

Certified Software Quality Engineer



Quality excellence to enhance your
career and boost your organization's
bottom line

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The Global Voice of Quality™



Certification from ASQ is considered a mark of quality excellence in many industries. It helps you advance your career, and boosts your organization's bottom line through your mastery of quality skills. Becoming certified as a Software Quality Engineer confirms your commitment to quality and the positive impact it will have on your organization.

Information

Certified Software Quality Engineer

The Certified Software Quality Engineer understands software quality development and implementation, software inspection, testing, and verification and validation; and implements software development and maintenance processes and methods.

Examination

Each certification candidate is required to pass a written examination that consists of multiple choice questions that measure comprehension of the Body of Knowledge. The Software Quality Engineer examination is a one-part, 160-question, four-hour exam and is offered in English only.

Education and/or Experience

You must have eight years of on-the-job experience in one or more of the areas of the Certified Software Quality Engineer Body of Knowledge. A minimum of three years of this experience must be in a decision-making position. (“Decision-making” is defined as the authority to define, execute, or control projects/processes and to be responsible for the outcome. This may or may not include management or supervisory positions.)

If you’ve ever been certified by ASQ as a Quality Engineer, Quality Auditor, Reliability Engineer, or Manager, experience used to qualify for certification in these fields applies to certification as a Software Quality Engineer.

If you have completed a degree from a college, university, or technical school with accreditation accepted by ASQ, part of the eight-year experience requirement will be waived, as follows (only one of these waivers may be claimed):

- Diploma from a technical or trade school—one year will be waived
- Associate degree—two years waived
- Bachelor’s degree—four years waived



- Master’s or doctorate—five years waived
Degrees or diplomas from educational institutions outside the United States must be equivalent to degrees from U.S. educational institutions.

Minimum Expectations for a Certified Software Quality Engineer

- Must possess a fundamental understanding of quality philosophies, principles, methods, tools, standards, organizational and team dynamics, interpersonal relationships, professional ethics, and legal and regulatory requirements.
- Must evaluate the impact of software quality management principles on business objectives and demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of developing and implementing software quality programs, which include tracking, analyzing, reporting, problem resolution, process improvement, training, and supplier management. Must have a basic



understanding of how and when to perform software audits including audit planning, approaches, types, analyses, reporting results, and follow-up.

- Must understand systems architecture and be able to implement software development and maintenance processes, quantify the fundamental problems and risks associated with various software development methodologies, and assess, support, and implement process and technology changes.
- Must be able to apply project management principles and techniques as they relate to software project planning, implementation, and tracking. Must be able to evaluate and manage risk.
- Must select, define, and apply product and process metrics and analytical techniques, and have an understanding of measurement theory and how to communicate results.
- Must have a thorough understanding of verification and validation processes, including early software defect detection and removal, inspection, and testing methods (e.g., types, levels, strategies, tools and documentation). Must be able to analyze test strategies, develop test plans and execution documents, and review customer deliverables.
- Must have a basic understanding of configuration management processes, including planning, configuration identification, configuration control, change management, status accounting, auditing, and reporting. Must assess the effectiveness of product release and archival processes.

For comprehensive exam information on Software Quality Engineer certification, visit www.asq.org/certification.

Body of Knowledge

Certified Software Quality Engineer

The topics in this Body of Knowledge include additional detail in the form of subtext explanations and the cognitive level at which the questions will be written. This information will provide useful guidance for both the Examination Development Committee and the candidates preparing to take the exam. The subtext is not intended to limit the subject matter or be all-inclusive of what might be covered in an exam. It is intended to clarify the type of content to be included in the exam. The descriptor in parentheses at the end of each entry refers to the highest cognitive level at which the topic will be tested. A more comprehensive description of cognitive levels is provided at the end of this document.



1 General Knowledge (16 Questions)

A. Quality Principles

- 1. Benefits of software quality**
Describe the benefits that software quality engineering can have at the organizational level. (Understand)
- 2. Organizational and process benchmarking**
Use benchmarking at the organizational, process, and project levels to identify and implement best practices. (Apply)

B. Ethical and Legal Compliance

- 1. ASQ Code of Ethics**
Determine appropriate behavior in situations requiring ethical decisions, including identifying conflicts of interest, recognizing and resolving ethical issues, etc. (Evaluate)
- 2. Legal and regulatory issues**
Define and describe the impact that issues such as copyright, intellectual property rights, product liability, data privacy, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, etc., can have on software development. (Understand)

C. Standards and Models

Define and describe the following standards and assessment models: ISO 9000 standards, IEEE software standards, and the SEI Capability Maturity Model Integrated (CMMI). (Understand)

D. Leadership Skills

- 1. Organizational leadership**
Use leadership tools and techniques, such as organizational change management, knowledge-transfer, motivation, mentoring and coaching, recognition, etc. (Apply)
- 2. Facilitation skills**
Use various approaches to manage and resolve conflict. Use negotiation techniques and identify possible outcomes. Use meeting management tools to maximize performance. (Apply)
- 3. Communication skills**
Use various communication elements (e.g., interviewing and listening skills) in oral, written, and presentation formats. Use various techniques for working in multi-cultural environments, and identify and describe the impact that culture and communications can have on quality. (Apply)

E. Team Skills

1. Team management

Use various team management skills, including assigning roles and responsibilities, identifying the classic stages of team development (forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning), monitoring and responding to group dynamics, and working with diverse groups and in distributed work environments. (Apply)

2. Team tools

Use decision-making and creativity tools, such as brainstorming, nominal group technique (NGT), multi-voting, etc. (Apply)

II Software Quality Management (26 Questions)

A. Quality Management System

1. Quality goals and objectives

Design quality goals and objectives for programs, projects, and products that are consistent with business objectives. Develop and use documents and processes necessary to support software quality management systems. (Create)

2. Customers and other stakeholders

Describe and distinguish between various stakeholder groups, and analyze the effect their requirements can have on software projects and products. (Analyze)

3. Planning

Design program plans that will support software quality goals and objectives. (Evaluate)

4. Outsourcing

Determine the impact that acquisitions, multi-supplier partnerships, outsourced services, and other external drivers can have on organizational goals and objectives, and design appropriate criteria for evaluating suppliers and subcontractors. (Analyze)

B. Methodologies

1. Cost of quality (COQ)

Analyze COQ categories (prevention, appraisal, internal failure, external failure) and their impact on products and processes. (Evaluate)

2. Process improvement models

Define and describe elements of lean tools and the six sigma methodology, and use the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) model for process improvement. (Apply)

3. Corrective action procedures

Evaluate corrective action procedures related to software defects, process nonconformances, and other quality system deficiencies. (Evaluate)

4. Defect prevention

Design and use defect prevention processes such as technical reviews, software tools and technology, special training, etc. (Evaluate)

C. Audits

1. Audit types

Define and distinguish between various audit types, including process, compliance, supplier, system, etc. (Understand)

2. Audit roles and responsibilities

Identify roles and responsibilities for audit participants: client, lead auditor, audit team members and auditee. (Understand)

3. Audit process

Define and describe the steps in conducting an audit, developing and delivering an audit report, and determining appropriate follow-up activities. (Apply)

III Systems and Software Engineering Processes (27 Questions)

A. Lifecycles and process models

Evaluate various software development lifecycles (iterative, waterfall, etc.) and process models (V-model, Feature Driven Development, Test Driven Development, etc.) and identify their benefits and when they should be used. (Evaluate)

B. Systems architecture

Identify and describe various architectures, including embedded systems, client-server, n-tier, web, wireless, messaging, collaboration platforms, etc., and analyze their impact on quality. (Analyze)

C. Requirements Engineering

1. Requirements types

Define and describe various types of requirements, including feature, function, system, quality, security, safety, regulatory, etc. (Understand)

2. Requirements elicitation

Describe and use various elicitation methods, including customer needs analysis, use cases, human factors studies, usability prototypes, joint application development (JAD), storyboards, etc. (Apply)

3. Requirements analysis

Identify and use tools such as data flow diagrams (DFDs), entity relationship diagrams (ERDs), etc., to analyze requirements. (Apply)

D. Requirements Management

1. Participants

Identify various participants who have a role in requirements planning, including customers, developers, testers, the quality function, management, etc. (Understand)

2. Requirements evaluation

Assess the completeness, consistency, correctness and testability of requirements, and determine their priority. (Evaluate)

3. Requirements change management

Assess the impact that changes to requirements will have on software development processes for all types of lifecycle models. (Evaluate)

4. Bidirectional traceability

Use various tools and techniques to ensure bidirectional traceability from requirements elicitation and analysis through design and testing. (Apply)

E. Software Analysis, Design, and Development

1. Design methods

Identify the steps used in software design and their functions, and define and distinguish between software design methods such as object-oriented analysis and design (OOAD), structured analysis and design (SAD), and patterns. (Understand)

2. Quality attributes and design

Analyze the impact that quality-related elements (safety, security, reliability, usability, reusability, maintainability, etc.) can have on software design. (Analyze)

3. Software reuse

Define and distinguish between software reuse, reengineering, and reverse engineering, and describe the impact these practices can have on software quality. (Understand)

4. Software development tools

Select the appropriate development tools to use for modeling, code analysis, etc., and analyze the impact they can have on requirements management and documentation. (Analyze)

5. Software development methods

Define and describe principles such as pair programming, extreme programming, cleanroom, formal methods, etc., and their impact on software quality. (Understand)

F. Maintenance Management

1. Maintenance types

Describe the characteristics of corrective, adaptive, perfective, and preventive maintenance types. (Understand)

2. Maintenance strategy

Describe various factors affecting the strategy for software maintenance, including service-level agreements (SLAs), short- and long-term costs, maintenance releases, product discontinuance, etc., and their impact on software quality. (Understand)

IV Project Management (24 Questions)

A. Planning, Scheduling, and Deployment

1. Project planning

Use forecasts, resources, schedules, task and cost estimates, etc., to develop project plans. (Apply)

2. Project scheduling

Use PERT charts, critical path method (CPM), work breakdown structure (WBS), Scrum, burn-down charts, and other tools to schedule and monitor projects. (Apply)

3. **Project deployment**
Use various tools, including milestones, objectives achieved, task duration, etc., to set goals and deploy the project. (Apply)

B. Tracking and Controlling

1. **Phase transition control**
Use phase transition control tools and techniques such as entry/exit criteria, quality gates, Gantt charts, integrated master schedules, etc. (Apply)
2. **Tracking methods**
Calculate project-related costs, including earned value, deliverables, productivity, etc., and track the results against project baselines. (Apply)
3. **Project reviews**
Use various types of project reviews such as phase-end, management, and retrospectives or post-project reviews to assess project performance and status, to review issues and risks, and to discover and capture lessons learned from the project. (Apply)
4. **Program reviews**
Define and describe various methods for reviewing and assessing programs in terms of their performance, technical accomplishments, resource utilization, etc. (Understand)

C. Risk Management

1. **Risk management methods**
Use risk management techniques (assess, prevent, mitigate, transfer) to evaluate project risks. (Evaluate)
2. **Software security risks**
Evaluate risks specific to software security, including deliberate attacks (hacking, sabotage, etc.), inherent defects that allow unauthorized access to data, and other security breaches, and determine appropriate responses to minimize their impact. (Evaluate)
3. **Safety and hazard analysis**
Evaluate safety risks and hazards related to software development and implementation and determine appropriate steps to minimize their impact. (Evaluate)

V Software Metrics and Analysis
(24 Questions)

A. Metrics and Measurement Theory

1. **Terminology**
Define and describe metrics and measurement terms including reliability, internal and external validity, explicit and derived measures, etc. (Understand)
2. **Basic measurement theory and statistics**
Define the central limit theorem, and describe and use mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, and range. Apply appropriate measurement scales (nominal, ordinal, ratio, interval) in various situations. (Apply)
3. **Psychology of metrics**
Describe how metrics and measuring affect the people whose work is being measured and how people affect the ways in which metrics are used and data are gathered. (Understand)

B. Process and Product Measurement

1. **Software metrics**
Use metrics to assess various software attributes such as size, complexity, number of defects, the amount of test coverage needed, requirements volatility, and overall system performance. (Apply)
2. **Process metrics**
Measure the effectiveness and efficiency of software using functional verification tests (FVT), cost, yield, customer impact, defect detection, defect containment, total defect containment effectiveness (TDCE), defect removal efficiency (DRE), process capability and efficiency, etc. (Apply)
3. **Metrics reporting tools**
Use various metric representation tools, including dashboards, stoplight charts, etc., to report results efficiently. (Apply)

C. Analytical Techniques

1. **Sampling**
Define and distinguish between sampling methods (e.g., random, stratified, cluster) as used in auditing, testing, product acceptance, etc. (Understand)

2. **Data collection and integrity**
Describe the importance of data integrity from planning through collection and analysis, and apply various techniques to ensure its quality, accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. (Apply)
3. **Quality analysis tools**
Describe and use classic quality tools (flowcharts, Pareto charts, cause and effect diagrams, control charts, histograms, etc.) and problem-solving tools (affinity and tree diagrams, matrix and activity network diagrams, root cause analysis, etc.) in a variety of situations. (Apply)

Software Verification and Validation (V&V) (27 Questions)

A. Theory

1. **V&V methods**
Select and use V&V methods, including static analysis, structural analysis, mathematical proof, simulation, etc., and analyze which tasks should be iterated as a result of modifications. (Analyze)
2. **Software product evaluation**
Use various evaluation methods on documentation, source code, test results, etc., to determine whether user needs and project objectives have been satisfied. (Analyze)

B. Test Planning and Design

1. **Test strategies**
Select and analyze test strategies (test-driven design, good-enough, risk-based, time-box, top-down, bottom-up, black-box, white-box, simulation, automation, etc.) for various situations. (Analyze)
2. **Test plans**
Develop and evaluate test plans and procedures, including system, acceptance, validation, etc., to determine whether project objectives are being met. (Create)
3. **Test designs**
Select and evaluate various test designs, including fault insertion, fault-error handling, equivalence class partitioning, boundary value, etc. (Evaluate)

4. **Software tests**
Identify and use various tests, including unit, functional, performance, integration, regression, usability, acceptance, certification, environmental load, stress, worst-case, perfective, exploratory, system, etc. (Apply)
 5. **Tests of supplier components and products**
Determine appropriate levels of testing for integrating third-party components and products. (Apply)
 6. **Test coverage specifications**
Evaluate the adequacy of specifications such as functions, states, data and time domains, interfaces, security, and configurations that include internationalization and platform variances. (Evaluate)
 7. **Code coverage techniques**
Identify and use techniques such as branch-to-branch, condition, domain, McCabe's cyclomatic complexity, boundary, etc. (Apply)
 8. **Test environments**
Select and use simulations, test libraries, drivers, stubs, harnesses, etc., and identify parameters to establish a controlled test environment in various situations. (Analyze)
 9. **Test tools**
Identify and use utilities, diagnostics, and test management tools. (Apply)
- ### C. Reviews and Inspections
- Identify and use desk-checks, peer reviews, walk-throughs, Fagan and Gilb inspections, etc. (Apply)
- ### D. Test Execution Documentation
- Review and evaluate documents such as defect reporting and tracking records, test completion metrics, trouble reports, input/output specifications, etc. (Evaluate)
- ### E. Customer Deliverables
- Assess the completeness of customer deliverables, including packaged and hosted or downloadable products, license keys and user documentation, marketing and training materials, etc. (Evaluate)

VII Software Configuration Management (16 Questions)

A. Configuration Infrastructure

- 1. Configuration management team**
Describe the roles and responsibilities of a configuration management group. (Understand)
[NOTE: The roles and responsibilities of the configuration control board (CCB) are covered in area VII.C.2.]
- 2. Configuration management tools**
Describe these tools as they are used for managing libraries, build systems, defect tracking systems, etc. (Understand)
- 3. Library processes**
Describe dynamic, static, and controlled processes used in library systems and related procedures, such as check-in/check-out, merge changes, etc. (Understand)

B. Configuration Identification

- 1. Configuration items**
Describe configuration items (documentation, software code, equipment, etc.), identification methods (naming conventions, versioning schemes, etc.), and when baselines are created and used. (Understand)
- 2. Software builds**
Describe the relationship between software builds and configuration management functions, and describe methods for controlling builds (automation, new versions, etc.). (Understand)

C. Configuration Control and Status Accounting

- 1. Item, baseline, and version control**
Describe processes for documentation control, tracking item changes, version control, etc., that are used to manage various configurations, and describe processes used to manage configuration item dependencies in software builds and versioning. (Understand)

- 2. Configuration control board (CCB)**
Describe the roles and responsibilities of the CCB and its members and the procedures they use. (Understand)
[NOTE: The roles and responsibilities of the configuration management team are covered in area VII.A.1.]
- 3. Concurrent development**
Describe the use of configuration management control principles in concurrent development processes. (Understand)
- 4. Status accounting**
Discuss various processes for establishing, maintaining, and reporting the status of configuration items. (Understand)

D. Configuration Audits

Define and distinguish between functional and physical configuration audits and how they are used in relation to product specifications. (Understand)

E. Product Release and Distribution

- 1. Product release**
Review product release processes (planning, scheduling, defining hardware and software dependencies, etc.) and assess their effectiveness. (Evaluate)
- 2. Archival processes**
Review the source and release archival processes (backup planning and scheduling, data retrieval, archival of build environments, retention of historical records, offsite storage, etc.) and assess their effectiveness. (Evaluate)

Levels of Cognition

Based on Bloom's Taxonomy—Revised (2001)

In addition to **content** specifics, the subtext for each topic in this BOK also indicates the intended **complexity level** of the test questions for that topic. These levels are based on "Levels of Cognition" (from *Bloom's Taxonomy—Revised, 2001*) and are presented below in rank order, from least complex to most complex.

Remember

Recall or recognize terms, definitions, facts, ideas, materials, patterns, sequences, methods, principles, etc.

Understand

Read and understand descriptions, communications, reports, tables, diagrams, directions, regulations, etc.

Apply

Know when and how to use ideas, procedures, methods, formulas, principles, theories, etc.

Analyze

Break down information into its constituent parts and recognize their relationship to one another and how they are organized; identify sublevel factors or salient data from a complex scenario.

Evaluate

Make judgments about the value of proposed ideas, solutions, etc., by comparing the proposal to specific criteria or standards.

Create

Put parts or elements together in such a way as to reveal a pattern or structure not clearly there before; identify which data or information from a complex set is appropriate to examine further or from which supported conclusions can be drawn.

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