

Purpose

This certification handbook contains information on the policies and procedures for applying for Value Added 616 certification, and re-certification. All certification holders are expected to understand and comply with the policies set forth in this document.

A. Certification Requirements

Certification	Certification Requirements
Lean Six Sigma White Belt (CLSSWB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of <u>4 hr. Lean Six Sigma White Belt</u> course Passing exam score (min. 70%) Application fee:
Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt (CLSSYB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of <u>16 hr. Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt</u> course Passing exam score (min. 70%) Application fee:
Lean Six Sigma Green Belt (CLSSGB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of <u>32 hr. Lean Six Sigma Green Belt</u> course Passing exam score (min. 70%) Application fee:
Lean Six Sigma Black Belt (CLSSBB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification Completion of <u>90 hr. Lean Six Sigma Black Belt</u> course Passing exam score (min. 70%) Completion of 1 <u>Black Belt</u> project with verified results, validated by VA616 certification panel (1 hr. outbrief) Application fee:
Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt (CLSSMBB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certification Completion of <u>80 hr. Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt</u> course Passing exam score (70% min.) Completion of 1 <u>Master Black Belt</u> project with verified results, validated by VA616 certification panel (1 hr. outbrief) Application fee:

We can easily accommodate client-specific certification requirements beyond those listed above.

B. Certification Process

- Send required documents to Sarah Chesla (sarah.chesla@valueadded616.com):

Yellow Belt Certification:

- Completed Request for Certification form
- LSSYB course completion certificate
- Application fee

Green Belt Certification:

- Completed Request for Certification form
- LSSGB course completion certificate
- Application fee

Black Belt Certification:

- Completed Request for Certification form
- LSSBB course completion certificate
- Application fee
- LSS Green Belt Certification
- Outbrief for 1 completed DMAIC Black Belt project, with evidence of verification of results

Master Black Belt Certification:

- Completed Request for Certification form
- LSSMBB course completion certificate
- Application fee
- LSS Black Belt Certification
- Outbrief for 1 completed DMAIC Master Black Belt project, with evidence of verification of results

2. Documents submitted will be reviewed, with determination made on next steps.
 - a. **For Yellow Belt and Green Belt Certification requests:** a determination will be made regarding certification approval, with certification candidate notified. Certifications will be sent to requestor.
 - b. **For Black Belt and Master Black Belt certification requests:** a 1 hour certification review session will be scheduled with the certification candidate and a Certification Review Board, made up of no less than two (2) Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belts.
 - c. During the certification review session, the certification candidate will present the project outbrief and verification of results, and address questions from the Certification Review Board.
 - d. The certification candidate will be notified of the Certification Review Board's decision within 5 business days. If approved, certification will be sent to certification candidate.
 - e. Questions regarding the Certification process and results should be directed to Sarah Chesla (sarah.chesla@valueadded616.com).
 - f. To contest a decision regarding certification, reference the grievance process listed below.

C. Grievance Process

Submission of Grievance Matter

All grievance matters must be submitted to the Value Added 616, Inc. Chief Executive Officer or his designee and explicitly identified by the Grievant as a formal complaint, dispute, or grievance submitted for treatment under this policy.

Initial Review

CEO Determination of Nature of Complaint: The CEO shall review the matter, decide on the nature of the matter, and inform the complainant.

- a. Matters of an Operational Nature: shall generally be defined as those issues related to the day-to-day management and conduct of institute business including operational policies and program, product and service offerings of VA616.
- b. Matter of a Strategic Nature: shall generally be defined as those issues related to the strategic direction of the organization including Board policy directives, Board Governance Polices and any items reserved to the Board for decision by the VA616 By-laws, Board Policies or the Rules of the Board.
- c. Mixed Matters: to the extent that the complaint contains matters which are covered by subsections (a) and (b), the complaint shall be separated, and each matter shall be handled by the process relevant to the matter, as contained in the policy.

Appeal Initial Determination of the Nature of the Matter: To the extent that a Party disputes the determination with respect of the nature of the complaint and therefore the channel for appointing a Resolution Officer, the Party must, by written notice, appeal that decision the VA616 CEO within ten (10) days of being notified of the determination. The notice for the CEO advising the Parties of the determination of the nature of the complaint category shall include an advisement to the Party of his/her right to seek a timely appeal determination from the CEO. Failure to submit the issue to the CEO within ten (10) days will constitute a waiver of that issue by the Party.

Resolution Officer

Operational VA616 Matters: The CEO and his appointed designee shall serve as Resolution Officer for matters described in Sections a through c above. In the event of a possible conflict of interest, the nature of the complaint, or the appropriate basis for referral, the CEO may refer the matter to the COO or another designee appointed by the CEO for initial review and resolution.

Resolution Officer Review and Actions

The Resolution Officer shall inform the individual, group or organization that is the subject of the grievance of the complaint and will thereafter conduct a preliminary review of the grievance matter, including the collection and consideration of all relevant communications and other materials submitted by the Parties or others in possession of material information. Following such review, the Resolution Officer may take any of the following actions:

1. Issue an informal resolution to the matter.
2. Request or direct that one or more of the Parties, or others in possession of material information, provide relevant documents, data, or information necessary to consider and resolve the grievance matter.
3. Issue a formal resolution to the matter, which will include a written, initial decision and resolution, which may include any appropriate corrective or remedial action

and or disciplinary sanction(s). Among other formal resolution conclusions, the Resolution Officer may; affirm the grievance in whole or in part.

4. Submit the complaint to the respondent for a reply within such timeframe as the Resolution Officer deems appropriate.
5. Dismiss the complaint with the Resolution Officer determines that (1) the complaint fails to state a claim that is supported by the facts alleged or (2) that the complaint challenges only the reasonableness of an action that was in the discretion of the respondent to take, and the complaint fails to allege sufficient facts to show a gross abuse of the discretion;
6. Refer the matter to the COO or another Resolution Officer for review, further referral, and/ or resolution; or
7. Require that the Parties involved submit to informal mediation of the grievance as authorized by the section titled Mediation/Informal Resolution below.

Finality of Resolution

All informal and formal resolutions of the grievance matter by the Resolution Officer will be final and not appealable.

Mediation/Informal Resolution

1. Matters Appropriate for Mediation: Each Resolution Officer is authorized to determine if a grievance matter is appropriate for informal mediation between the Parties based on the facts and circumstances related to the matter. Such mediation will be intended to assist the Parties in reaching a fair, informal, mutually acceptable settlement of the issues and concerns presented without resorting to any formal process.
2. Mediator Authorities/ Designation of Mediator: Once a matter is determined to be appropriate for mediation under this policy, the Resolution Officer may begin and conclude the necessary meetings, discussions, and negotiations appropriate to reaching a mediated settlement of the matter. In the alternative, and in consultation with the Parties, the Resolution Officer may appoint one or more designed mediators to supervise and oversee the mediation process consistent with the provisions.
3. Successful Mediation: If the Parties reach a successful, mediated resolution of the grievance matter, the designated mediator will prepare a report identifying the resolution terms and forward the report to the Parties for approval and to the CEO.
4. Unsuccessful Mediation: If the Parties cannot reach a successful, mediated resolution of the grievance matter, the Resolution Officer will accept the matter for resolution, consistent with the Section titled Matters Appropriate for Mediation above and other controlling terms of this policy.

Resolution Hearings

Hearing Authorizations: A Party may request that a grievance matter review and resolution include an informal, in-person or telephone hearing. Such a request must include a statement of the reasons that the Party believes support the use of a hearing process. The decision to grant or deny a hearing request is solely within the discretion of the Resolution Officer to grant or deny as he/she deems it appropriate.

Hearing Process: Any hearing authorized or convened under this policy will be informal and designed to collect and weigh the available, relevant information and proof. The Resolution Officer shall conduct the hearing and will have full authority and responsibility to convene, preside over, continue, and conclude the hearing in a fair, objective and efficient manner. The decisions of the Resolution Officer with respect to the hearing, including the acceptance or rejection of information submitted, will not be subject to appeal.

Hearing Schedule and Location: Each hearing convened under this policy will be scheduled by the Resolution Officer in consultation with the Parties. Each hearing will be held by telephone or at the site determined by the Resolution Officer.

Hearing Notice and Attendance: The Resolution Officer will schedule the hearing and notify the Parties in writing. Any hearing may proceed to a conclusion whether the Parties are present. Each Party will be given the option to attend the hearing in person and will be required to indicate the following at least thirty (30) days before the hearing:

1. Whether the Party intends to appear at and participate in the hearing in person.
2. Whether the Party intends to participate in the hearing via telephone, and if so, the telephone numbers where the Party is to be reached during the hearing.
3. Whether the Party intends to appear at the hearing with an attorney or other representative and if so the name, address and telephone number of such attorney or representative
4. Whether the Party intends to present witnesses at the hearing and if so, the name, address, and telephone number of each witness and a brief summary of the content of propped witness testimony and
5. Whether the Party intends to present or offer any documentary information or other written proof during the hearing. If such information is submitted, the Party must provide a copy of each document and a brief description of the relevance of the material.

Responsibilities and Rights of the Parties: In addition to other responsibilities and rights, the Parties may do, or be required to do, the following:

1. Attend the hearing and be present during the testimony of all witnesses.
2. Present witnesses, written information, and argument on their behalf;
3. Review or inspect all oral or written information presented in the case.
4. Comply with all lawful requirements or directives issued by the responsible Resolution Officer consistent with the terms of this policy.

Witnesses: All witnesses will be excluded from the hearing except during their presentation of information. However, a Party may request that a witness remain in the hearing room during all or part of the hearing. The Resolution Officer will rule on any request and the ruling will not be subject to appeal.

Hearing Expense: Parties will be responsible for their own expenses associated with the hearing, including costs related to transportation, witnesses, legal counsel, and the like, unless otherwise stated in these procedures; VA616 will bear all general expenses and other

grievance matter costs, including costs associated with the participation of the Resolution Officer and staff or individuals assisting the Resolution Officer.

Closing of the Hearing Record: The record of each hearing will be closed following the conclusion of the hearing unless otherwise directed by the Resolution Officer. Any Party may request that the record remain open for thirty (30) days for the purpose of receiving additional documentary information and or similar materials. The Resolution Officer authority may deny requests to keep the hearing record open without appeal.

D. Re-Certification Process

Value Added 616 Program Overview

The Value Added 616 Program supports the continual academic and professional development of our certification holders so they are always prepared to face the demands of today's complex and changing business world. The mission of the Value Added 616 Program is to:

- Provide a system for recording professional development activities
- Encourage and nurture lifelong learning and growth within the community of practice
- Promote and maintain relevancy of certified practitioners
- Sustain the global recognition and reputation of Value Added 616 credentials

Certain certifications earned through Value Added 616 require maintenance through participation in a recertification program through the Value Added 616 Program. *There is no requirement for recertification for those who obtained Lean Six Sigma Yellow or Green Belt certifications.* **The recertification cadence for Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt certification is every three years.**

Taking part in professional development and learning activities allows certification holders to earn Value Added Points (VAPs), satisfying certification renewal requirements while pursuing growth and development as a practitioner.

Below is the step-by-step high-level process for the Value Added Program:

1. Earn your Lean Six Sigma certification, which begins your three year renewal cadence on the date of issuance
2. Earn VAPs by participating in a variety of activities
3. Record 60 VAPs in the database over the course of your three year renewal cadence
4. Receive a notification of completion for VAP requirements from the automated system
5. Complete the renewal payment process
6. Login and confirm the new cadence dates are reflected on your certificate

Value Added 616 Program Requirements (for LSSBB and LSSMBB)

All required certification holders must earn VAPs to renew their certification to remain on active status. VAPs are earned through various upskill and reskill activities that are divided into two categories:

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1. **Learning** – Opportunities allowing you to upskill your technical, leadership, and business acumen.
2. **Sharing** – Activities allowing you to share your expertise and build the community of practice.

Each certification has different requirements for renewal:

Certification	Certification Cycle	Total VAPs Required	Learning Min VAPs	Sharing Max VAPs
LSSYB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LSSGB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LSSBB	3 years	60	45	15
LSSMBB	3 years	80	40	40

Learning

Research indicates that employers need well-rounded practitioners with more than just technical skills. Leadership, business intelligence and people skills are imperative to support long-range strategic objectives that contribute to success. The learning component of the Value Added 616 Program is to ensure you are equipped to remain relevant in a continually changing business environment. There is no limit on the amount of VAPs that can be earned in learning.

Sharing

Value Added 616 recognizes that sharing your expertise and actively applying your skills is valuable and contributes tremendously to the community of practice. Many find that giving back is an enriching learning experience that enhances professional development in different ways. That is why sharing activities are considered VAP eligible.

Sharing is an optional way to earn VAPs. The requirement listed above is the maximum number of sharing VAPs allowed for each certification. If sharing the expertise VAPs are earned, the total cannot exceed the limits listed above.

Value Added Points Explained

Reporting VAPs

The certification holder is responsible for recording their own VAPs in the database. To maintain an active certification status in good standing, all VAPs must be recorded, and the renewal process must be completed before the certification holder's program rhythm ends (expiration date listed in database). If the certification holder does not complete the renewal process, the certification will expire. Please review the Certification Status section of this handbook for more information.

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Fractions of VAPs can also be reported, with the smallest fraction of a VAP that is reportable being 0.25. For example, if you spend 15 minutes engaged in an approved VAP activity, you can record it as 0.25 VAP. Similarly, spending 30 minutes engaged in an approved VAP activity, you can record 0.50 VAP.

To submit your VAPs:

1. Login to your account
2. Go to your certifications page
3. Click "Manage VAPs" on the certification for which you wish to submit VAPs
4. Submit your VAP request

Earning VAPs

There are many opportunities to earn VAPs. The Value Added 616 Program organizes VAPs based upon the type of activity conducted. Detailed below you will find a description of each activity, examples, and any associated policies. If you do not feel your VAPs fit into one of these activities, and you believe they qualify, please email sarah.chesla@valueadded616.com and someone will assist you with the inquiry.

Learning

Education Courses

Educational training courses are a traditional and effective way to upskill contributing to continued success in the community of practice. To qualify, the course should be led by an instructor/facilitator and can take place in person or online.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour of education equals 1 VAP
- If only a portion of the course relates to topics relevant in the certification renewal process, calculate VAPs by the percentage of the overall curriculum that focused on those relevant topics.
- Report each course separately. Only individual courses will be accepted for VAP credit.

Documentation required for audit: Registration form, certificate, or letter of attendance.

Professional Activities

Professional meetings that include an educational component are an opportunity to learn and network. This includes attending meetings or events

related to the community of practice. For example, your organization may have quarterly Community of Practice events to attend.

VAP Rules:

- Organization meetings are limited to earning 2 VAPs

Documentation required for audit: Registration form, letter of attendance or other form of documentation confirming participation in event.

Online Learning

Technology has made learning accessible without leaving home. Earning VAPs through online learning allows you to customize learning around your schedule and interests. There are many videos, webinars, and educational platforms available online.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour of learning equals 1 VAP
- Qualifying activities must be relevant to the field, meet a specified purpose, and use reputable resources

Documentation required for audit: Evidence supporting your reported learning, including notes from and dates of activities conducted, or YouTube (or similar) link to the training.

Reading

Reading is a valuable component of learning, and there are countless reading materials pertinent to the community of practice. You can read books, articles, whitepapers, or journals to stay informed and support your ongoing professional development.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour of reading equals 1 VAP

Documentation required for audit: Evidence supporting your reported learning, including notes from and dates of reading.

Informal Learning

Educational opportunities focused on structured discussions. Oftentimes learning comes through interaction with others. You can earn in VAPs by engaging in structured professional discussions with others, for example while

you are being mentored or participating in a “lunch and learn” session with your organization.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour of learning equals 1 VAP

Documentation required for audit: Evidence supporting your reported learning, including notes from and dates of activities conducted.

Sharing

Working as a Practitioner

Every day you spend working in your role, your certification allows you to apply your knowledge and skills in a practical setting. Using these skills and knowledge in the workplace plays a vital part in growing the community of practice and increasing your effectiveness as a subject matter expert.

VAP Rules:

- This activity has a maximum number of VAPs that can be claimed per cycle:
 - LSSBB – No more than 15 VAPs claimed per cycle
 - LSSMBB – No more than 40 VAPs claimed per cycle
- These VAPs only apply to your current cycle and cannot be transferred

Documentation required for audit: Proof of employment (job description) or outline of work completed.

Creating Content

Creating new content allows you to share expertise and contribute to the continual learning of others. There are multiple ways to create new knowledge resources, such as writing blogs, articles, or books, or creating presentations, online videos, or webinars.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour spent creating equals 1 VAP

Documentation required for audit: Copies of publications, sample educational materials, or a link to the public file (e.g., YouTube link).

Giving a Presentation

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There are many opportunities to give a formal presentation and share knowledge that relates to your certification (e.g., ASQ, PMI or DoD panel events). For VAPs to be earned, the topics presented must be relevant to the community of practice.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour spent presenting equals 1 VAP

Documentation required for audit: Copy of presentation or link to presentation (if public).

Coach and Mentor

By sharing your expertise with others, you grow the community of practice by empowering others. Whether you are mentoring, teaching, or applying your subject matter expertise toward an activity, others will benefit from your experience and perspective.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour spent sharing knowledge equals 1 VAP

Documentation for audit: Evidence supporting your arrangement, including notes from and dates of discussions and activities.

Volunteering

You can use your domain-related services and experience to volunteer. Examples include, but are not limited to not-for-profits, start-ups, socio-economic disadvantaged, and veteran organizations.

VAP Rules:

- 1 hour spent volunteering equals 1 VAP

Documentation for audit: Evidence supporting your arrangement, including notes from and dates of discussions and activities.

Other VAP Policies

- Activities completed before you earn a Lean Six Sigma certification are not eligible as VAPs.
- You cannot claim participation in the same course or activity more than once.
- If you earn more than the required VAPs in your Value Added 616 Program rhythm, you may not apply the additional VAPs to your next cycle.

- Maximum word count for reporting VAPs should not exceed five hundred words and should not be less than the three sentence minimum to qualify as a paragraph - be clear, concise, and precise.

Certification Renewal Fees and Policies

After Value Added 616 confirms you meet the VAP requirements, an electronic notification is sent via email to apply for certification renewal. You will then be directed to submit the renewal fee payment on the Value Added 616 website. The renewal process can be completed at any point in the cycle after the VAP requirements have been met by submitting the payment. The payment must be submitted no later than 60 days after the cycle end date, or your certification will go into expired status.

- The renewal fee for LSSBB certification is \$100 every three years.
- The renewal fee for LSSMBB certification is \$150 every three years.

After processing the completed application and the renewal payment your certificate will update within the database for download and/or printing.

Value Added 616 Audit Process

As the recipient of a Value Added 616 certification, you have agreed to comply with the terms of use, including adherence to the terms of the audit process. The terms of the audit process provide that all certification holders are subject to an audit. In the event of an audit, you will be permitted to renew your certification only after you successfully complete the audit and meet all the terms of the audit.

A percentage of certification holders will be randomly selected for Value Added 616's annual audit process. If you are selected for an audit, you will be asked to submit supporting material to verify any VAPs submitted. Therefore, it is important to keep documentation for all VAP claims for at least 6 months after the Value Added 616 Program cycle has ended.

Extenuating Circumstances

You may cancel your certification at any time. To do so, contact Value Added 616 by emailing sarah.chesla@valueadded616.com.

If there are other extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from completing the certification renewal process detailed in this handbook, please contact Sarah Chesla (sarah.chesla@valueadded616.com). All claims are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Certification Status

Your certification status is determined by participating in and fulfilling the requirements of the Value Added 616 Program. There are two certification statuses:

Active Status

When you earn a certification, you are automatically in active status for three years. When you fulfill all Value Added Program requirements for your certification, including earning and reporting VAPs and submitting the renewal payment before the cycle end date, you are in active status.

Certification holders in active status will be automatically recorded in the online Certification Registry. You can select to be removed from the registry, your name not appearing in the registry does not automatically indicate that you are not certified.

Expired Status

You will lose your certification and go into an expired status if you do not earn the VAPs necessary or fail to submit your payment within 60 days of your certification cycle ending. When your certificate expires, you may not refer to yourself as a certificate holder and cannot use the certification designation. To obtain a new certificate you will be required to complete a new application (\$100), and retake the appropriate level exam (\$200).

E. Contact Us

Phone: (616) 377-4499

Email: sarah.chesla@valueadded616.com