GAICC

ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor

Certification Scheme Document

This document defines the certification scheme for ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor: the competence it certifies, how that competence is assessed, and the rules under which certification is granted, maintained, suspended and withdrawn. It is written to support conformity with ISO/IEC 17024:2026 for the certification of persons.

Field	Value
Document ID	GAICC-SCH-SLA42001-001
Version	1.3
Issued	30 October 2026
Scheme owner	Global AI Certification Council (GAICC)
Credential	ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor
Credential tier	Tier 4
Scheme basis	ISO/IEC 17024:2026 for certification of persons
Subject standard	ISO/IEC 42001:2023, First edition, 2023-12
Related documents	Exam Content Outline GAICC-ECO-SLA42001-001, Candidate Handbook GAICC-CH-SLA42001-001, Course Curriculum GAICC-CUR-SLA42001-001
Fact authority	GAICC-QMS-FR-42001-001 (Standard Fact Register v1.0) and GAICC-QMS-FR-AUDIT-001 (Audit Standards Fact Register v1.0)

This document contains no fee amounts. Exam Content Outlines carry no fee amounts at all. Candidate Handbooks carry examination and membership fees only, never training prices. certifications.gaicc.org/fees.html is the single source of truth.

1. Purpose and scope

This scheme certifies that an individual holds the competence described in section 4 in relation to ISO/IEC 42001:2023, at the Senior Lead Auditor level.

The scheme certifies persons. It does not certify organizations, and holding this credential does not imply that any organization the holder works for conforms to ISO/IEC 42001. Organizational certification is granted only by an accredited certification body following an audit.

Certification is not a legal qualification. It does not confer authority to act as a regulator, and it does not by itself demonstrate compliance with any law, including the EU AI Act or any other AI regulation.

2. Normative basis

Reference	Role in this scheme
ISO/IEC 17024:2026	General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons. The scheme is designed against these requirements. The 2012 edition was withdrawn on 31 March 2026.
ISO/IEC 42001:2023	The subject standard. All assessed content derives from it.
ISO/IEC 22989:2022	The single normative reference of ISO/IEC 42001. Its vocabulary applies to this scheme by the same route.
ISO/IEC 23894	Referenced as guidance on AI risk management. Informative to this scheme.
ISO/IEC 42006:2025	Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of AI management systems. It supplements ISO/IEC 17021-1. Assessed content for candidates, not a requirement on them.
ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015	Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems. Assessed content for candidates, including the major and minor nonconformity definitions at 3.12 and 3.13, not a requirement on them.
ISO 19011:2026	Guidelines for auditing management systems. Guidance only, and binds no one. Assessed content for candidates.
GAICC-QMS-FR-42001-001 (Standard Fact Register v1.0) and GAICC-QMS-FR-AUDIT-001 (Audit Standards Fact Register v1.0)	The authority for every factual claim in examination items and in course materials.

3. Scheme governance and impartiality

GAICC operates this scheme through a scheme committee that is responsible for the competence model, the Exam Content Outline, the examination blueprint and the cut score. Committee membership is drawn to represent the interests of candidates, employers, practitioners and users of certified services, and no single interest holds a controlling voice.

3.1 Separation of training from certification

GAICC publishes training material and authorizes training partners. To protect impartiality:

- Certification decisions are made by the Certification Decision Authority, which is independent of the training function.
- Completion of GAICC training is not a condition of certification. The routes in section 6 are equivalent.
- Examination items are not disclosed to trainers, and trainers do not participate in scoring or in certification decisions.
- Personnel involved in item development declare conflicts of interest and are excluded from decisions affecting candidates they have trained or employed.

GAICC runs a separate certification body site, certifications.gaicc.org, distinct from the training site gaicc.org. Scheme documents, fees and candidate rules are published on the certification body site, which is the single source of truth.

4. Competence model

The competence model is derived from an analysis of the tasks a practitioner at this level performs, and is expressed as the examination domains below. Domain weightings determine how many items each domain contributes to a form.

Domain	Title	Weighting
I	Strategic Governance and Leadership in AI Management Systems	25%
II	Advanced Audit of Implementation and Operational Control	35%
III	Performance, Maturity and Continual Improvement	25%
IV	Ethics, Transparency and Cross-Border Engagement	15%

Depth of competence. Complex engagements. The learner designs audit programs across multiple sites, standards and jurisdictions, judges governance maturity rather than clause conformity, audits agentic and generative systems, and arbitrates where evidence, law and ethics conflict. They set precedent for other auditors.

Audience. Audit team leaders on complex, multi-site and multi-standard engagements, technical experts on AIMS audits, and scheme and certification body technical managers.

4.1 Cognitive distribution

Every examination form is built to this distribution. It is stated here so that a candidate, an employer and an assessor can all see the standard of judgment the credential represents.

Cognitive level	Share of form
Remember	0%
Understand	10%
Apply	20%
Analyze	30%

Cognitive level	Share of form
Evaluate	40%

Formative assessment never exceeds the summative level. Module quizzes are written to the same cognitive distribution as the examination. A quiz pitched above the examination it prepares for gives a misleading readiness signal and is treated as a defect.

5. Eligibility

Criterion	Requirement
Prerequisite credential	ISO/IEC 42001 Lead Implementer recommended, not required
Experience	Recommended, not required: 5 years of relevant professional experience. The examination assumes familiarity with running an implementation.
Training	Required: at least 40 contact hours of structured ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor training by one of the routes in section 6, completed before the examination. Training for another GAICC certification does not count toward these hours.
Minimum age	18 years

Eligibility criteria are applied consistently to every candidate. Where a criterion is stated as recommended, it is not used to refuse an application.

6. Training routes

The required 40 contact hours may be completed by any one of three equivalent routes. No route confers an advantage in the examination, and no provider has access to live examination content. Evidence is a certificate of completion stating the provider, program title, contact hours and completion date.

1. GAICC self-paced course
2. A GAICC Authorized Training Partner or Certified Instructor
3. Equivalent contact hours from a GAICC recognized institution

7. Examination specification

Property	Value
Scored items	80
Format	60 single answer multiple choice with four options A to D, and 20 multi answer with five options A to E, select all that apply, no partial credit
Time allowed	120 minutes
Pass mark	70% provisional, confirmed per form by the standard setting study in section 9
Delivery	Online only, AI proctored on the GAICC hub (no test center option)
Open book	No, closed book
Languages	English, other languages on request
Attempts	One attempt per registration, plus one free resit within 12 months of registration
Blueprint	Built to the Exam Content Outline domains and weightings in section 4

7.1 Items per domain

Domain	Weighting	Items
I. Strategic Governance and Leadership in AI Management Systems	25%	20
II. Advanced Audit of Implementation and Operational Control	35%	28
III. Performance, Maturity and Continual Improvement	25%	20
IV. Ethics, Transparency and Cross-Border Engagement	15%	12
TOTAL	100%	80

Item counts are the target for a form. A published form may vary by one item per domain to accommodate item retirement, provided the total and the overall weighting are preserved.

8. Item development and review

Every item passes the following gates before it can appear on a live form. An item failing any gate is returned for rework or retired.

Factual gate. The item and its rationale are checked against GAICC-QMS-FR-42001-001 (Standard Fact Register v1.0) and GAICC-QMS-FR-AUDIT-001 (Audit Standards Fact Register v1.0). Any item asserting a fact the register contradicts is rejected outright, including where the wrong fact appears only in the answer key or rationale.

Blueprint gate. The item is tagged to one domain, one cognitive level and one difficulty label from the vocabulary easy, moderate, hard, very-hard. No other difficulty word is used anywhere a candidate can see.

Construction gate. Four options for single answer items and five for multi answer. No cueing language. The key is not systematically the longest option. Distractors are plausible to a candidate who has not mastered the objective.

Rationale gate. Every item carries a rationale that states why the key is correct, citing the clause or control, and why each distractor is wrong.

Independence gate. No item can be answered from another item on the same form.

Why the factual gate is stated first. A factual review of GAICC materials completed on 25 August 2026 found a practice question whose designated correct answer asserted a fact that ISO/IEC 42001 contradicts. A candidate who learned it would answer the real examination incorrectly. The factual gate exists so that this cannot recur.

9. Standard setting

The pass mark is 70%, confirmed for each form by a modified Angoff study per examination form. Subject matter experts rate the probability that a minimally competent candidate answers each item correctly; those ratings are aggregated to a cut score for the form.

Where the study produces a cut score materially different from the provisional mark, the study result governs for that form and the difference is recorded. Cut scores are not adjusted to achieve a target pass rate.

10. Examination delivery and security

Control	Provision
Delivery platform	hub.gaicc.org, online only (no test center option)
Proctoring	AI proctoring for online delivery, which is the only delivery mode
Item bank security	Live forms are held separately from practice material. Practice forms share no items with any live form.
Form rotation	Forms are rotated and items retired on a defined cycle
Candidate conduct	Candidates agree to the examination rules before starting. Breaches are handled under section 14.
Reasonable adjustments	Available on request, arranged before the examination is scheduled

Practice forms must never duplicate a live form. A portfolio review found one GAICC credential whose published practice examination was a verbatim copy of the live form. Under this scheme a practice form sharing any stem with a live form is withdrawn immediately and the live form is rotated.

11. Results and the certification decision

Provisional result on screen at completion; the Certification Decision Authority confirms the certification decision within 72 hours.

The certification decision is made by the Certification Decision Authority on the basis of the scored result and the candidate eligibility record. The decision is not made by anyone who trained the candidate or who developed the specific form sat.

Candidates receive their overall result and, where a result is a fail, domain level feedback sufficient to guide further study. Item level content is never disclosed.

12. Certificate, validity and use of the mark

Property	Value
Validity	3 years from the date of certification
Scope of claim	The holder may state that they hold the credential while it is valid
Use of the mark	In accordance with the GAICC Use of Certificates and Marks rules
Prohibited claims	The holder must not imply that any organization is certified, that GAICC endorses their employer, or that the credential constitutes legal or regulatory approval
Register	Certification status is verifiable through the GAICC register

13. Recertification

Certification is valid for 3 years and sits in renewal Tier 3. It is maintained by completing 60 hours of continuing professional development over the 3 year cycle, distributed across the three competencies of the GAICC AI Competence Triangle as shown below, reaffirming the GAICC Code of Ethics, paying the renewal fee set out in the Candidate Handbook, and recertifying in accordance with GAICC-QMS-PRO-REC-001.

CPD competency	Hours per cycle	What counts
Technology	27	AI systems, data, models, tooling and technical controls
Humanity	12	ethics, human oversight, fairness, transparency and impact on people
Strategy	21	governance, policy, risk, assurance and organizational alignment

A 3 month grace period applies after expiry. Where CPD evidence is insufficient, or a certification has lapsed beyond the grace period, the holder re-establishes competence by re-examination.

14. Suspension and withdrawal

Certification may be suspended or withdrawn where the holder:

- breaches the examination rules or is found to have gained certification improperly
- misuses the certification mark or misrepresents the scope of the credential
- fails to meet recertification requirements within the grace period
- breaches the GAICC Code of Ethics

The holder is notified in writing with reasons, and may appeal under section 15. Withdrawn certifications are removed from the register.

15. Appeals and complaints

There is no fee to lodge an appeal or complaint. An appeal against a certification decision, and a complaint about the scheme or its operation, are handled by personnel not involved in the matter appealed or complained of.

Outcomes are communicated in writing. Where an appeal identifies a defect in an item, a form or the scheme, the defect is corrected and every candidate affected by it is identified and remediated.

16. Confidentiality and records

Candidate personal information and examination responses are treated as confidential and are used only for operating the scheme, except where disclosure is required by law. Item banks, forms and standard setting data are confidential without exception.

Records of eligibility, results, certification decisions, appeals, complaints and scheme reviews are retained for at least one full certification cycle beyond the period to which they relate.

17. Scheme review

The scheme is reviewed at least annually, and additionally whenever any of the following occurs:

- ISO/IEC 42001 or its normative reference is amended or revised
- ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 42006, ISO 19011 or ISO/IEC 17024 is revised
- the Standard Fact Register or the Audit Standards Fact Register is revised in a way that affects assessed content
- examination performance data indicates a domain or item is not functioning as intended
- an appeal or complaint identifies a scheme defect
- the regulatory environment changes in a way that affects the competence model

Review outcomes are recorded, and any change affecting candidates is published before it takes effect.

18. Revision history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	25 August 2026	First issue. Establishes the scheme against the corrected fact base, adds the factual gate to item development, and separates practice forms from live forms.
1.1	29 September 2026	The scheme basis is ISO/IEC 17024:2026, since the 2012 edition was withdrawn on 31 March 2026. ISO/IEC 42005 is removed from the normative basis. ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO 19011 are added, and each auditing standard is dated. Scheme review is triggered by revision of any auditing standard the Audit Standards Fact Register tracks. Related document IDs

Version	Date	Change
		are given in full. Spelling is American English. The examination specification is unchanged: 80 items, all scored.
1.2	21 October 2026	Training is now required: at least 40 contact hours before the examination (previously recommended), with no credit for training taken for another GAICC certification. Experience: 5 years of relevant professional experience recommended, not required. Renewal moves to Tier 3: 60 CPD hours per 3 year cycle across the GAICC AI Competence Triangle (Technology 27, Humanity 12, Strategy 21), replacing the four CPD categories, with a 3 month grace period; the renewal fee is in the Candidate Handbook. Program names use American English. Matches the requirements published on certifications.gaicc.org and gaicc.org.
1.3	30 October 2026	Examinations are online only, AI proctored on the GAICC hub; the test center option is withdrawn. Attempts: one free resit within 12 months of registration. Renewal unchanged (Tier 3, 60 CPD hours).