CQE

CERTIFIED QUALITY ENGINEER

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

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ASQ
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 Quality Engineer confirms your commitment to quality and the positive impact it will have on your organization.

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.

Certified Quality Engineer

The Certified Quality Engineer (CQE) is a professional who understands the principles of product and service quality evaluation and control. This body of knowledge and applied technologies include, but are not limited to, development and operation of quality control systems, application and analysis of testing and inspection procedures, the ability to use metrology and statistical methods to diagnose and correct improper quality control practices, an understanding of human factors and motivation, familiarity with quality cost concepts and techniques, and the knowledge and ability to develop and administer management information systems and to audit quality systems for deficiency identification and correction.

CQE

Computer Delivered – the CQE examination is a one-part, 175-multiple-choice-question, five-and-a-half-hour exam and is offered in English only. One hundred and sixty questions are scored and 15 are unscored.

Paper and Pencil – The CQE examination is a one-part, 160-multiple-choice-question, five-hour exam and is offered in English only.

For comprehensive exam information on the Quality Engineer certification, visit **asq.org/cert**.

Education and/or Experience

You must have eight years of on-the-job experience in one or more of the areas of the Certified 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.

Work experience must be in a full-time, paid role. Paid intern, co-op, or any other course work cannot be applied toward the work experience requirement.

If you were ever certified by ASQ as:

- Quality Auditor (CQA)
- Reliability Engineer (CRE)
- Software Quality Engineer (CSQE)
- Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence (CMQ/OE)
- Supplier Quality Professional (CSQP)

Experience used to qualify for certification in these fields applies to certification as a Quality Engineer (CQE).

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's 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

- Will have a fundamental understanding of quality philosophies, principles, systems, methods, tools, standards, organizational and team dynamics, customer expectations and satisfaction, supplier relations and performance, leadership, training, interpersonal relationships, improvement systems, and professional ethics.
- Will have a fundamental understanding of a quality system and its development, documentation, and implementation to domestic and international standards or requirements.
- Will have a basic understanding of the audit process including types of audits, planning, preparation, execution, reporting results, and follow-up.
- Will be able to develop and implement quality programs, including tracking, analyzing, reporting, and problem solving.
- Will be able to plan, control, and ensure product and process quality in accordance with quality principles, which include planning processes, material control, acceptance sampling, and measurement systems.
- Will have basic knowledge of reliability, maintainability, and risk management, including key terms and definitions, modeling, systems design, assessment tools, and reporting.
- Will have a thorough understanding of problem solving and quality improvement tools and techniques. This includes knowledge of management and planning tools, quality tools, preventive and corrective actions, and how to overcome barriers to quality improvements.
- Will be able to acquire and analyze data using appropriate standard quantitative methods across a spectrum of business environments to facilitate process analysis and improvements.

Certified Quality Engineer (CQE)

Topics in this body of knowledge (BoK) include subtext explanations and the cognitive level at which the questions will be written. This information will provide useful guidance for both the Exam Development Committee and the candidate preparing to take the exam. The subtext is not intended to limit the subject matter or be all-inclusive of that material that will be covered in the exam. It is meant to clarify the type of content that will be included on the exam. The descriptor in parentheses at the end of each entry refers to the maximum cognitive level at which the topic will be tested. A complete description of cognitive levels is provided at the end of this document.

I. Management and Leadership (18 Questions)

A. Quality Philosophies and Foundations

Describe continuous improvement tools, including lean, Six Sigma, theory of constraints, statistical process control (SPC), and total quality management, and understand how modern quality has evolved from quality control through statistical process control (SPC) to total quality management and leadership principles (including Deming's 14 points). (Understand)

B. The Quality Management System (QMS)

1. Strategic planning

Identify and define top management's responsibility for the QMS, including establishing policies and objectives, setting organization-wide goals, and supporting quality initiatives. (Apply)

2. Deployment techniques

Define, describe, and use various deployment tools in support of the QMS such as:

a. Benchmarking

Define the concept of benchmarking and why it may be used. (Remember)

b. Stakeholder

Define, describe, and use stakeholder identification and analysis. (Apply)

c. Performance

Define, describe, and use performance measurement tools. (Apply)

d. Project management

Define, describe, and use project management tools, including PERT charts, Gantt charts, critical path method (CPM), and resource allocation. (Apply)

3. Quality information system (QIS)

Identify and describe the basic elements of a QIS, including who will contribute data, the kind of data to be managed, who will have access to the data, the level of flexibility for future information needs, and data analysis. (Understand)

C. ASQ Code of Ethics for Professional Conduct

Determine appropriate behavior in situations requiring ethical decisions. (Evaluate)

D. Leadership Principles and Techniques

Analyze various principles and techniques for developing and organizing teams and leading quality initiatives. (Analyze)

E. Facilitation Principles and Techniques

1. **Roles and responsibilities**

   Describe the facilitator's roles and responsibilities on a team. (Understand)

2. **Facilitation tools**

   Apply various tools used with teams, including brainstorming, nominal group technique, conflict resolution, and force-field analysis. (Apply)

F. Communication Skills

Identify specific communication methods that are used for delivering information and messages in a variety of situations across all levels of the organization. (Analyze)

G. Customer Relations

Define, apply, and analyze the results of customer relation tools such as quality function deployment (QFD) and customer satisfaction surveys. (Analyze)

H. Supplier Management

1. **Techniques**

   Apply various supplier management techniques, including supplier qualification, certification, and evaluation. (Apply)

2. **Improvement**

   Analyze supplier ratings and performance improvement results. (Analyze)

3. **Risk**

   Understand business continuity, resiliency, and contingency planning. (Understand)

I. Barriers to Quality Improvement

Identify barriers to quality improvement, analyze their causes and impact, and implement methods for improvement. (Analyze)

II. The Quality System (16 Questions)

A. Elements of the Quality System

1. **Basic elements**

   Interpret the basic elements of a quality system, including planning, control, and improvement, from product and process design through quality cost systems and audit programs. (Evaluate)

2. **Design**

   Analyze the design and alignment of interrelated processes to the strategic plan and core processes. (Analyze)

B. Documentation of the Quality System

1. **Document components**

   Identify and describe quality system documentation components, including quality policies and procedures to support the system. (Understand)

2. **Document control**

   Evaluate configuration management, maintenance, and document control to manage work instructions and quality records. (Evaluate)

C. Quality Standards and Other Guidelines

Apply national and international standards and other requirements and guidelines, including the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), and describe key points of the ISO 9000 series of standards. (Note: Industry-specific standards will not be tested.) (Apply)

D. Quality Audits

1. **Types of audits**
   Describe and distinguish between various types of quality audits such as product, process, management (system), registration (certification), compliance (regulatory), first, second, and third party. (Apply)

2. **Roles and responsibilities in audits**
   Identify and define roles and responsibilities for audit participants such as audit team (leader and members), client, and auditee. (Understand)

3. **Audit planning and implementation**
   Describe and apply the stages of a quality audit, from audit planning through conducting the audit. (Apply)

4. **Audit reporting and follow-up**
   Apply the steps of audit reporting and follow-up, including the need to verify corrective action. (Apply)

E. Cost of Quality (COQ)

Identify and apply COQ concepts, including cost categorization, data collection, reporting, and interpreting results. (Analyze)

F. Quality Training

Identify and apply key elements of a training program, including conducting a needs analysis, developing curricula and materials, and determining the program's effectiveness. (Apply)

III. Product, Process, and Service Design (23 Questions)

A. Classification of Quality Characteristics

Define, interpret, and classify quality characteristics for new and existing products, processes, and services. (Note: The classification of defects is covered in IV.B.3.) (Evaluate)

B. Design Inputs and Review

1. **Inputs**
   Translate design inputs such as customer needs, regulatory requirements, and risk assessment into robust design using techniques such as failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA), quality function deployment (QFD), Design for X (DFX), and Design for Six Sigma (DFSS). (Analyze)

2. **Review**
   Identify and apply common elements of the design review process, including roles and responsibilities of participants. (Apply)

C. Technical Drawings and Specifications

Interpret specification requirements in relation to product and process characteristics and technical drawings, including characteristics such as views, title blocks, dimensioning and tolerancing, and GD&T symbols. (Evaluate)

D. Verification and Validation

Interpret the results of evaluations and tests used to verify and validate the design of products, processes and services, such as installation qualification (IQ), operational qualification (OQ), and process qualification (PQ). (Evaluate)

E. Reliability and Maintainability

1. **Predictive and preventive maintenance tools**
   Describe and apply the tools and techniques used to maintain and improve process and product reliability. (Apply)

2. **Reliability and maintainability indices**
   Review and analyze indices such as MTTF, MTBF, MTTR, availability, and failure rate. (Analyze)

3. **Reliability models**
   Identify, define, and distinguish between the basic elements of reliability models such as exponential, Weibull, and bathtub curve. (Apply)

4. **Reliability/Safety/ Hazard Assessment Tools**
   Define, construct, and interpret the results of failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA), failure mode, effects, and criticality analysis (FMECA), and fault tree analysis (FTA). (Evaluate)

IV. Product and Process Control (25 Questions)

A. Methods

Implement product and process control methods such as control plan development, critical control point identification, and work instruction development and validation. (Analyze)

B. Material Control

1. **Material identification, status, and traceability**
   Define and distinguish between these concepts, and describe methods for applying them in various situations. (Analyze)

2. **Material segregation**
   Describe material segregation and its importance, and evaluate appropriate methods for applying it in various situations. (Evaluate)

3. **Material classification**
   Classify product and process defects and nonconformities. (Evaluate)

4. **Material review board**
   Describe the purpose and function of an MRB and evaluate nonconforming product or material to make a disposition decision in various situations. (Evaluate)

C. Acceptance Sampling

1. **Sampling concepts**
   Interpret the concepts of producer and consumer risk and related terms, including operating characteristic (OC) curves, acceptable quality limit (AQL), lot tolerance percent defective (LTPD), average outgoing quality (AOQ), and average outgoing quality limit (AOQL). (Analyze)

2. **Sampling standards and plans**
   Identify, interpret, and apply ANSI/ASQ Z1.4 and Z1.9 standards for attributes and variables sampling. Identify and distinguish between single, double, multiple, sequential, and continuous sampling methods. Identify the characteristics of Dodge-Romig sampling tables and when they should be used. (Analyze)

3. **Sample integrity**
   Identify and apply techniques for establishing and maintaining sample integrity. (Apply)

D. Measurement and Test

1. **Measurement tools**
   Select and describe appropriate uses of inspection tools such as gage blocks, calipers, micrometers, and optical comparators. (Analyze)

2. **Destructive and nondestructive tests**
   Identify when destructive and nondestructive measurement test methods should be used and apply the methods appropriately. (Apply)

E. Metrology

Apply metrology techniques such as calibration, traceability to calibration standards, measurement error and its sources, and control and maintenance of measurement standards and devices. (Analyze)

F. Measurement System Analysis (MSA)

Calculate, analyze, and interpret repeatability and reproducibility (gage R&R) studies, measurement correlation, capability, bias, linearity, precision, stability and accuracy, as well as related MSA quantitative and graphical methods. (Evaluate)

V. Continuous Improvement (27 Questions)

A. Quality Control Tools

Select, construct, apply, and interpret the following quality control tools:

1. **Flowcharts**
2. **Pareto charts**
3. **Cause and effect diagrams**
4. **Control charts**
5. **Check sheets**
6. **Scatter diagrams**
7. **Histograms (Analyze)**

B. Quality Management and Planning Tools

Select, construct, apply, and interpret the following quality management and planning tools:

1. **Affinity diagrams and force field analysis**
2. **Tree diagrams**
3. **Process decision program charts (PDPC)**
4. **Matrix diagrams**
5. **Interrelationship digraphs**
6. **Prioritization matrices**
7. **Activity network diagrams (Analyze)**

C. Continuous Improvement Methodologies

Define, describe, and apply the following continuous improvement methodologies:

1. **Total quality management (TQM)**
2. **Kaizen**
3. **Plan-do-check-act (PDCA)**
4. **Six Sigma**
5. **Theory of constraints (ToC) (Evaluate)**

D. Lean tools

Define, describe, and apply the following lean tools:

1. **5S**
2. **Value stream mapping**
3. **Kanban**
4. **Visual control**
5. **Waste (Muda)**
6. **Standardized work**
7. **Takt time**
8. **Single minute exchange of die (SMED) (Evaluate)**

E. Corrective Action

Identify, describe, and apply elements of the corrective action process, including problem identification, failure analysis, root cause analysis, problem correction, recurrence control, and verification of effectiveness. (Evaluate)

F. Preventive Action

Identify, describe, and apply various preventive action tools such as error proofing/poka-yoke, robust design and analyze their effectiveness. (Evaluate)

VI. Quantitative Methods and Tools (36 Questions)

A. Collecting and Summarizing Data

1. **Types of data**

   Define, classify, and compare discrete (attributes) and continuous (variables) data. (Apply)

2. **Measurement scales**

   Define and describe nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio scales. (Understand)

3. **Data collection methods**

   Describe various methods for collecting data, including tally or check sheets, data coding, automatic gaging, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the methods. (Apply)

4. **Data accuracy and integrity**
   Apply techniques that ensure data accuracy and integrity, and identify factors that can influence data accuracy such as source/resource issues, flexibility, versatility, inconsistency, inappropriate interpretation of data values, and redundancy. (Apply)

5. **Descriptive statistics**
   Describe, calculate, and interpret measures of central tendency and dispersion (central limit theorem), and construct and interpret frequency distributions, including simple, categorical, grouped, ungrouped, and cumulative. (Evaluate)

6. **Graphical methods for depicting relationships**
   Construct, apply, and interpret diagrams and charts such as stem-and-leaf plots, and box-and-whisker plots. (Note: Scatter diagrams are covered in V.A.) (Analyze)

7. **Graphical methods for depicting distributions**
   Construct, apply, and interpret diagrams such as normal and non-normal probability plots. (Note: Histograms are covered in V.A.) (Analyze)

B. Quantitative Concepts

1. **Terminology**
   Define and apply quantitative terms, including population, parameter, sample, statistic, random sampling, and expected value. (Analyze)

2. **Drawing statistical conclusions**
   Distinguish between numeric and analytical studies. Assess the validity of statistical conclusions by analyzing the assumptions used and the robustness of the technique used. (Evaluate)

3. **Probability terms and concepts**
   Describe concepts such as independence, mutually exclusive, multiplication rules, complementary probability, and joint occurrence of events. (Understand)

C. Probability Distributions

1. **Continuous distributions**
   Define and distinguish between these distributions such as normal, uniform, bivariate normal, exponential, lognormal, Weibull, chi square, Student's t and F. (Analyze)

2. **Discrete distributions**
   Define and distinguish between these distributions such as binomial, Poisson, hypergeometric, and multinomial. (Analyze)

D. Statistical Decision Making

1. **Point estimates and confidence intervals**
   Define, describe, and assess the efficiency and bias of estimators. Calculate and interpret standard error, tolerance intervals, and confidence intervals. (Evaluate)

2. **Hypothesis testing**
   Define, interpret, and apply hypothesis tests for means, variances, and proportions. Apply and interpret the concepts of significance level, power, and type I and type II errors. Define and distinguish between statistical and practical significance. (Evaluate)

3. **Paired-comparison tests**
   Define and use paired-comparison (parametric) hypothesis tests, and interpret the results. (Apply)

4. **Goodness-of-fit tests**
   Define chi square and other goodness-of-fit tests, and understand the results. (Understand)

5. **Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**
   Define and use ANOVAs and interpret the results. (Analyze)

6. **Contingency tables**
   Define and use contingency tables to evaluate statistical significance. (Apply)

E. Relationships Between Variables

1. **Linear regression**
   Calculate the regression equation for simple regressions and least squares estimates. Construct and interpret hypothesis tests for regression statistics. Use linear regression models for estimation and prediction. (Analyze)

2. **Simple linear correlation**
   Calculate the correlation coefficient and its confidence interval, and construct and interpret a hypothesis test for correlation statistics. (Analyze)

3. **Time-series analysis**
   Define, describe, and use time-series analysis, including moving average to identify trends and seasonal or cyclical variation. (Apply)

F. Statistical Process Control (SPC)

1. **Objectives and benefits**
   Identify and explain the objectives and benefits of SPC. (Understand)

2. **Common and special causes**
   Describe, identify, and distinguish between these types of causes. (Analyze)

3. **Selection of variable**
   Identify and select characteristics for monitoring by control chart. (Analyze)

4. **Rational subgrouping**
   Define and apply the principles of rational subgrouping. (Apply)

5. **Control charts**
   Identify, select, construct, and use various control charts, including $\bar{X}$-R, $\bar{X}$-s, individuals and moving range (ImR or XmR), moving average and moving range (MamR), p, np, c, and u. (Analyze)

6. **Control chart analysis**
   Read and interpret control charts and use rules for determining statistical control. (Evaluate)

7. **Pre-control charts**
   Define and describe these charts and how they differ from other control charts. (Understand)

8. **Short-run SPC**
   Identify and define short-run SPC rules. (Understand)

G. Process and Performance Capability

1. **Process capability studies**
   Define, describe, calculate, and use process capability studies, including identifying characteristics, specifications and tolerances, developing sampling plans for such studies, and establishing statistical control. (Analyze)

2. **Process performance vs. specifications**
   Distinguish between natural process limits and specification limits, and calculate percent defective, defects per million opportunities (DPMO), and parts per million (PPM). (Analyze)

3. **Process capability indices**
   Define, select, and calculate Cp, Cpk, Cpm, and Cr, and evaluate process capability. (Evaluate)

4. **Process performance indices**
   Define, select, and calculate Pp and Ppk, and evaluate process performance. (Evaluate)

H. Design and Analysis of Experiments

1. **Terminology**
   Define terms such as dependent and independent variables, factors, levels, response, treatment, error, and replication. (Understand)

2. **Planning and organizing experiments**
   Identify the basic elements of designed experiments, including determining the experiment objective, selecting factors, responses, and measurement methods, and choosing the appropriate design. (Analyze)

3. **Design principles**
   Define and apply the principles of power and sample size, balance, replication, order, efficiency, randomization, blocking, interaction, and confounding. (Apply)

4. **One-factor experiments**
   Construct one-factor experiments such as completely randomized, randomized block, and Latin square designs, and use computational and graphical methods to analyze the significance of results. (Analyze)

5. **Full-factorial experiments**
   Construct full-factorial designs and use computational and graphical methods to analyze the significance of results. (Analyze)

6. **Two-level fractional factorial experiments**
   Construct two-level fractional factorial designs and apply computational and graphical methods to analyze the significance of results. (Analyze)

VII. Risk Management (15 Questions)

A. Risk Oversight

1. **Planning and oversight**
   Understand identification, planning, prioritization, and oversight of risk. (Understand)

2. **Metrics**
   Identify and apply evaluation metrics. (Apply)

3. **Mitigation planning**
   Apply and interpret risk mitigation plan. (Evaluate)

B. Risk Assessment

Apply categorization methods and evaluation tools to assess risk. (Analyze)

C. Risk Control

1. **Identification and documentation**
   Identify and document risks, gaps, and controls. (Analyze)

2. **Auditing and testing**
   Apply auditing techniques and testing of controls. (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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