Certification and Career Guide

CompTIA offers some of the most recognized entry-level certifications for IT professionals, including its A+, Network+ and Security+ certifications. This certification guide will help you get started with CompTIA’s certs and career paths.
About CompTIA

Worldwide Leader
Computing Technology Industry Association, CompTIA, is the leading provider of vendor-neutral IT certifications in the world.

CompTIA is dedicated to helping IT professionals lead the way in our ever-changing and digitally connected world. To date, CompTIA has issued more than 2 million IT certifications worldwide.

For more than two decades, CompTIA has developed training and certification exams for computing support, networking, security, open-source (Linux) development, cloud and mobility. They regularly review and update exams to ensure that CompTIA certifications continue to address the needs of today’s technology challenges.

Program Overview
CompTIA’s vendor-neutral certification program is one of the most recognized in the IT industry, having issued more than 2 million certifications during a 20-year span. Currently, their certifications are offered at four levels, or series:

- Basic
- Professional
- Master
- Specialty

Although the Basic and Master series each offer one certification at this time, CompTIA’s Professional series is comprised of nine globally recognized certifications that can help aspiring IT professionals jump start a career in a number of different areas of IT, including security, networking, cloud computing, server and Linux administration, project management and more. In the Specialty category, there are currently four certifications for document imaging, cloud essentials, healthcare IT and trainers.
Basic Certification

CompTIA IT Fundamentals

The CompTIA IT Fundamentals exam is designed to help students learn more about the world of information technology (IT). It’s ideal for students who are considering a career in IT or if they work in an allied field that requires a broad understanding of IT. CompTIA IT Fundamentals can also be a stepping stone to more advanced certifications such as CompTIA A+, and, with specialized experience, CompTIA Network+ and CompTIA Security+. Only one exam, FC0-U51, is required to earn the certification. Exam FC0-Z51, a non-proctored exam will no longer be available after July 31, 2017.
The CompTIA Professional series certifications are geared at IT professionals seeking a specific IT career, such as computer support, networking, security, mobility, project management or storage. The three most popular CompTIA certifications (A+, Network+ and Security+) fall in this category, as well as the Linux+, Cloud+, CSA+, Mobility+, Server+ and Project+ certifications.

**CompTIA A+**
The CompTIA A+ certification has been described as an "entry-level rite of passage for IT technicians," for a good reason. The A+ certification is designed for those seeking a career as a help desk, support, service center or networking technician. A+ covers PC and laptop hardware, software installation and configuration of computer and mobile operating systems. This certification also tests a candidate’s understanding of basic networking, troubleshooting and security skills. These skills serve as a springboard for CompTIA networking or security certifications or those offered by other organizations. According to CompTIA, more than one million IT professionals hold the A+ certification. The A+ is required certification for Canon, Dell, Intel and HP service technicians and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Candidates must pass two exams (exams 220-901 and 220-902) to earn the A+ credential.

**CompTIA Network+**
Many IT professionals start with the A+ certification. However, you can move directly to the CompTIA Network+ certification if you have at least nine months of networking experience. A candidate must be familiar with networking technologies, media, topologies, security, installation and configuration. The Network+ certification is recommended or required by Cisco, Dell, HP and Intel, and is also an accepted entry-point certification for the Apple Consultants Network. Network+ credential meets the ISO 17024 standard and just like the A+, it is recognized by the U.S. DoD. Only one exam, N10-006, is required to earn the certification.

**CompTIA Cybersecurity Analyst (CSA+)**
The requirement for highly skilled information security analysts will continue to rise as the cybercrimes and the threat of cybercrimes increase. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports anticipated growth of 18 percent for information security analysts between 2014 and 2024, giving Information Security Analysts the fastest rate of growth for all occupations. Cybersecurity Analyst (CSA+) certification is one of the newest additions to the CompTIA certification portfolio. The CSA+ credential is specifically designed to meet the ever-growing need for experienced, qualified information security analysts.

CSA+ credential holders are well versed in the use of system threat detection tools, as well as the use of data and behavioral analytics to secure applications and systems from risks, threats and other vulnerabilities. CSA+
Certification holders are able to monitor network behavior and analyze results and create solutions to better protect against advanced persistent threats (APTs), intrusions, malware and the like.

CompTIA describes CSA+ as a bridge certification between the Security+ credential (requiring two years’ experience) and the master-level CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner (CASP)) credential, which requires 10 years of experience. To earn the CSA+, candidates must pass a performance-based exam.

**CompTIA Security+**

CompTIA Security+ covers network security concepts, threats and vulnerabilities, access control, identity management, cryptography and much more. While CompTIA does not have any prerequisites, they recommend that certification candidates obtain the Network+ credential and have at least two years of IT administration experience with a security focus. To obtain the Security+ certification candidates must pass on exam, SY0-401.

**CompTIA Linux+**

The CompTIA Linux+ Powered by LPI certification aims at Linux network administrators with at least 12 months of Linux administration experience, including installation, package management, GNU and Unix commands, shells, scripting, security and more. CompTIA recommends the A+ and Network+ certifications as prerequisites but neither are required. Candidates must pass two exams (must pass LX0-103 before taking LX0-104,) to earn the credential.

**CompTIA Cloud+**

The CompTIA Cloud+ certification has been keeping pace with the growing cloud computing market. This certification targets IT professionals with 2 to 3 years of experience in storage, networking or data center administration. The CV0-001 exam tests candidates' knowledge of cloud models, resource management, business continuity techniques and general hypervisor technology for server virtualization.

**CompTIA Mobility+**

With the explosion of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programs and Internet of Things (IoT), mobile technology has seen an increasing in popularity and significance for IT infrastructures. IT professionals with 18 months’ experience in a mobile environment, and familiar with a variety of mobile devices, technologies and security, make great candidates for the CompTIA Mobility+ certification. CompTIA also recommends that candidates have 1 year of networking experience or a Network+ certification, and they must pass the MB0-001 exam. The Mobility+ exam is slated for retirement on December 15, 2017.

**CompTIA Server+**

CompTIA Server+ is tailored for server administrators with 18 to 24 months of experience with server hardware and software technologies. The A+ certification is highly recommended. The Server+ credential is recommended or required by HP, Intel and Lenovo for their server technicians, and is recognized by Microsoft and the U.S. DoD. A single exam, SK0-004, is required to achieve this credential.
CompTIA Project+

The CompTIA Project+ certification focuses exclusively on project management and is ideal for project managers who are familiar with project lifecycles from planning to completion, who can finish a project on time and under budget. Project managers interested in this certification should have at least one year of project management experience overseeing small- to medium-sized projects. The Project+ credential requires that candidates pass a single multiple choice exam, PK0-004.
Master Certifications

CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner (CASP)
The highly sought-after CASP certification is the only master-level credential currently available from CompTIA. CASP is designed for highly experienced IT security professionals who plan, design and implement security solutions in an enterprise environment.

While this certification doesn’t have any required prerequisites, it’s suggested that candidates earn the Network+ and Security+ certifications before tackling the CASP exam. You should also have 10 years of IT administration experience, as well as a minimum of 5 years of technical security experience (thus the certification’s place in the “Master” category).

Booz Allen Hamilton, Network Solutions and Verizon Telematics, among other companies, require CASP certification for certain positions. The U.S. Army and U.S. Navy also accept CASP as an industry-based certification required by employees and contractors who perform IT work in DOD data centers. The CASP certification requires that candidates pass the CAS-002 exam, which consists of 80 multiple-choice and performance-based questions.
Specialty Certifications

CompTIA specialty certifications cover topics specific to a particular vertical or niche market, such as digital imaging and social media. This category also includes the long-standing CTT+, CompTIA’s IT trainer credential.

**CompTIA CDIA+**
The CompTIA Certified Document Imaging Architect (CDIA+) certification is geared toward individuals looking to start a career in digital imaging and content management; specifically, best practices for planning, designing and specifying such systems. CDIA+ is recognized by imaging powerhouses such as Canon, Konica Minolta, Ricoh and Kyocera. In order to achieve a CDIA+ certification, candidates are required to complete the CD0-001 multiple-choice exam. It’s recommended that CDIA+ candidates have at least 2 years of experience before sitting for the exam.

**CompTIA Cloud Essentials**
The CompTIA Cloud Essentials certification aligns with individuals who understand the business aspects of cloud computing and how to move from in-house to cloud storage. Additionally, candidates should be familiar with the impacts, risks and consequences of implementing a cloud-based solution. A single exam is required to earn the credential.

**CompTIA CTT+**
The CompTIA Certified Technical Trainer (CTT+) certification was created specifically for anyone interested in technical training. It covers instructor skills, such as preparation, presentation, communication, facilitation and evaluation, in vendor-neutral fashion. Adobe, Cisco, Dell, IBM, Microsoft and Ricoh all recommend CTT+ to their trainers, and accept it in lieu of their own in-house trainer certifications.

Two exams are required for the CTT+ credential: CompTIA CTT+ Essentials (TK0-201) and either CTT+ Classroom Performance Trainer (TK0-202) or CTT+ Virtual Classroom Trainer (TK0-203).

The CTT+ Classroom Performance Trainer and CTT+ Virtual Classroom Trainer are performance-based exams. In this case, you must submit a video or recording of your classroom or virtual classroom sessions and complete a form that documents your training preparation, delivery and student evaluations.
Related Jobs and Careers

In addition to certification levels, CompTIA groups its certifications into several career paths:

- Information security
- Network and cloud technologies
- Hardware, services and infrastructure
- IT management and strategy
- Web and mobile
- Software development
- Training
- Office productivity
- Just starting my career

The CompTIA Certifications page lets you pick a certification level and/or a career path, and then returns a list of certs to focus on. For example, one of the most popular career paths in IT is network administration. CompTIA’s Network and Cloud Technologies career path offers numerous certifications that can help you advance your network administration career, such as IT Fundamentals at the Basic level, A+, Cloud+, Linux+, Mobility+ and Network+ at the Professional level, and the Cloud Essentials and Healthcare IT Technician specialty certifications.

Those interested in network security (one of the fastest growing fields in IT) should consider the certifications in CompTIA’s Information Security career path. This includes IT Fundamentals, A+, CSA+, Network+, Security+, and CASP.

CompTIA also provides a comprehensive IT certification roadmap that encompasses certifications from CompTIA as well as a variety of other organizations, including Cisco, Citrix, EC-Council, Microsoft and more.

Because CompTIA credentials do not focus on a single skill (such as networking or virtualization), CompTIA credential holders may find themselves in a variety of job roles depending on their experience, skill level and area of interest. Here are just a few of the possible careers that CompTIA credential holders may find themselves engaged in:

- **A+:** Typically, A+ credential holders find work in support roles, such as support administrators, support technicians or support specialists.
• **Network+**: Network+ professionals primarily work in network-related roles, such as network analysts, administrators or support specialists. Credential holders may also work as network engineers, field technicians or network help desk technicians.

• **CSA+ Security Analyst**: Common roles for professionals interested in cybersecurity, information security and risk analysis may engage in roles that include security engineers, cybersecurity analysts or specialists, threat or vulnerability analysts, or analysts for security operations centers (SOCs).

• **Security+**: Security spans a variety of jobs, such as network, system or security administrators, security managers, specialists or administrators, and security consultants.

• **Server+**: Roles for server professionals include storage and server administrators, as well as server support or IT/server technicians.

• **Linux+**: Linux professionals often work in roles such as Linux database administrators, network administrators or web administrators.

• **Cloud+/Cloud Essentials**: Cloud+ credential holders typically work as cloud specialists, developers or system and network administrators. Cloud Essentials professionals tend to work in areas related to cloud technical sales or business development.

• **CASP**: Common roles for CASP credential holders include cybersecurity specialists, InfoSec specialists, information security professionals and security architects.

• **Mobility+**: IT professionals interested in mobile devices may work in a variety of roles, ranging from email administrators, mobile device management/device administrators to network administrators, as well as solution architects.

• **Project+**: Project+ credential holders typically engage in project leadership roles, such as project managers, coordinators and directors, or team leads.

• **CDIA+**: Common careers include electronic records managers, solutions sales consultants and enterprise content management (ECM) administrators.

While the examples above are by no means exhaustive, they do provide an overview of some of the available careers. You career choices are limited only by your interests, imagination and determination to achieve your personal goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Covers</th>
<th>Recommended Experience</th>
<th>Job Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Foundational IT skills across devices and operating systems</td>
<td>6 to 12-months IT experience</td>
<td>Technical Support Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASP</td>
<td>Advanced security for complex environments</td>
<td>10 years experience in IT administration, including at least 5 years of hands-on technical security experience</td>
<td>Information Security Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDIA+</td>
<td>Digital imaging and enterprise content management</td>
<td>24-months experience in digital imaging</td>
<td>ECM Consultant or Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud+</td>
<td>Implement, maintain and utilize cloud technologies</td>
<td>24 to 36-months experience in networking, storage, or data center administration</td>
<td>Project Manager, Cloud Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud Essentials</td>
<td>Cloud computing from a business and operations perspective</td>
<td>6-months working in an environment that markets or relies on IT-related services</td>
<td>Non-technical employees: management, customer service, and operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA+</td>
<td>Prevent, detect and combat cybersecurity threats.</td>
<td>Network+, Security+ or equivalent knowledge. Minimum of 3-4 years of hands-on information security or related experience.</td>
<td>Security Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIT+</td>
<td>Techniques for teaching in today’s learning environments</td>
<td>6 to 12-months training experience</td>
<td>Technical Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Fundamentals</td>
<td>Solid grounding in technology concepts and practices</td>
<td>No previous IT experience required</td>
<td>Students preparing to enter the IT workforce and professionals changing careers to IT or technology-related fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linux+ (Powered by LPI)</td>
<td>Technical competencies for junior-level Linux administrators</td>
<td>A+, Network+ and 12-months of Linux administration experience</td>
<td>Junior Linux Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility+</td>
<td>Understand and troubleshoot wireless devices and technologies</td>
<td>Network+, 18-months experience in a mobile environments and 12 months networking experience</td>
<td>Mobility Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network+</td>
<td>Design, configure, manage and troubleshoot wired and wireless devices</td>
<td>A+ plus 9-months networking experience</td>
<td>Network Field Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project+</td>
<td>Initiate and manage projects and initiatives on time and within budget</td>
<td>1 year of managing, directing or participating in small- to medium-scale projects</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security+</td>
<td>Best practices in securing a wired and wireless network and managing risk</td>
<td>Network+ plus 2-years technical networking experience, with an emphasis on security</td>
<td>Security Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Server+</td>
<td>Build, secure and troubleshoot server hardware and software technologies</td>
<td>A+ plus 18 to 24-months experience in server technology</td>
<td>Systems Engineer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you have any questions about these certifications or other IT career paths, please contact us:

800.850.9932
or
www.stormwindstudios.com