



Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge (CCSK) v3 FAQ

May 2014

What is the Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge (CCSK)?

The CCSK is a web-based examination of individual competency in key cloud security issues.

What is the latest version of the CCSK examination?

The current version of the CCSK test is version 3.

What is the cost of the CCSK?

The CCSK costs \$345 USD, effective May 1, 2013.

How do I prepare for the CCSK examination?

We highly recommend CCSK training. As with any IT certification, formal training is an excellent way to improve your chance of successfully passing the exam. We have found that even more value comes in sharing real-world experiences with your peers and getting hands-on access to cloud systems to apply the best practices.

Information on CCSK training may be found at <https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/education/training/>

CSA has developed a preparation guide for the CCSK examination. The CSA prep guide covers the key learning objectives of each domain and is available here: <https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/CCSK-Prep-Guide-V3.pdf>

I have achieved the CCSK version 2.1, do I need to take the CCSK version 3 test?

Please contact ccsk-admin@cloudsecurityalliance.org for your free test token for V3.

What is the body of knowledge covered by CCSK?

The body of knowledge for the CCSK examination is the CSA Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus in Cloud Computing V3, English language version, and the ENISA report “Cloud Computing: Benefits, Risks and Recommendations for Information Security”. These research documents can be downloaded here:

CSA Guidance: <https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/guidance/csaguide.v3.0.pdf>

ENISA: <http://www.enisa.europa.eu/act/rm/files/deliverables/cloud-computing-risk-assessment>

92% of the questions are based on the CSA Guidance and 8% of the questions are based on the ENISA report. The very best way to prepare for the CCSK examination is to thoroughly read and understand these two documents.

Is the CCSK a viable substitute for other industry certifications?

The CCSK is NOT a substitute for other certifications in information security, audit and governance. Many certification programs help personal development within specific professional roles and job duties, and also provide vetting of individuals, which the CCSK does not do. The CCSK augments these other credentialing programs by encouraging a competency in cloud computing security best practices, which we believe will help individuals better cope with the increasingly pervasive cloud computing issues they are now facing. The Cloud Security Alliance is a strong supporter of popular professional certification programs within our industry and looks forward to developing formalized relationships with these programs in the future.

How does the CCSK complement other industry certifications?

CCSK early adopters have multiple certifications. CSA is committed to working with key user certification organizations to make sure that the education we provide aligns with the other certifications you seek.

One of the most widely sought user accreditations is the Certified Information Systems Auditor[®], from ISACA[®]. The CISA is considered to be the gold standard for information technology audit, and is also sought by professionals with related job duties. What CISAs have told us is that the CCSK provides the necessary context and focus to successfully audit cloud environments. The more knowledge one has about how clouds work and how they can be secured, the easier it is to identify the appropriate measures to test control objectives and make recommendations for IT systems that one will rarely touch and see. A cloud auditor would hold both certifications.

The most common certification we see held by CCSKs is the Certified Information Systems Security Professional[®] (CISSP) from (ISC)2, the most prevalent IT security certification worldwide. Those with a CISSP find this knowledge helpful in preparing for the CCSK.

All of the CISSP domains have an analog in the CCSK and from the feedback of CISSPs, where we have the same domain, the CCSK builds upon the CISSP domain and provides context that is important to cloud.

Are there any plans to “grandfather” individuals with other certifications into the CCSK program?

No. The CCSK is not a user accreditation, but a certificate of knowledge for a specific topic. Grandfathering would not serve the purpose of encouraging competency in cloud security best practices.

Does the Cloud Security Alliance plan other certifications?

CSA is developing new complementary education and certification programs in conjunction with industry partners and higher education. We are developing educational programs in the areas of security architecture, audit & assurance and software development.

Does the CSA provide training programs for CCSK test preparation?

CSA recommends training and has developed a training program to assist students in achieving their CCSK as well as to provide hands on experience in securing a cloud environment:

Cloud Computing Security Knowledge Foundation

The Cloud Computing Security Knowledge Foundation class provides students a comprehensive one day review of cloud security fundamentals and prepares them to take the Cloud Security Alliance CCSK certification exam. Starting with a detailed description of cloud computing, the course covers all major domains in the latest Guidance document from the Cloud Security Alliance, and the recommendations from the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA).

This class is geared towards security professionals, but is also useful for anyone looking to expand their knowledge of cloud security. (We recommend attendees have at least a basic understanding of security fundamentals, such as firewalls, secure development, encryption, and identity management.)

Cloud Computing Security Knowledge Plus

The CCSK Plus class builds upon the CCSK Foundation class with expanded material and extensive hands-on activities with a second day of training. Students will learn to apply their knowledge as they perform a series of exercises as they complete a scenario bringing a fictional organization securely into the cloud.

This second day of training includes additional lecture, although students will spend most of their time assessing, building, and securing a cloud infrastructure during the exercises.

More information on class schedules and training partners is available here:

<https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/education/training/>

Who is on the CSA Certification Board?

Our board is a diverse group of cloud security experts from around the world, listed here:

http://www.cloudsecurityalliance.org/ccsk_certification_board.html

Does the CCSK have industry support?

The CCSK is strongly supported by a broad coalition of experts and organizations from around the world. Since its launch in 2010, the CCSK has been adopted around the world and is the gold standard for demonstration of cloud security competency. The collaboration with ENISA means that the world's two leading organizations for vendor neutral cloud security research are providing the foundation for the industry's first cloud security certification.

www.cloudsecurityalliance.org/certifyme

