Top Agile Certifications: Report for 2023

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Introduction

There's no substitute for experience. However, certifications can be a valuable tool for propping one's career. Employers want assurance that candidates have the agile knowledge and skills, and certifications demonstrate a person's masters of the respective subject. This article takes a look at Agile related certifications.

Top Agile Certifications

We compiled and analyzed data from multiple sources: Google Trends, LinkedIn, Indeed, Monday.com's LogoMonitor, BMC, and LearnWisdom™ — to determine the general consensus on the top Agile certifications. Seven emerged. Here they are:

- Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)
- Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO)
- Certified SAFe Agilist (SA)
- Certified SAFe Product Owner and Product Manager (SAFe PDPM)
- PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)
- Certified Professional Scrum Master (PSM I)
- Certified Professional Scrum Product Owner (PSPO I)

Details follow. Note: Prerequisites, costs, and other data are subject to change by the governing organizations.

Profile of Each Certification

Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)

- **Certification**: Certified ScrumMaster
- **Abbreviation for certification**: CSM
- **Governing organization + name**: Scrum Alliance
- **Governing organization + website**: https://www.scrumalliance.org/
- **Short description of certification**: Validates a solid understanding of Scrum including practical ways to apply it in one's job. Focuses on teamwork.
- **Exam + prerequisites**: Completion of a two-day course by an authorized trainer
- **Exam + cost**: Course (referenced above) includes the cost of the exam. Cost ranges from about $500 to $1,200 depending on the location, delivery format (in-person or online), provider, and other factors
- **Exam + delivery**: Online
- **Exam + number of questions**: 50
- **Exam + time to complete**: 1 hour
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: 74%
- **Credential expiration**: 2 years
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: 20 SEUs
- **Credential renewal + cost**: $150

Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO)

- **Certification**: Certified Scrum Product Owner
- **Abbreviation for certification**: CSPO
- **Governing organization + name**: Scrum Alliance
- **Governing organization + website**: https://www.scrumalliance.org/
- **Short description of certification**: Demonstrates a deep understanding of Scrum principles and practices, as well as the role and responsibilities of the Product Owner in the Scrum framework.
- **Exam + prerequisites**: Certification is earned after the successful completion of the required two-day course delivered by an authorized trainer (there is not a separate exam).
- **Exam + cost**: Certification is awarded after the successful completion of the required two-day course delivered by an authorized trainer (there is not a separate exam); course cost ranges from about $500 to $1,200 depending on the location, delivery format (in-person or online), provider, and other factors
- **Exam + delivery**: Certification is awarded after the successful completion of the required two-day course delivered by an authorized trainer (there is not a separate exam)
- **Exam + number of questions**: Certification is awarded after the successful completion of the required two-day course delivered by an authorized trainer (there is not a separate exam)
- **Exam + time to complete**: Certification is awarded after the successful completion of the required two-day course delivered by an authorized trainer (there is not a separate exam)
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: Certification is awarded after the successful completion of the required two-day course delivered by an authorized trainer (there is not a separate exam)
- **Credential expiration**: 2 years
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: 20 SEUs
- **Credential renewal + cost**: $100

Certified SAFe Agilist (SA)

- **Certification**: Certified SAFe Agilist
- **Abbreviation for certification**: SA
- **Governing organization + name**: Scaled Agile
- **Governing organization + website**: https://scaledagile.com/
- **Short description of certification**: Validates knowledge of Lean-Agile Leadership, Team and Technical Agility and organize around the flow of value; align teams to customer-centric business objectives; participate successfully in SAFe Agile Release Trains; and adopt a lean mindset
- **Exam + prerequisites**: Completion of a two-day course by an authorized trainer
- **Exam + cost**: Course (referenced above) includes the cost of the exam. Cost ranges from about $500 to $1,200 depending on the location, delivery format (in-person or online), provider, and other factors
- **Exam + delivery**: Online
- **Exam + number of questions**: 45
- **Exam + time to complete**: 1.5 hours
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: 85%
- **Credential expiration**: 1 year
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: 10 SEUs
- **Credential renewal + cost**: $100

Certified SAFe Product Owner and Product Manager (SAFe PDPM)

- **Certification**: Certified SAFe Product Owner and Product Manager
- **Abbreviation for certification**: SAFe PDPM
- **Governing organization + name**: Scaled Agile
- **Governing organization + website**: https://scaledagile.com/
- **Short description of certification**: Demonstrates knowledge of how to: collaborate with the Product Manager (PM) and a Product Manager (PM); put the customer at the center of the design, build, and test; Develop on Cadence; Plan and Program Increment (PI) Planning; decompose Epics to Features, and Features to Stories; and collaborate with Agile teams to forecast work.
- **Exam + prerequisites**: Completion of a two-day course by an authorized trainer
- **Exam + cost**: Course (referenced above) includes the cost of the exam. Cost ranges from about $500 to $1,200 depending on the location, delivery format (in-person or online), provider, and other factors
- **Exam + delivery**: Online
- **Exam + number of questions**: 45
- **Exam + time to complete**: 1.5 hours
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: 85%
- **Credential expiration**: 1 year
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: 10 SEUs
- **Credential renewal + cost**: $100

PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)

- **Certification**: PMI Agile Certified Practitioner
- **Abbreviation for certification**: PMI ACP
- **Governing organization + name**: Project Management Institute
- **Governing organization + website**: https://www.pmi.org/
- **Short description of certification**: Validates knowledge of the agile principles and mindset, understanding of Agile active multiple methodologies (such as Scrum, Kanban, Lean).
- **Exam + prerequisites**: 2,000 hours of project management experience; 1,500 hours of agile experience, and 21 hours of training in Agile
- **Exam + cost**: $435 for members of the PMI; $555 for those not a member of the PMI
- **Exam + delivery**: In-person in an assessment center
- **Exam + number of questions**: 120
- **Exam + time to complete**: 3 hours
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: Passing score is not disclosed (it is estimated to be 70%)
- **Credential expiration**: 3 years
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: 30 PDUs
- **Credential renewal + cost**: $60 for PMI members, $150 for those not members of the PMI

Certified Professional Scrum Master (PSM I)

- **Certification**: Certified Professional Scrum Master
- **Abbreviation for certification**: PSM I
- **Governing organization + name**: Scrum.org
- **Governing organization + website**: https://www.scrum.org/
- **Short description of certification**: Validates knowledge of the Scrum framework and its application to teamwork, accountabilities, and how to apply Scrum
- **Exam + prerequisites**: A course is recommended but not required
- **Exam + cost**: $150
- **Exam + delivery**: Online
- **Exam + number of questions**: 80
- **Exam + time to complete**: 1 hour
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: 85%
- **Credential expiration**: Certification does not expire
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: Not applicable
- **Credential renewal + cost**: Not applicable as certification does not expire

Certified Professional Scrum Product Owner (PSPO I)

- **Certification**: Certified Professional Scrum Product Owner
- **Abbreviation for certification**: PSPO I
- **Governing organization + name**: Scrum.org
- **Governing organization + website**: https://www.scrum.org/
- **Short description of certification**: Validates knowledge of the Scrum framework and one's ability to support and lead teams to effective delivery
- **Exam + prerequisites**: A course is recommended but not required
- **Exam + cost**: $200
- **Exam + delivery**: Online
- **Exam + number of questions**: 80
- **Exam + time to complete**: 1 hour
- **Exam + pass rate (minimum % that must be correct to pass exam)**: 85%
- **Credential expiration**: Certification does not expire
- **Credential renewal + required continuing education units (CEUs) or professional development units (PDUs) or Scrum educational units (SEUs)**: Not applicable
- **Credential renewal + cost**: Not applicable as certification does not expire

Conclusion

Certifications can provide significant value for professionals looking to enhance their skills and credibility in the marketplace. Employers often prefer to hire certified professionals, and those who invest in professional credentials typically enjoy larger salaries. Informed by data from multiple sources, this article provides an overview of the top Agile certifications: Certified ScrumMaster (CSM), Certified Scrum Product Owner (CSPO), Certified SAFe Agilist (SA), Certified SAFe Product Owner and Product Manager (SAFe PDPM), PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP), Certified Professional Scrum Master (PSM I), and Certified Professional Scrum Product Owner (PSPO I). These interested in securing one or more Agile certifications can leverage the information presented in this article to assist in their decision-making.

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About Scott M. Graffius

Scott M. Graffius, Founder of Exceptional Agility, is an expert practitioner and thought leader in agile, project, program, portfolio, and PMO management. He has generated over $3 billion of business value in aggregate for Global Fortune 500 companies and other organizations he has served in various roles. He is a prolific author and highly sought-after international keynote speaker, having presented at 84 conferences and other events across 25 countries. Clients, professional associations, governments, and universities have used and featured him and his methodologies. Organizations like Microsoft, Oracle, Broadcom, Cisco, Gartner, IT Project Management Institute, IEEE, SANS Institute, National Academy of Sciences, United States Department of Energy, Amsterdam Public Health Research Institute, Yale University, Tufts University, and many others.

Visit https://ScottGraffius.com to learn more, and connect with Scott on:

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About *Agile Scrum: Your Quick Start Guide with Step-by-Step Instructions*

Now available in the United States: bit.ly/scrumusa — Now available in UK and: bit.ly/scrum-uglb

Shifting customer needs are common in today's marketplace. Businesses must be adaptive and responsive to change while delivering an exceptional customer experience to be competitive.

There are a variety of frameworks supporting the development of products and services, and most approaches fall into one of two broad categories: traditional or agile. Traditional practices such as waterfall engage sequential development, while agile involves iterative and incremental deliverables. Organizations are increasingly embracing agile to manage projects, and best meet their business needs of rapid response to change, fast delivery speed, and more.

With clear and easy to follow step-by-step instructions, **Scott M. Graffius**'s award-winning ***Agile Scrum: Your Quick Start Guide with Step-by-Step Instructions*** helps the reader:

- Implement and use the most popular agile framework—Scrum;
- Deliver products in short cycles with rapid adaptation to change, fast time-to-market, and continuous improvement; and
- Support innovation and drive competitive advantage.

Hailed by Literary Titan as "the book highlights the versatility of Scrum beautifully."

Winner of 17 first place awards.

Agile Scrum: Your Quick Start Guide with Step-by-Step Instructions is available in paperback and ebook/Kindle worldwide. Some links by country follow.

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About *Agile Transformation: A Brief Story of How an Entertainment Company Developed New Capabilities and Unlocked Business Agility to Thrive in an Era of Rapid Change*

Now available in the United States: bit.ly/at-us — Now available in Europe: bit.ly/at-world

Thriving in today's marketplace frequently depends on making a transformation to become more agile. Those successful in the transition enjoy faster delivery speed and ROI, higher satisfaction, continuous improvement, and additional benefits.

Based on actual events, ***Agile Transformation: A Brief Story of How an Entertainment Company Developed New Capabilities and Unlocked Business Agility to Thrive in an Era of Rapid Change*** provides a quick (60-90 minute) read about a successful agile transformation at a multinational entertainment and media company, told from the author's perspective as an agile coach.

The award-winning book by **Scott M. Graffius** is available in paperback and ebook/Kindle worldwide. Some links by country follow.

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