



Canadian Construction
Association
Gold Seal Certification

Gold Seal Certification application guide

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Michael Ramos, Construction Safety Practitioner

What is Gold Seal Certification?

Gold Seal Certification: Canada's recognized industry standard

Gold Seal Certification Program

The Canadian Construction Association's (CCA) Gold Seal Certification Program certifies Canadian construction management professionals and establishes, administers, and continuously improves national professional certification standards. These certification standards apply to construction management professionals working in the industrial, commercial, institutional, and heavy civil infrastructure sectors. The Program also promotes accredited education and training for construction management professionals. The Program certifies Estimators, Forepersons, Owner's Construction Managers, Project Managers, Safety Practitioners, and Superintendents working in Canada's non-residential construction industry.

For more information on the roles certified within the Program, see the [competency assessments](#) for designation definitions.



Self-assessment tools

The Gold Seal Certification Program developed self-assessment tools for applicants to use before enrolling in the Program. These tools help applicants determine their competencies and credits.

Competency self-assessment

The Gold Seal Certification Program has used learning professionals, industry experts and groups of volunteer industry practitioners to define the competencies of construction professionals. This includes the knowledge, skills, and abilities that construction professionals working in one of the six Gold Seal designations should possess, regardless of company discipline, size, or geography. The Gold Seal exam measures applicants against this standard. Candidates apply knowledge gained over a minimum of five years of experience plus the relevant training and education. Gold Seal Certified (GSC) applicants are required to assess their competencies against the program standard. If an applicant does not perform some of the duties listed in the tool or is less familiar with them, they should acquire those competencies through training, research, or peer discussion. To be eligible for the Program, most of the applicant's duties must align with the competencies listed in the self-assessment tool.

Competency self-assessment tools can be found on our [website](#).

Credit self-assessment

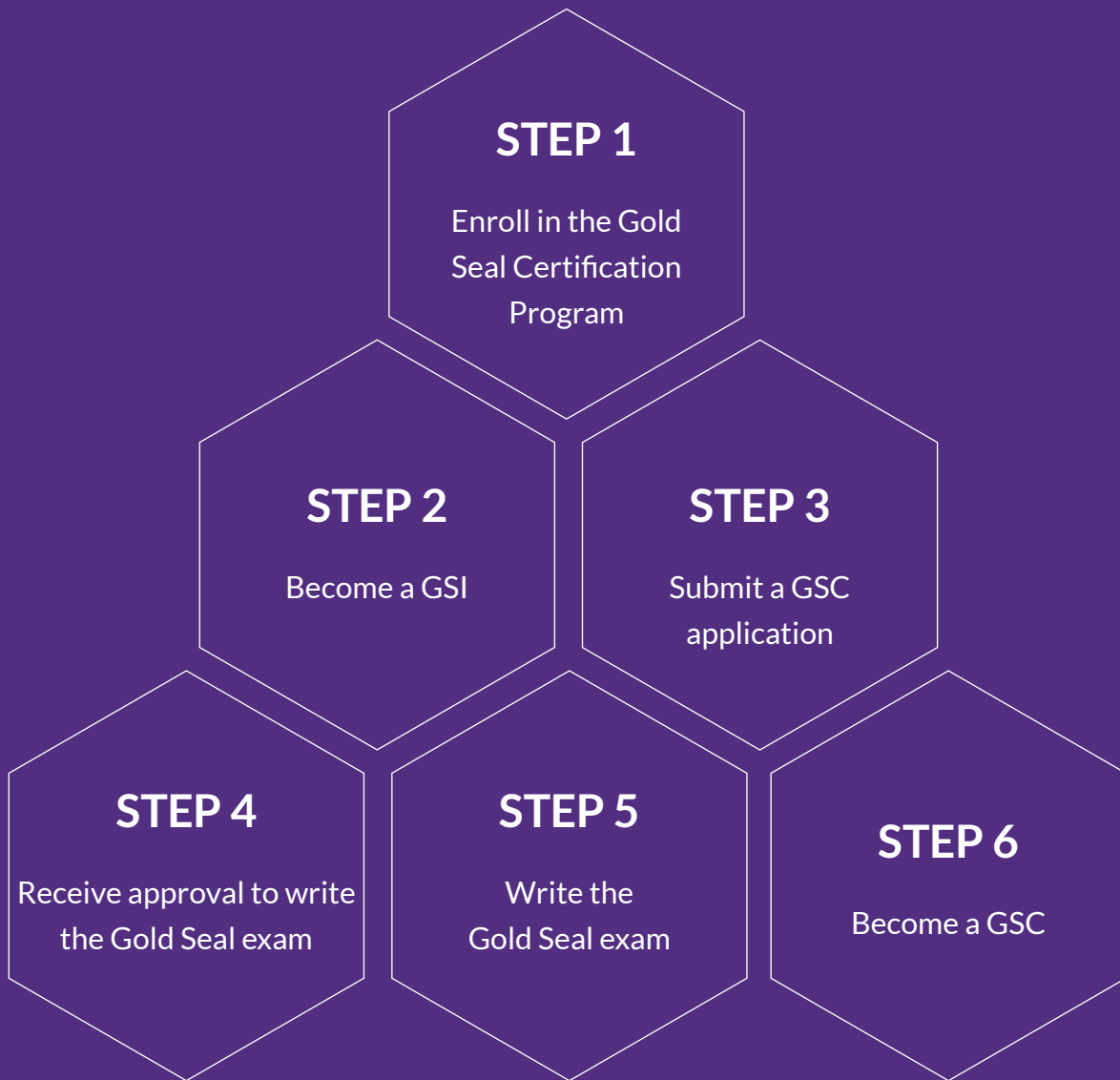
This tool is intended for individuals interested in understanding how the Gold Seal Certification Program applications are reviewed. This tool can estimate if enrolled applicants have enough credits to complete their GSC application.

 [View the credit self-assessment tool.](#)



The Gold Seal application process

Applicants must first enroll in the Gold Seal Certification Program and then be approved as a GSI. GSIs have up to five years to meet the requirements, submit their GSC application and be approved to write the Gold Seal exam.



OPTIONAL FINAL STEP

Apply for Professional Gold Seal Certified (PGSC)

See [page 22](#) for more information



Enrollment eligibility requirements

There are several eligibility categories that must be met before enrolling in the Program. This section will review the type of company, construction, project, job titles and duties, and other eligibility determinations for the Program.

Type of company

Estimators, Forepersons, Project Managers, Safety Practitioners and Superintendents must be directly employed by a general, specialty trade, electrical, mechanical or civil infrastructure contractor.

Owner's Construction Managers are accountable to the procurement authority, including owners, consultants (on behalf of the owners), general contractors, construction managers, and design builders. Owner's Construction Managers are responsible for managing time, cost, quality, and the project's overall performance and promoting positive relationships with all stakeholders.

Type of construction

Construction is the act, art, or business of moving, demolishing, installing, or building a structure, facility, or system according to a plan or definite process. Construction consists of applying any of these techniques to physical plant facilities, such as structures, utilities, excavations, landscaping, site improvements, drainage systems and roads, and additions, deletions, or modifications of such facilities. Exterior and interior painting of new structures is a form of construction.

Maintenance is the ongoing upkeep of buildings, roads, grounds, and utilities required to keep them in an adequate condition; this type of experience is not eligible for credits. It consists of preserving but not improving buildings and grounds. Maintenance is generally routine or recurring and brings equipment back to a fully functional state. However, if a replacement is needed to upgrade a system, it is not considered maintenance.

Source:

<https://www.bfs.ucsb.edu/faqs/what-difference-between-maintenance-and-construction>

Type of project

Residential projects (Part nine of the [National Building Code](#)) do not count toward industry experience credits. The program accepts residential occupancies and projects that fall under Part three of the National Building Code's industrial, commercial, institutional, or heavy civil sectors. Residential buildings and structures that are taller than three stories high are accepted.

Employment at non-profit organizations (including governments) is only eligible for experience credits if an applicant applies for the owner's construction manager designation.

Job titles

Job titles may differ from the official program designation name. For example, in some companies, "General Foreperson" is used instead of "Superintendent." In these cases, the "Experience" section within the "Role" field of the application and the applicant's reference letter must provide details on their duties.

Job duties

To qualify to write the Gold Seal exam, applicants must be currently employed and have at least five years of experience in the applicable designation. Experience in another designation does not count for credits. For instance, if they are applying as an estimator, their experience as a Foreperson does not qualify for credits. However, for superintendents, two years as a Foreperson can count as companies may not have an "Assistant Superintendent" role but will have a Foreperson role.

Some applicants may spend, for example, 10 per cent of their time at the onset of a project doing estimating and the rest of the time doing project manager duties. What matters is that most of the responsibilities align with the competency self-assessment for the chosen designation. The "Experience" section and letter of reference must provide details on the applicant's duties.

Active employment

Gold Seal applicants and those writing the Gold Seal exam need to be actively employed in their designation. The applicants' employment status is verified at the time of the application review(s) and before the exam(s) if it has been more than one year since the application approval. Those who have changed roles that do not fall under the designation they were approved for are no longer eligible to write the Gold Seal exam.

Letter of reference

The letter of reference should come from the applicant's direct supervisor or a long-term client if they are self-employed. The letter – preferably on official letterhead – should include the following:

- Company name
- Company website
- Name, title, and contact information of the direct supervisor
- Job title and primary duties
- Length of employment (if the applicant has held various positions, the letter needs to include the effective dates of the new positions)





CERTIFICATION STEPS 1 - 3

Requirements

The Gold Seal Certification Program requires applicants to meet a variety of criteria at each stage of the application process. In this section, requirements will be laid out in categories including experience, education, and training, as well as recognized reciprocities for additional, industry-related certifications.

Program enrollment

Suppose an applicant has at least one year of Canadian experience in their designation – or two years in a related assistant’s role (such as junior, assistant, or co-ordinator), and have obtained a letter of reference. In that case, they can enroll in the Gold Seal Certification Program and be approved as a GSI. They will have up to five years to meet the GSC requirements and take the Gold Seal exam to become a GSC. Note that the enrollment fee (non-refundable) is \$425 plus applicable taxes. Once the applicant meets the GSC requirements (please see below), they can complete a GSC application for \$100 plus applicable taxes (non-refundable).

Enrollment does not require credits in education or training. Applicants are only named a GSI once their enrollment application is approved.

Gold Seal Certification

Applicants require 100 credits (75 for Forepersons) to be approved to write the Gold Seal exam:

- A minimum of 50 credits (five years) in industry experience.
- A minimum of three years must be in Canada and in a full position (i.e., not an assistant’s position)
- If an applicant has at least three years working in a full position, they can claim two years in a relevant assistant’s position to obtain their minimum five years’ experience.
- If an applicant has additional experience in a full position or a relevant assistant’s position, they may claim an additional three years for eight years’ experience (or 75 credits). A letter of reference is required ([see page 11](#)).
- A minimum of 25 credits in education or training.
- For all designations except forepersons, applicants need an additional 25 credits in either additional industry experience or education and training.



Reciprocities

Applicants may be automatically eligible to write the Gold Seal exam or become certified if they have one of the following four certifications. Applicants with one of these reciprocities must also provide a reference letter (see p. 5). For the designations requiring industry experience, three years must be in the Canadian industry.

1. All designations

Member of the Chartered Institute of Building (MCIOB) status from the Chartered Institute of Builders (CIOB): approved to write the Gold Seal exam with five years of experience and the mandatory ethics course.

2. Safety Practitioner

National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO) certification: approved to write the Gold Seal exam with five years of experience and the mandatory ethics course.

3. Estimator

Professional Quantity Surveyor (PQS) designation: automatically approved for certification upon application.

Construction Estimator Certified (CEC) credential: approved to write the exam with five years of experience.

Project experience

Applicants require at least five years of experience in the chosen designation (i.e., 50 credits). Ten credits are provided for each year of experience in the field. Additionally, the following conditions must be met:

- Experience must be in the industrial, commercial, institutional, or heavy civil sectors.
- At least three of the five years of experience must have been in Canada. Applicants may claim additional years of experience outside of Canada if they have a minimum of three years.
- If the applicant is applying as a foreperson, three of the five years of experience must have been in a foreperson's position.
- If the applicant has at least three years of working experience in a full Project Management position, they may claim two years in a relevant assistant's position to obtain their minimum five years' experience. If they have additional experience in a full Project Management position or a relevant assistant's position, they may claim an additional three years for eight years' experience (or 75 credits). (I.e., assistant superintendent, assistant project manager, junior estimator.)
- Must currently be employed in the chosen designation.
- Must provide a letter of reference ([see page 11](#)).

Owner's Construction Manager: Not for profit/government employment experience is eligible for credits.

Note the current year does not count until the end of the year. Therefore, if an applicant applies in 2022, they need to demonstrate that they are employed in the selected designation in 2022 and provide relevant experience for 2017 – 2021.

Screen capture from GSC application form:

Project experience

Include the current project you are working on, as well as at least 5 more projects (one project per year of experience). You may include up to 8 years experience for the maximum experience credits (75). Do not include multiple projects from the same year. Each year/project is worth 10 credits. Project experience must be within the last 10 years. Maximum 2 years of the minimum 5 can be from a country other than Canada.

Foremen: 3 years must be as Foreperson, the remaining 2 can be claimed without foreman title or duties.

Other designations: Maximum 2 years out of the minimum 5 can be in a related assistant's role (e.g. Junior Estimator, Project Coordinator, Foreperson for Superintendents).

Note: Residential experience (part 9 of the National Building Code) does not count. We do accept residential buildings and structures that are over 3 stories high (Part 3).

Current project – 2022

Current year does not count towards the minimum 5 years experience. It is to confirm you are currently working in the designation you have chosen for this application.

Role – 2022 *

Employer *

Education and training

Applicants must have at least 25 credits in formal education and/or training before submitting a GSC application. All mandatory, additional, and safety-related training and courses must have been completed within the last 10 years. There is no time limit on when formal education is completed. Note that the same courses from formal education cannot be used to gain additional training credits.

A degree or course can only be awarded credits in one section. (I.e., if an applicant claimed a course under mandatory training, they could not list it again under safety training or additional training.)

Formal education

Credits are awarded for the highest level of education achieved related to the construction industry

Tradesperson qualification	10 credits
One-year industry-related certificate (includes Project Manager, Superintendent, and OHS programs)	15 credits
Two-year industry-related diploma	20 credits
Three-year industry-related advanced diploma	25 credits
Four-year industry-related degree	30 credits
Construction Management degree program	40 credits

Note

- A formal education certificate must be attached to the GSC application.
- Formal education is not mandatory. Training credits are applied to the education and training section of the application.
- If an applicant has foreign formal education, we require proof of Canadian equivalency. This proof can be obtained through an academic credential assessment service provider, such as the [Canadian Information Center for International Credentials](#). Evidence must be received before an applicant submits their application.

Mandatory training

Construction Industry Ethics course

- A new, consolidated Construction Industry Ethics course is available as of May 21, 2021. It replaces the requirement for the online and in-class/virtual portions of the course. New applicants must take the revised course in either e-learning or virtual/in-class format.
- Applicants who completed both the previous online and in-class/virtual courses will be given the same number of credits (three) and are not required to take the new course. However, if applicants are missing the previous online component, they must take the new course. This course is worth three Gold Seal credits.

- Courses are offered through local construction associations across the country. Please contact a [local construction association](#) to learn more about course schedules and register for the Construction Industry Ethics course.
- Ethics course substitutions are not accepted.

Designation-specific training

Excluding the specific courses for Forepersons; these are subject areas, not course titles.

- **Foreperson:** Required to take Construction 101 and beyond (four credits – inquire with a local construction association) and Leadership for Safety Excellence (LSE) (two credits).
 - o LSE equivalent for Newfoundland and Labrador applicants is Supervisor Health & Safety (two credits), for Ontario applicants is Basics of Supervising (three credits) and for Québec applicants is Santé et sécurité générale sur les chantiers de construction (five credits).
- **Estimator (min. two credits in total):** Measuring construction work, drawings and specifications, construction contracts, pricing/bidding, construction documents, regulatory codes, scheduling, or communication.
- **Owner’s Construction Manager (min. two credits in total):** Law and contracts in the construction industry, construction planning and scheduling, project management, project costing control/ accounting.
- **Project Manager (min. two credits in total):** Law and contracts in the construction industry, construction planning and scheduling, project management, project costing control/accounting.
- **Superintendent (min. two credits in total):** Management of human resources in the construction industry, jobsite controls, planning/scheduling.

Optional safety training

Screen capture from GSC application:

Safety training (optional)

There is a maximum number of safety credits for the following designations:

- Estimator: 5
- Foreperson: 5
- Owner's Construction Manager: 5
- Project Manager: 5
- Superintendent: 10
- Safety Practitioner: unlimited

We allocate 1 credit per 6 hours of training, lunch and breaks not included.

NOTE: Do not attach certificates that have already been attached to education or mandatory training sections.

Course 1

Course name

Course duration in hours

Year completed

Attach certificate of completion/transcript/record of attendance

Examples of the types of training accepted in this category include first aid/CPR, WHMIS, COR, joint health and safety committee, how to operate various equipment, etc.

Additional training

Non-accredited construction-related courses that meet our national curriculum standard may be used towards the candidate's Gold Seal application in certain circumstances:

- Additional training must be specific to the construction industry (see the 11 subject areas of the Gold Seal curriculum standard) and the applicant's designation.

- Courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences cannot be exam preparatory, product or promotional endorsement.

Many applicants obtain additional credits by attending courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences. The Program has accredited such courses, making them automatically eligible for Gold Seal credits. There are more than [1,000 Canadian Gold Seal-accredited education and training seminars, workshops and courses](#).

We are currently revising the accreditation program guidelines. During this revision, we will recognize non-accredited construction management courses that fall under our Gold Seal national curriculum standard.

These courses can be included in the Gold Seal Certification applications, subject to credit approval upon review.

- Credit allocation is determined by the number of hours of a course. The formula for designating training credits is one credit is allocated for every six hours of training, excluding lunch and breaks. There is a cap of 10 credits per course regardless of duration. Homework and assignments are not included when considering credits.
- A record of attendance/certificate of completion is required.
- Training must have been taken within the last 10 years.

There are 11 national curriculum standard areas in which you can earn credits:

1. Overview of the construction industry
2. Construction safety (note a 5-credit limit for Estimators, Forepersons, Owner's Construction Managers and Project Managers and a 10-credit limit for Superintendents)
3. Communication
4. Law and contracts for the construction industry
5. Construction estimating
6. Management of human resources
7. Construction job site controls
8. Construction planning/scheduling
9. Project cost control and accounting
10. Project management process
11. Construction and environment

Please consult our [national curriculum standard](#) to read descriptions of acceptable seminars, workshops, and courses. Note that they must be managerial rather than technical. Exceptions are made for certain technical courses.



OPTIONAL FINAL STEP

Professional Gold Seal Certification (P.GSC)

This section will outline the optional final stage of the Gold Seal Certification Program, the Professional Gold Seal Certification. It will include the requirements to become a P.GSC professional and will also outline how to maintain this renewable certification.

By obtaining their Professional Gold Seal Certified (P.GSC) credential, GSCs are making a statement of enhanced professional development and recognition while letting their clients, co-workers and partners know that they are working with a capable professional, committed to the job.

A P.GSC receives the following:

- A P.GSC certificate;
- A golden P.GSC hard hat in the first year of designation;
- The ability to use the abbreviation P.GSC after their name; and
- A listing on our website with provided consent.

To be eligible for the P.GSC, the applicant must:

- Be Gold Seal Certified (GSC);
- Gain one additional year of experience after receiving the GSC;
- Obtain 10 credits (one credit per hour) of construction-related training after receiving the GSC.

P.GSC requirements include:

1. Previous GSC credential
2. Proof of having worked for a general, specialty trade, electrical, mechanical, or civil infrastructure contractor for a minimum of 2,000 hours, in the last two years, in the designation in which they were certified (1,000 hours per year)
3. Proof of a minimum of 30 Gold Seal credits within the past two years
 - Minimum 10 credits (one credit per hour) from construction-related courses obtained after receiving the GSC
 - Seminars, conferences, self-directed study, or professional meetings (1 credit per 3 hours)
 - Involvement in community-based or charitable organizations, technical or professional associations, and mentoring (1 credit per 3 hours)
 - Teaching includes giving presentations, seminars, and workshops (2 credits per hour of teaching)
 - Contributing to activities that improve the construction industry, such as committee work (one credit per hour), submitting patents (10 credits per patent registered), publishing papers in peer-reviewed journals (five credits per article)

 [To apply or renew, complete the P.GSC application form.](#)



Conditions

This section will include general program regulations that prospective applicants must follow, as laid out by the Gold Seal Certification team.

- All enrollment, application, and exam information is shared with CCA's local partner associations that help administer the Gold Seal Certification Program. Information is only shared with the partner association chosen by the applicant as part of the application process. Certificate holders can [grant consent](#) to share their information in public domains, including our website and publications.
- The Gold Seal team does not pre-score applicants. Applicants can estimate how many credits they have using the [credit self-assessment tool](#).
- Applicants must represent themselves truthfully in their application. Applicants are strongly advised to acquaint themselves with the requirements before applying, as application fees are non-refundable.
- Enrollments and intern applications are valid for five years. The applicants are responsible for keeping the Gold Seal team apprised of their contact information by filling out the [contact information form](#).
- Only approved Gold Seal Interns (GSIs) can promote themselves as GSIs. Applicants become GSIs once their enrollment application is approved.
- Once an applicant's internship has expired, they can no longer promote themselves as GSI and must remove the abbreviation from their signature, LinkedIn profile, etc. Similarly, applicants can only promote themselves as GSC once they have passed the exam. Applying for GSC or having an approved GSC application does not constitute the GSC.
- Approved and conditionally approved applicants must write the Gold Seal exam within one year from the application approval date. Similarly, applicants who wish to rewrite their exam must do so within one year from the last exam attempt.

- If applicants require accommodation for the exam, they can speak with the Gold Seal team. The type of accommodation varies and can include, i.e., additional time.
- Exam questions and answers are the property of the Canadian Construction Association. Copying and sharing them in any way is prohibited.
- Exam marks are final. Applicants who do not pass the exam can rewrite the exam for an additional fee of \$125 plus applicable taxes.
- There is zero tolerance for abuse toward the Gold Seal team. Abuse of any kind is a violation of the Gold Seal values and will result in removal from the Program.



Contact us

Please refer to our website at cca-acc.com/workforce-excellence/gold-seal/ for information and details.

The Gold Seal team can be reached by email at goldseal@cca-acc.com.



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