



# **Personal certification – Design Thinking**

**Description of the certification scheme for design thinkers**

**Version 2  
08/02/2023**

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## 1 Introduction

### Development of the certification scheme

Dancert has employed employees of Ampersand Associates (AA) for the development of the certification scheme. Ampersand Associates is a training-provider and consultancy, that specialises in innovation management and design. AA is established by a former employee from Danish Technological Institute (an approved Technological Service Institution - GTS). Ampersand Associates collaborates closely with researchers from the Danish Technological University on original research and training in the field of design thinking - and is a member of the design society (<https://www.designsociety.org/>).

Due to the AA's involvement in research, training and consulting within design thinking, it has been able to ensure the collection of knowledge with respect to this topic from relevant European and American knowledge centres.

The development of the certification scheme is based on the following sources in the edition applicable from time to time:

- CEN 16555-3 "Innovation thinking"
- BS 7000-1 "Design management systems - Guide to managing innovation"
- The DS guide 36 "Vejledning for brugerorienteret innovation"
- "The design thinking playbook" by Lewrick *et al.*

and on the competencies needed for a professional, to engage plan and execute design thinking processes with the aim of creation product, service, or process innovation in public or private organisations and NGO's.

### Evaluation criteria

The exam questions have been developed based on the most current knowledge about the topic in such a way that they are based on the literature and compared with the most current updated knowledge about relevant topics.

### Criteria for suspension and withdrawal of the certification

Dancert's general conditions for certification apply to the certification and conditions for its maintenance in general.

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## Criteria for the amendment of the validity area or level of the certification

Whenever an updated version of this description is issued due to changes in the reference literature, the certifications may be required by Dancert to be updated with respect to these changes within 2 years if the certifications are to be maintained.

## Definitions

Applicant	Person, who has applied for personal certification
DT	Design Thinking
Competence	Ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve the planned results
Qualifications	Proven education, training and work experience as relevant for the certification

## Reference

As of July 2022, the background literature for the certification in design thinking is as follows:

- CEN 16555-3 2014 "Innovation thinking"  
This standard is built on design thinking and provides guidance on how to integrate the core values of innovation thinking into any organization.
- BS 7000-1 2008 "Design management systems - Guide to managing innovation"  
This standard gives guidance on managing innovation, specifically the design and development of innovative and competitive products that satisfy customers' perceived needs and aspirations in the long-term future.
- The DS guide 36:2012 "Vejledning for brugerorienteret innovation"  
The standard provides a fundamental overview of why and how your organization can work with user-oriented innovation and gives input to how you plan, execute, evaluate and develop innovation in your organisation.
- "The design thinking playbook" by Lewrick *et al.* 2018  
The book is authored by Stanford professor Larry Leifer from the centre for design research (CDR) and Stanford CDR alumni Michael Lewrick. The book defines Design Thinking as being about approaching things differently with strong user orientation and fast iterations with multidisciplinary teams to solve wicked problems.

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## 2 Work profile for applicants

A specialist, manager or leader who is concerned with driving innovation by means of the design thinking framework, either directly or through creating the organisational frames for design thinking to thrive.

A certified design thinker is typically not a specialist in the execution of all the tasks in the design thinking process but has the competencies required for staging and driving the design process, with the involvement of relevant specialists throughout the process.

## 3 Qualifications as preconditions for applicants

### Education

The applicant must have a bachelor's or master's degree of a technical or mercantile character that has provided qualifications for understanding technical or business matters of importance for innovation and design processes in organisations.

As an alternative, an applicant may apply for certification if he or she can document similar abilities. For instance, by means of 3+ years of work experience with design or innovation, or a different education, where it can be expected that the applicant has achieved similar qualifications.

The certification requires basic skills in reading and understanding texts in English as the multiple-choice test will be in English.

### Training

The certification is aimed at current and future leaders and/or facilitators of design thinking, who have completed a training programme of at least 25 hours successfully. The programme must at least cover all 7 areas stated in section 4. This is proven by submitting the programme certificate to Dancert, clearly stating the content and scope of the training. The training programme must have been completed no more than 5 years before the application date for certification.

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## 4 Required competences

The skills and coaching competencies of the design thinker are of utmost importance for the quality of the design thinking effort. The design thinker must be able to select, adjust, implement, apply and maintain relevant approaches in his or her work with the following central design thinking areas:

1. Scoping a design challenge and facilitating a common understanding of the challenge among relevant team members and other stakeholders.
2. Preparation and staging of design work through planning a design process fit for the purpose and selecting the appropriate design methods for supporting it.
3. Effective involvement and analysis of users, customers, domain experts and other multidisciplinary collaborators throughout the design process.
4. Data collection and analysis with the aim of discovering problems worth solving and providing a detailed understanding and definition of the problem.
5. Creative work with ideation and creation of solution concepts based on insights and facilitated creativity.
6. Experimental learning through fast iterations between prototyping and testing, with the aim of finding and validating the best possible solutions to the problems worth solving.
7. Evaluation and continuous improvement of your organisation's design thinking maturity with the aim of finding and addressing "anti-patterns" for design thinking.

## 5 Criteria for certification

### 5.1 Documentation of qualifications

The applicant must submit an application for personal certification as a design thinker. The documentation of qualifications stated in section 3 is to be presented.

Qualification preconditions for applicants:

Education

Employment

Fulfilled training in design thinking

### 5.2 Documentation of competencies

The documentation of competencies is performed by a multiple-choice test.

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### **5.2.1 Multiple choice test**

The multiple-choice test is performed locally and in person and a Dancert employee informs about, monitors and evaluates the test.

The applicants are informed about the conditions for the test:

- The applicant has signed the non-disclosure agreement.
- The applicant's background qualifications have been approved.
- No support tools for the test.
- No telephone or electronic units may be present during the test .
- The applicant may not write down, photograph or take the assignment questions with them in any way.
- The duration of the test is 30 minutes.

The test consists of 35 questions, randomly taken from a pool of at least 70 questions. To pass the test, the applicant must give the correct answer to at least 28 of the questions taken from the pool.

The multiple-choice test consists of questions where the applicant must provide the correct answer based on two or more possible answers.

### **5.2.2 Re-evaluation**

If the applicant does not pass the multiple-choice test, he or she must perform a new multiple-choice test. An applicant, who has not fulfilled the requirements during the evaluation, can request a re-evaluation within a period of 6 months as of the first evaluation.

### **5.3 Validity of the certificate**

The certification is valid for 5 years.

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## 6 Re-certification

The re-certification must be conducted prior to the expiry of the valid certificate, but not earlier than 4 months prior to expiry.

### 6.1 Documentation of qualifications

The applicant must prove that he or she has worked with design thinking or design in the organisations, to which the applicant has been attached, since the certification or the last re-certification. The design thinking or design work must have had a scope of at least 25 % of the working hours.

### 6.2 Documentation of competencies

The documentation of competencies is performed by a multiple-choice test.

The multiple-choice test is performed locally and in person, and a Dancert employee informs about, monitors and evaluates the test.

The applicants are informed about the conditions for the test:

- The applicant has signed the non-disclosure agreement.
- The applicant's background qualifications have been approved.
- No support tools for the test.
- No telephone or electronic units may be present during the test .
- The applicant may not write down, photograph or take the assignment questions with them in any way.
- The duration of the test is 30 minutes.

The test consists of 35 questions, randomly taken from a pool of at least 70 questions. To pass the test, the applicant must give the correct answer to at least 28 of the questions taken from the pool. The test will always be based on the latest version of the background literature. The applicant is encouraged to take this into account, when preparing for the re-certification.

The multiple-choice test consists of questions where the applicant must provide the correct answer based on two or more possible answers.

#### 6.2.1 Re-evaluation

If the applicant does not pass the multiple-choice test, he or she must perform a new multiple-choice test. An applicant, who has not fulfilled the requirements during the evaluation, can request a re-evaluation within a period of 6 months as of the first evaluation.

If the date for expiry of the certificate is exceeded due to re-evaluation, the certificate will only be issued again at the execution of the re-evaluation, where the

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requirements have been fulfilled.

### **6.3 Validity of the certificate**

As of the re-certification, the certificate is valid for 5 years.