A Simple Guide to Top Cloud Certifications

Get career-ready with certifications in AWS, Azure, GCP, and role-based technologies

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A Simple Guide to Cloud Certifications

Thinking about making a change in your career? Want to boost your income or add some security to your current cloud gig?

Consider pursuing a top certification.

Getting cloud-certified can be a great way for you to advance your career in today's digital world. With more and more companies moving their IT infrastructure to the cloud, there's an explosive demand for tech pros with the cloud expertise to drive innovation forward.

By earning a cloud certification, you can show employers that you have what it takes to design, deploy, and manage critical cloud applications and services. But it can be difficult to know where to start. That's why **we've researched and compiled a list of the most sought-after cloud certifications** with need-to-know info, including job roles and US salary estimates, to help make your decision-making process a little easier.

∞ DevOps

DevOps is a set of practices that aims to bring together development and operations teams to collaborate more effectively and deliver software faster — and with higher quality.

It involves automating and streamlining the software delivery process, from building and testing to deployment and monitoring, to ensure that code changes are delivered quickly and reliably.

AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional	
About the certification	The AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional certification validates your expertise in implementing and managing DevOps practices on the AWS platform. It focuses on continuous delivery and deployment, infrastructure as code, monitoring and logging, and security and compliance.
Job roles and salary ranges	DevOps Engineer | Estimated salary: $117,008* AWS DevOps Engineer | Estimated salary: $127,553*
Prerequisites	You'll need to have a minimum of two years of experience in a DevOps role, knowledge of AWS services and DevOps practices, and, (ideally) the AWS Certified Developer - Associate certification before you can take the AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional certification exam.
Exam Website	https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-devops-engineer-professional/
Cost	$300 plus tax, where applicable

AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional

Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/devops-engineer-professional-certification-preparation-for-aws-2019-427/

Certified Kubernetes Administrator (CKA)

About the certification	The Certified Kubernetes Administrator certification validates your knowledge of managing Kubernetes clusters. Kubernetes is a container orchestration tool that has become the standard for managing containerized applications. With this certification, you'll learn how to deploy, manage, and scale Kubernetes clusters in production environments. The Certified Kubernetes Administrator certification covers a range of topics, including installation and configuration, networking, storage, security, and troubleshooting.
Job roles and salary ranges	Kubernetes Administrator | Estimated salary: $128,604* Kubernetes Engineer | Estimated salary: $156,773*
Prerequisites	None
Exam Website	https://training.linuxfoundation.org/certification/certified-kubernetes-administrator-cka/
Cost	**$395 plus tax, where applicable**
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/certified-kubernetes-administrator-exam-preparation-242/

Docker Certified Associate (DCA)

About the certification	The Docker Certified Associate certification validates your expertise in working with Docker. Docker is a commonly used containerization platform that lets developers build, ship, and run applications in containers. With the Docker Certified Associate certification, you'll learn how to work with Docker at a professional level. This certification covers container creation and management, Dockerfile creation and management, image creation and management, and Docker networking and volumes.
Job roles and salary ranges	Software Engineer | Estimated salary: $102,735* Cloud Engineer | Estimated salary: $126,592*
Prerequisites	It's a good idea to have six months to a year of Docker experience prior to taking the Docker Certified Associate certification exam.
Exam Website	https://prod.examity.com/docker/
Cost	**$195 plus tax, where applicable**
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/docker-certified-associate-dca-exam-preparation-1-1393/

Security

In cloud, cybersecurity plays a crucial role in protecting sensitive data and systems from cyber attacks. The cloud offers a ton of benefits, including scalability, flexibility, and cost savings — but it also presents new security challenges.

With more data being stored in the cloud, the risk of data breaches and cyber attacks increases. Cybersecurity measures must be implemented to safeguard cloud-based systems and data, including strong access controls, encryption, and monitoring of activity and traffic.

Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)	
About the certification	In today's digital age, information security is of paramount importance, and the Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) certification equips you with the knowledge and skills you need to secure information systems and protect against cyber threats. The CISM certification covers risk management, access controls, network security, cryptography, and incident response.
Job roles and salary ranges	Business Analyst | Estimated salary: $80,276* Systems Analyst | Estimated salary: $87,425* Information Systems Security Officer | Estimated salary: $112,979* Privacy Consultant | Estimated salary: $106,007* Cybersecurity Manager | Estimated Salary: $125,740*
Prerequisites	You'll need to have five or more years of CISM professional work experience across at least three of the four CISM domains before you can take the Certified Information Security Manager certification exam.
Exam Website	https://www.isaca.org/credentialing/cism#register
Cost	$575 - $760 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/cism-foundations-1-2565/

Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	
About the certification	The Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) certification covers access control, cryptography, security architecture, risk management, and more. If you earn this certification, you'll gain the skills you need to design, implement, and manage a comprehensive security program to protect against cyber threats.
Job roles and salary ranges	Information Assurance Analyst | Estimated salary: $93,050* Security Systems Administrator | Estimated salary: $101,448* Cybersecurity Engineer | Estimated salary: $121,910*
Prerequisites	You'll need five years of full-time, paid work experience; four years of experience plus a recent university degree; or four years of experience with an approved security certification before you can take the CISSP certification exam.

Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)

Exam Website	https://www.isc2.org/Certifications/CISSP#collapse2
Cost	$749 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/preparation-for-the-cissp-certification-640/

AWS Certified Security - Specialty

About the certification	The AWS Certified Security - Specialty certification validates your expertise in securing applications and infrastructure on the AWS platform. With this certification, you'll learn best practices for securing AWS resources, protecting data, and responding to security incidents. The AWS Certified Security - Specialty certification covers identity and access management, network security, encryption, compliance, incident response, and more.
Prerequisites	You'll need to have the AWS Cloud Practitioner certification or any Associate-level AWS certification before you can take the AWS Certified Security - Specialty certification exam.
Exam Website	https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-security-specialty/
Cost	$300 plus taxes, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/security-specialty-certification-preparation-for-aws-201/

Amazon Web Services

Amazon Web Services (AWS) has been a major player in the cloud industry since its launch in 2006. AWS provides a wide range of cloud-based services, including computing, storage, and databases, as well as developer tools, analytics, and security services.

AWS has had a significant impact on cloud, driving innovation and competition and expanding access to resources for businesses and individuals.

AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner

About the certification	The AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner certification, an entry-level certification, covers the fundamental concepts of the AWS Cloud, including its infrastructure, services, and pricing models. This certification is designed for individuals who have minimal experience with AWS but who want to gain a basic understanding of the platform.

AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner

Job roles and salary ranges	AWS Cloud Practitioner | Estimated salary: $85,736*
Prerequisites	None
Exam Website	https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-cloud-practitioner/
Cost	**$100 plus tax, where applicable**
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/aws-cloud-practitioner-clf-c01-certification-preparation-for-aws-5597/

AWS Certified Solutions Architect - Associate

About the certification	Earning the AWS Certified Solutions Architect - Associate certification demonstrates your ability to design and deploy scalable, highly available, and fault-tolerant systems on AWS, using a range of AWS services and technologies.
Job roles and salary ranges	Solutions Architect | Estimated salary: $135,763* AWS Solutions Architect | Estimated salary: $152,171*
Prerequisites	It's a good idea to have some basic knowledge of building cloud solutions on the AWS platform before you take the AWS Certified Solutions Architect - Associate certification exam.
Exam Website	https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-solutions-architect-associate/
Cost	**$150 plus tax, where applicable**
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/aws-solutions-architect-associate-saa-c03-certification-preparation-for-aws-1-7446/

AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional

About the certification	The AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional certification validates your expertise in implementing and managing DevOps practices on the AWS platform. It focuses on continuous delivery and deployment, infrastructure as code, monitoring and logging, and security and compliance.
Job roles and salary ranges	DevOps Engineer | Estimated salary: $117,008* AWS DevOps Engineer | Estimated salary: $127,55*
Prerequisites	You'll need to have a minimum of two years of experience in a DevOps role, knowledge of AWS services and DevOps practices, and, (ideally) the AWS Certified Developer - Associate certification before you can take the AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional certification exam.
Exam Website	https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-devops-engineer-professional/

AWS Certified DevOps Engineer - Professional

Cost	$300 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/devops-engineer-professional-certification-preparation-for-aws-2019-427/

Google Cloud Platform

Google Cloud Platform (GCP) is a cloud platform and service offered by Google. Like AWS, it provides a range of cloud-based services, including computing, storage, networking, databases, machine learning, and more, to help organizations build, deploy, and manage applications and services in the cloud.

GCP is known for its flexibility, scalability, and reliability, making it an ideal platform for a variety of workloads.

Google Certified Associate Cloud Engineer (ACE)

About the certification	The Google Certified Associate Cloud Engineer (ACE) certification lets you demonstrate your ability to deploy applications, monitor operations, and manage GCP resources in a secure and efficient manner. This certification covers key GCP services such as computing, storage, networking, and security, and can ensure you have the skills to work effectively with GCP tools and technologies.
Job roles and salary ranges	Cloud Engineer | Estimated salary: $126,592*
Prerequisites	It's a good idea to have a basic understanding of both GCP products/services and cloud concepts before you take the Google Certified Associate Cloud Engineer (ACE) certification exam.
Exam Website	https://cloud.google.com/certification/cloud-engineer
Cost	$125 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/google-associate-cloud-engineer-exam-preparation-844/

Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect

About the certification	The Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect certification validates your understanding of designing and implementing cloud solutions on GCP. If you earn this certification, you'll have the skills to design and develop solutions using GCP services like computing, storage, networking, and security, and you'll be able to use industry best practices to optimize GCP resources for maximum efficiency.

Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect

Job roles and salary ranges	Cloud Architect | Estimated salary: $155,449*
Prerequisites	It's a good idea to have general knowledge of IT concepts before you take the Google Certified Professional Cloud Architect certification exam.
Exam Website	https://cloud.google.com/certification/cloud-architect
Cost	$200 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/cloud-architect-professional-certification-preparation-for-google-35/

Google Certified Professional Data Engineer

About the certification	Earning the Google Certified Professional Data Engineer certification shows that you have a deep understanding of designing and managing data processing systems on GCP. With this certification, you'll be able to demonstrate your ability to design and build data processing systems that are secure, scalable, and highly available.
Job roles and salary ranges	Data Engineer | Estimated salary: $108,816*
Prerequisites	It's a good idea to have basic database knowledge before you take the Google Certified Professional Data Engineer certification exam.
Exam Website	https://cloud.google.com/certification/data-engineer
Cost	$200 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/data-engineer-professional-certification-preparation-for-google-83/

△ Azure

Azure is another major player in the cloud industry, offering cloud-based services like computing, storage, databases, networking, and developer tools. Its strengths lie in its integration with other Microsoft products and its ability to support hybrid cloud deployments, making it a popular choice for businesses that want to move to the cloud gradually.

Azure also offers a breadth of security and compliance features, making it a top choice for businesses that require strict security measures.

AZ-104: Microsoft Azure Administrator

About the certification	The AZ-104: Microsoft Azure Administrator certification exam validates your ability to manage Azure identities and governance, implement and manage storage, configure and manage virtual networking, monitor and back up Azure resources, and more. If you earn this certification, you'll learn a wide range of Azure topics, including Azure AD, Azure storage, Azure virtual machines, and Azure networking.
Job roles and salary ranges	Microsoft Azure Administrator | Estimated salary: $104,993* Cloud Software Engineer | Estimated salary: $136,354*
Prerequisites	You'll need a general knowledge of IT architecture before you can take the AZ-104: Microsoft Azure Administrator certification exam.
Exam Website	https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/certifications/exams/az-104/
Cost	$165 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/az-104-exam-preparation-microsoft-azure-administrator-1-1332/

AZ-204: Microsoft Certified Azure Developer Associate

About the certification	The AZ-204: Microsoft Certified Azure Developer Associate certification confirms your ability to develop and deploy cloud-based applications and services on Azure. To earn this certification, you'll have to learn how to use Azure tools and services to design and develop scalable, secure, and highly available applications — and more.
Job roles and salary ranges	Microsoft Azure Developer | Estimated salary: $133,202*
Prerequisites	It's a good idea to have some software development and Azure experience prior to taking the AZ-204: Microsoft Certified Azure Developer Associate certification exam.
Exam Website	https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/certifications/exams/az-204
Cost	$165 plus tax, where applicable
Learning Path	https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/az-204-exam-preparation-developing-solutions-for-microsoft-azure-1208/

AZ-500: Microsoft Certified Azure Security Engineer Associate

About the certification	The AZ-500: Microsoft Certified Azure Security Engineer Associate certification validates your ability to implement and manage security controls, secure data and applications, manage access and identity, and protect Azure resources from potential threats. To earn this certification, you'll need to become well-versed in using Azure security tools and services such as Azure Security Center, Azure Key Vault, Azure AD, and more.
Job roles and salary ranges	Microsoft Azure Security Engineer | Estimated salary: $138,904*

AZ-500: Microsoft Certified Azure Security Engineer Associate	
Prerequisites	You'll need a moderate to strong understanding of Azure offerings and knowledge of basic IT security principles before you can take the AZ-500: Microsoft Certified Azure Security Engineer Associate certification exam.
Exam Website	**https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/certifications/azure-security-engineer/**
Cost	**$165 plus tax, where applicable**
Learning Path	**https://cloudacademy.com/learning-paths/az-500-exam-preparation-microsoft-azure-security-technologies-650/**

*All salaries listed are national estimates courtesy of ZipRecruiter.com and Glassdoor.com.

A Final Look

With the right cloud certification, you can learn the skills you need to take your career to the next level — regardless of the economic climate.

Begin by using this guide to choose the certification you want to pursue. Then, start a **Cloud Academy Learning Path** ❯ to gain skills that'll help you pass the exam.

Ready to start your journey?

Show employers that you have what it takes to design, deploy, and manage critical cloud applications and services.

Move your career forward with Cloud Academy. ›

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