



# STEPS TO SILVER

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## A GUIDE TO LINKED LEARNING SILVER CERTIFICATION™

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to help district staff, school administrators, pathway staff, and postsecondary, industry, and student support partners in preparing for Linked Learning Silver Certification.

It provides a roadmap to help you understand the certification process, self-assess against the Silver standards, and collect a body of artifacts that reflect the high-quality work and outcomes of the pathway.

### Questions? Suggestions?

Contact the Linked Learning Alliance,  
[certification@linkedlearning.org](mailto:certification@linkedlearning.org)



## ABOUT LINKED LEARNING SILVER CERTIFICATION

**Linked Learning Certification** promotes the continuous improvement of Linked Learning pathways to provide proven high-quality integrated learning experiences and positive student outcomes for all student populations. Silver and Gold levels provide pathway teams the opportunity for comprehensive self-assessment and independent evaluation and validation of their pathway work.

Silver certification demonstrates that a pathway has in place the core components of a high-quality Linked Learning pathway. Silver certification helps drive the work of pathway teams by engaging key stakeholders including pathway staff, administrators, counselors, students, and industry partners in the design and development of the pathway.

Silver certification standards, summarized below, were developed in collaboration with the diverse field of Linked Learning educators, and support continuous improvement for all. Access the complete standards at [LinkedLearning.org/Certification](https://www.linkedlearning.org/Certification).

INTEGRATED PROGRAM OF STUDY	WORK-BASED LEARNING	INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS
<p><b><i>Student-centered learning connected to postsecondary and industry expectations.</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>A continuum of meaningful experiences with work and real-world applications of learning.</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Meeting the developmental needs of each young person to equip all for a successful transition to college and career.</i></b></p>
<p><b>An integrated program of study</b> includes academic and CTE/career-themed courses.</p> <p><b>Course requirements</b> qualify students for a range of postsecondary options, including admission to public universities.</p> <p><b>CTE/career-themed sequence</b> of at least three courses allows students to learn through lens of an industry or career.</p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary projects</b> at each grade level integrate core academic and CTE/ career-themed curricula.</p> <p><b>Pathway teams collect data</b> on college preparatory and CTE/career-themed course completion, postsecondary credits earned, and graduation.</p>	<p><b>Career awareness activities</b> motivate students to explore a broad range of career options that inform future decision-making.</p> <p><b>Career exploration</b> is driven by students' interest in specific career paths, rather than an overview of many.</p> <p><b>Career preparation</b> enables students to experience firsthand what it might be like to have a specific career.</p> <p><b>Pathway teams collect data</b> on career awareness, exploration, and preparation.</p>	<p><b>Orientation activities</b>, offered annually, prepare students for pathway success.</p> <p><b>An open admissions policy</b> ensures equitable student access.</p> <p><b>Differentiated interventions</b> support struggling students.</p> <p><b>College and career planning</b> helps students set goals and work towards attaining them.</p> <p><b>College admissions activities</b> prepare and support students as they navigate the college admissions process.</p> <p><b>Job application activities</b> prepare students to navigate career choices.</p> <p><b>Pathway teams collect data</b> on pathway admissions, intervention services, and college/career planning.</p>

## SUBMISSION DEADLINES

For the 2019–20 academic year, the Linked Learning Alliance is offering three submission dates for pathways that plan to go through the Silver certification process. You may register and begin the process at any time at [certification.linkedlearning.org](https://certification.linkedlearning.org).

Fall submission deadline: **October 15, 2019**

Initial review and feedback: Provided on or before **November 1, 2019**

Resubmit deadline: **November 22, 2019**

Final approval: On or before **December 6, 2019**

Winter submission deadline: **January 15, 2020**

Initial review and feedback: Provided on or before **January 31, 2020**

Resubmit deadline: **February 21, 2020**

Final approval: On or before **March 6, 2020**

Spring submission deadline: **April 3, 2020**

Initial review and feedback: Provided on or before **April 17, 2020**

Resubmit deadline: **May 8, 2020**

Final approval: On or before **May 22, 2020**

## CERTIFICATION FEES

The fee for Silver certification is \$1,000 per year per district for an unlimited number of pathways. Payment and invoices are set on an annual cycle from July 1 through June 30. Mid-year submission billing will be prorated based on the submission cycle. All districts with pathways at Silver level will be invoiced annually in July, regardless of when they first submitted for approval. Districts must pay \$1,000 annually to maintain the Silver certification status of their pathways. Silver certification is valid for two years, after which pathways must resubmit evidence for Silver renewal or apply for Gold certification.

## PREPARATION

### DETERMINE PATHWAY READINESS

Linked Learning Certification is designed to support a process of continuous improvement toward positive college and career outcomes for all students. Silver certification is the first level in the certification process, and a prerequisite to Gold certification. Silver certification signifies that the foundational structures of a high-quality pathway are in place. Review this guide and the Silver standards. If your pathway is recertifying, update your data and artifacts if needed to reflect your current program.

### FORM A CERTIFICATION TEAM

The foundation of a high-quality pathway and a successful certification is a strong team of pathway CTE and core academic teachers, site and district administrators, counselors, parents and students, and industry and postsecondary partners. Team members work together and have a common understanding of their roles in the pathway, and in the certification process.

### ENGAGE IN SELF-STUDY

Linked Learning offers a promising set of strategies to ensure that every child has the best possible education. But only when the pathway is of high quality and equitable access can we be assured that students will meet college- and career-ready outcomes. The self-study, benchmarked against the Silver and Gold standards, is at the heart of a process of continuous learning and improvement. Using the self-study tool provided, your pathway team can continually assess the degree to which the pathway is holistically meeting or exceeding the standards. Email the Alliance at [certification@linkedlearning.org](mailto:certification@linkedlearning.org) to request your self-study guide.

## EXECUTION

### REGISTER YOUR PATHWAY

To begin using the certification platform, visit [certification.linkedlearning.org](https://certification.linkedlearning.org) and click “Sign Up.” Follow the prompts to enter basic information about your pathway. The first two collaborators to be added to the account will be considered “lead collaborators.” All communications from the Linked Learning Alliance certification team regarding your pathway’s status will be directed to the lead collaborators. Any collaborator may email specific questions to the certification team at any time: [certification@linkedlearning.org](mailto:certification@linkedlearning.org).

### COLLECT ARTIFACTS

We recommend pathways plan on approximately 4–6 weeks collecting and uploading artifacts, though there is no limit to the length of time a pathway chooses to spend on this step. The actual amount of time will be influenced by internal pathway schedules and the stage of development of the pathway.

The collection and review of artifacts aligned to the Silver standards becomes a repository for the team of best practices, reflections from all stakeholders, and data that offer a holistic view of the foundational work being accomplished by the pathway. The team will use the Linked Learning Certification site to collect and review artifacts collaboratively.

## CONFIRMATION

### SUBMIT FOR APPROVAL

Once your artifacts are collected, click the “submit for certification” link on the certification website by the appropriate submission deadline as referenced on page 4. The Alliance certification team may ask for clarification and/or additional evidence—if so, you will have the opportunity to make adjustments before the resubmit deadline. Once you resubmit, the Alliance will review your application and will determine whether or not your pathway is Silver certified by the final approval date in your cycle.



### GO FOR GOLD

Silver certification is a significant milestone—but it is not the finish line! We encourage all Silver pathways to continue your certification journey by working toward [Gold certification](#)—the highest quality standard for Linked Learning pathways.

The Linked Learning Alliance is here to help:  
[certification@linkedlearning.org](mailto:certification@linkedlearning.org).



**Linked Learning** is a systemic approach to education dedicated to the idea that students work harder and dream bigger when their learning connects with them and connects them to the world. Linked Learning gives students the supports they need to prepare for college and career, and helps them grow through real work experiences so they can fully participate in shaping civic, cultural, and economic life. Proven in California and spreading across the United States, this approach works because it is built on relevance, equity, and hope.

**The Linked Learning Alliance** is a devoted partner in the work of transforming education. Established in 2008, the Alliance ensures that the Linked Learning approach not only grows, but flourishes in every school it touches. Optimistic in mission and surefooted in means, the Alliance works as a standard setter, communicator, field driver, and advocate so that every district can pursue the highest quality of learning. Supporting the champions of the Linked Learning approach, the Alliance renews hope in education by empowering every school, every employer, and every community to prepare students for success by bringing learning to life.

Learn more at [LinkedLearning.org](https://www.linkedlearning.org)