3. Plan and trial your solution in a controlled environment, review the impact it has had, and refine it. Use simulation where appropriate.
· Develop the to-be process to incorporate the solutions
· Conduct experiments or a pilot to validate and refine your solution (e.g. rapid PDCA, DOE)
· Conduct a rigorous analysis of the impact of your solution using the appropriate statistical tools. Ensure there is no unintended negative impact. Use the outcome to gain buy-in to the proposed solution
4. Plan the implementation of the process solution
· Conduct a risk analysis and come up with suitable mitigations, refinements and error proofing using appropriate tools such as FMEA and poka yoke
· Use appropriate change management tools and techniques to ensure your stakeholders are willing and ready to adopt the change (such as force field analysis, change readiness planning, comms & training planning)
· Use appropriate project management tools and techniques to ensure your improvements are delivered to time, quality and budget (such Gantt charts, action plans and cost benefit analysis)

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt
Certification Criteria continued

Control
1. Establish and implement a system of controls for sustaining the solution
· Create a control plan supported by visual management and regular monitoring to ensure the sustained performance of the main Y-metrics (and root cause Xs where appropriate)
· Establish a response plan with an escalation pathway
2. Implement the solution
· Standardise the process and establish a system for ongoing monitoring, using Control Charts
· Use data to confirm that the solution has addressed the problem and met the goals of the project. This must include a comparison against the baseline data obtained in Measure, use the appropriate statistical tools to clearly evidence the improvement and its magnitude.
3. Assess the overall project benefit
· Assess the project benefits resulting from the improvement
· Compile and review lessons learnt
· Identify replication opportunities and recommendations for future improvements
· Hand over project to the process owner
· Finalise the project storyboard

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

*** example list of statistical tools which a black belt should be able to apply using statistical software**

Basic Graphs
Frequency Plots (histogram, box plots)
Scatter Plots
Pareto Charts
Time Series Plots/Run Charts

Measurement Systems Analysis
Gauge R&R Study - crossed, nested
Gauge Bias and Linearity Study
Gauge Stability and Consistency
Attribute Agreement Analysis

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

*** example list of statistical tools which a black belt should be able to apply using statistical software**

Sampling
Population Sampling approaches
Process Sampling Approaches
Sample Size calculations for continuous and discrete data

Statistical Process Control
Statistical Process Control principles and practice including Tests for Special Causes
Individuals (X-moving Range) SPC Charts
SPC Charts for Attribute Data (p, np, c, u,)
Charts for sub-grouped continuous data (Xbar-R, Xbar-S, X-MR-R/S)
Time-Weighted Control Charts (Awareness)

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

*** example list of statistical tools which a black belt should be able to apply using statistical software**

Statistical Thinking
The Normal Distribution, Z distribution, normal probabilities, combining distributions
Normality Testing using probability plot or equivalent
Data Transformation and when to use it
Central Limit Theorem and distribution of the sample mean (awareness)
Application of Confidence Intervals

Six Sigma Measures
DPU/DPMO and determining number of opportunities
Sigma Calculations and Six Sigma Shift

Process Capability
Process Capability Analysis
Capability Indices (Cp/CpK, Pp/PpK, Cpm, Z bench), assumptions, sample size
Non-normal capability analysis

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

*** example list of statistical tools which a black belt should be able to apply using statistical software**

Hypothesis Tests
Principles and application of hypothesis tests (Ho, Ha), checking assumptions
2 sample t test
Paired t test
One way ANOVA
Test for Standard Deviations/Equal Variances
Proportions Tests
Chi Square tests
Transforming data for robustness
1 sided tests
1 sample tests
Non-Parametric Hypothesis Tests
Type I and Type II Errors
Calculation of Power and Sample Size
ANOVA with 2 or more factors, main and interaction Effects, co-variates

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

*** example list of statistical tools which a black belt should be able to apply using statistical software**

Regression
Principles and application of regression analysis, checking assumptions
Correlation
Simple Linear Regression
Rsq, Residuals Analysis
Multiple Linear Regression and Model Building
Assessing and dealing with Multicollinearity
Interpreting regression outputs
Curvilinear regression
Regression model with continuous and discrete predictors
Transforming data to improve the model
Using regression models - interpretation and predictions
Single and Multiple Binary Logistic Regression
Ordinal Logistic Regression

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Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification Criteria continued

*** example list of statistical tools which a black belt should be able to apply using statistical software**

Design of Experiments
Full and Fractional Factorial 2-level Designs principles and application, assumptions checking
Planning and Designing the experiment - blocking, randomising, replication, resolution, practical considerations
Model refinement
Analysing the Experiment – effects plots, residuals analysis, reducing the model
Using the final model, predictions

Time Series and Seasonality
Time Series Analysis, seasonal effects
Selecting and interpreting the best model

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Lean Master Black Belt

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Lean Master Black Belt
Certification Criteria

Certification Audience

A Master Black Belt is a Black Belt who is working in a CI capacity at a strategic level in their organisation, leading projects and cultural change while coaching and developing black belts and green belts. Approximately 4+ years' relevant experience

Certification Process

1. Exam passed as set by licenced organisation
2. A Master Black Belt must be previously certified as a BQF (or equivalent) Black Belt
3. 1/2 day review of project portfolio with Q&A by a licenced organisation (see link) - portfolio to be submitted in advance

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Lean Master Black Belt Certification Criteria

1. Expected Experience (in addition to previous Black Belt Experience)

Note: the role of Master Black Belt is diverse depending on industry and job role. Listed below are some examples of the type of experience we expect to see.
· Deployment of a CI, Lean Six Sigma or similar transformation across an organisation or part of an organisation
· Coaching, encouraging and supporting the use of the technical Lean Six Sigma tools across multiple levels of the business, including green and black belts
· Creation and deployment of LSS related training materials to support the organisation in its Continuous Improvement journey
· Working with senior stakeholders to build CI into the organisational ways of working
· Use of Black Belt level statistics in day to day operations to drive improvements

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Lean Master Black Belt Certification Criteria

2. Expected Knowledge and further training

note; the role of Master Black Belt is diverse depending on industry and job role. Listed below are some examples of the type of further knowledge development we expect to see.
· Knowledge and practical application of advanced statistics at a level allowing the coaching of black belts in a range of technical tools
· Courses on topics which enhance the Master Black Belts' ability to deliver; more advanced statistical tools, advanced change management, leadership, coaching, wider systems thinking, business agility, project management etc
· Further reading and study of relevant literature or other content; keeping up with the latest thinking

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