Canadian Construction Association
Gold Seal Certification

Gold Seal Certification application guide

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Michael Ramos, GSC, 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 is a nationally recognized standard of excellence for construction management professionals. Earned through industry experience, education, and examination, Gold Seal Certification enhances professional development, improves job mobility and markets an individual's skills, competence and experience. The Program certifies Estimators, Forepersons, Owner's Construction Managers, Project Managers, Safety Practitioners, and Superintendents working in Canada's industrial, commercial, institutional, and heavy civil infrastructure sectors. The Program also promotes accredited education and training for construction management professionals.

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 have, 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 are encouraged to 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

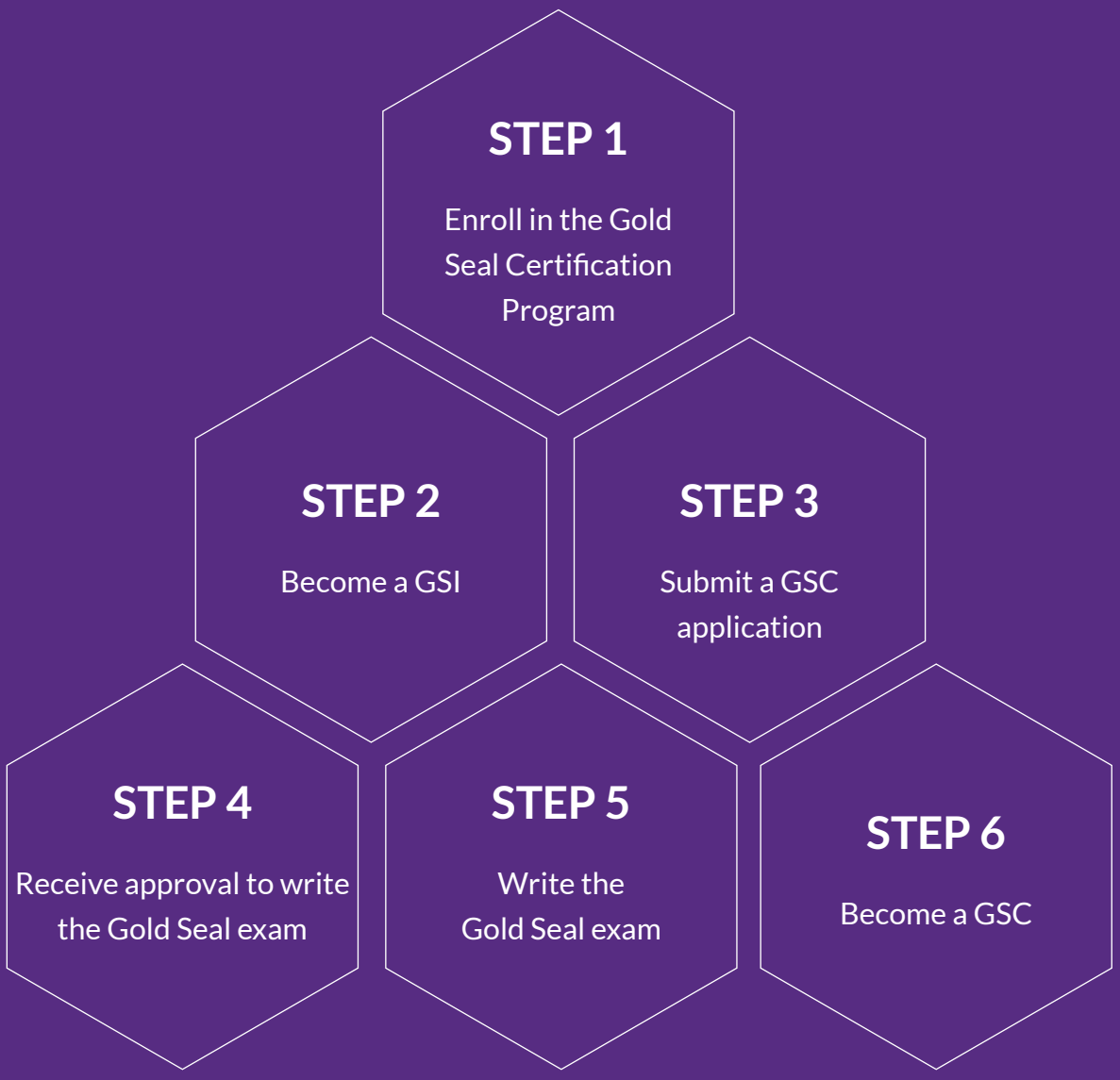
This tool is intended for applicants enrolled in the Gold Seal Certification Program, to estimate their credits. Note that this tool provides guidance; however, it is only a self-assessment tool and GSC application reviews are at the discretion of the Program.

View the credit self-assessment tool.



The Gold Seal application process

Applicants must first enroll in the Gold Seal Certification Program to be approved as a Gold Seal Intern (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 (P.GSC)

See **page 19** 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, civil infrastructure contractor or a manufacturer, supplier or service provider.

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, restorations 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: bfs.ucsb.edu

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 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.

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 in Canada 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 percent 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 in Canada. 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 must 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 are laid out in categories including experience, education, and training, as well as recognized reciprocities for additional industry-related certifications.

Program enrollment

If 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 coordinator), and have obtained a letter of reference, 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. The enrollment fee (non-refundable) is $490 plus applicable taxes.

Note: 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 to be approved to write the Gold Seal exam. Credits are allocated to the following categories:

Experience: A minimum of 50 credits (five years) up to a maximum of 75 credits (up to eight years) in industry experience.

Education and training: A minimum of 25 credits

- **Formal education:** Optional (see page 16 for details)
- **Mandatory training:** Five credits (see page 17 for details)
  - Construction Industry Ethics course (three credits)
  - Designation-specific course (two credits)
- **Safety training:** Optional (see page 18 for details)
- **Additional training:** Optional (see page 18 for details)

Once the applicant meets the GSC requirements (please see above), they can complete a GSC application for $115 plus applicable taxes (non-refundable). The fee to write the exam is $150 plus applicable taxes (non-refundable).

Notes

- Other certifications cannot be claimed for credits (I.e. PMP, CET, etc.)
- Mandatory, and additional training must be Gold Seal accredited (see page 16 for details).

Reciprocities

Applicants may be automatically eligible to write the Gold Seal exam or become certified if they have one of the following four certifications. The application fees are provded below for each designation. Applicants with one of these reciprocities must also be currently employed in the designation, in Canada, relating to the equivalency and provide a reference letter (see page 11). 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. The application fee (non-refundable) is $600 and the exam fee (non-refundable) is $150, plus applicable taxes.

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. The application fee (non-refundable) is $600 and the exam fee (non-refundable) is $150, plus applicable taxes.

3. Estimator

   Professional Quantity Surveyor (PQS) designation: automatically approved for certification upon application. The application fee (non-refundable) is $600 plus applicable taxes.

   Construction Estimator Certified (CEC) credential: approved to write the exam with five years of experience and the mandatory ethics course. The application fee (non-refundable) is $600 and the exam fee (non-refundable) is $150, plus applicable taxes.



Blake Goss, P.GSC, Project Manager



Darie Tardiff, GSC, Project Manager

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 a full position in Canada.
- Must be currently employed, in Canada, in the chosen designation.
- Must provide a letter of reference (see page 11).

Notes:

- Applicants may claim additional years of experience outside of Canada if they have a minimum of three years.
- 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 is applying as a Foreperson, they can claim two years in a previous role (I.e. Carpenter).
- The current year does not count until the end of the year.

Education and training

Applicants must have at least 25 credits in formal education and/or training before submitting a GSC application. **All mandatory and additional training must be Gold Seal accredited** and completed within the last 10 years. Safety training that is a minimum of three hours is automatically Gold Seal accredited, but must be completed within the last 10 years.

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

Applicants will receive the highest number of credits based on the type of education achieved. Multiple types of formal education cannot be combined.

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
Tradesperson qualification (Red Seal, Journeyman ticket)	25 credits
Four-year industry-related degree	30 credits
Construction Management degree program	40 credits

Notes

- A formal education certificate must be attached to the GSC application.
- There is no time limit for formal education.
- 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

- All applicants must take the mandatory **Construction Industry Ethics** course. It is worth three Gold Seal credits and is available in either an e-learning or virtual/in-class format.

- Courses are offered through CCA's partner associations across the country. Please contact a CCA partner 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 suggested topics.
Note: training must be Gold Seal accredited.

- **Estimator (min. two credits in total):** Measuring construction work, drawings and specifications, construction contracts, pricing/bidding, construction documents, regulatory codes, scheduling, or communication.

- **Foreperson:** Required to take **Construction 101 and beyond** (five credits – inquire with a CCA partner association) and **Leadership for Safety Excellence (LSE)** (two credits for one-day online course, five credits for two-day in-person course).
    - LSE equivalent for Newfoundland and Labrador applicants is Supervisor Health & Safety (five credits), for Ontario applicants is Basics of Supervising (five credits) and for Québec applicants is Santé et sécurité générale sur les chantiers de construction (ten credits).

- **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

Examples of the types of training accepted in this category include first aid/CPR, WHMIS, COR, Joint Health and Safety Committee, Working at Heights, Fall Protection, how to operate various equipment, etc.

Safety training credit limits

Estimators, Forepersons, Owner's Construction Managers, Project Managers and Superintendents can claim up to 10 credits for safety training (equivalent to 30 hours). There is no credit limit for Safety Practitioners.

Safety training that is a minimum of three hours is automatically Gold Seal accredited.

Additional training

- Additional training courses **must be** Gold Seal accredited to be considered for the GSC application.
- A record of attendance/certificate of completion is required.
- Training must have been taken within the last 10 years.
- Courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences cannot be exam preparatory, product or promotional endorsement.



OPTIONAL FINAL STEP

Professional Gold Seal Certification (P.GSC)

This section outlines the optional final stage of the Gold Seal Certification Program: the Professional Gold Seal Certification. It includes the requirements to become a P.GSC professional and also outlines 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.

Note:

- The P.GSC credential is renewable every two years, for $150 plus taxes.
- The P.GSC requirements below apply to both new and renewal applications.

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 directory with provided consent.

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

- Be Gold Seal Certified (GSC);
- Be currently employed in Canada in the construction industry;
- Gain one additional year of experience and training after receiving the GSC;

P.GSC requirements include:

1. Working for a general, specialty trade, electrical, mechanical, or civil infrastructure contractor for the **past two years** (from the time of application), in the designation in which they were certified.
2. Proof of having earned a **minimum of 30 Gold Seal credits** in the past two years:
   - Mandatory:
     - A **minimum of 10 credits** (one credit per three hours) of any construction related training is required after receiving the GSC.
   - Optional:
     - Seminars, conferences, self-directed study, or professional meetings (one credit per three hours);
     - Involvement in community-based or charitable organizations or mentoring (one credit per three hours);
     - Teaching: includes giving presentations, seminars, and workshops (two credits per hour of teaching);
     - Contributing to activities that improve the construction industry, such as committee work (one credit per hour).

To apply or renew, please visit the CCA-ACC.com member centre.

Conditions

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

- All enrollment, application, and exam information are shared with CCA's 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 in the CCA-ACC.com member centre 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 or credit management tool in the CCA-ACC.com member centre.

- 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.

- Enrollment applications are valid for five years. The applicants are responsible for keeping the Gold Seal team appraised of their contact information by updating their profile in the CCA-ACC.com member centre.

- 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 applicants must write the Gold Seal exam within one year from the application approval date. Applicants who do not write within the year must restart the application process.

- 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 $150 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/gold-seal/ for information and details.

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