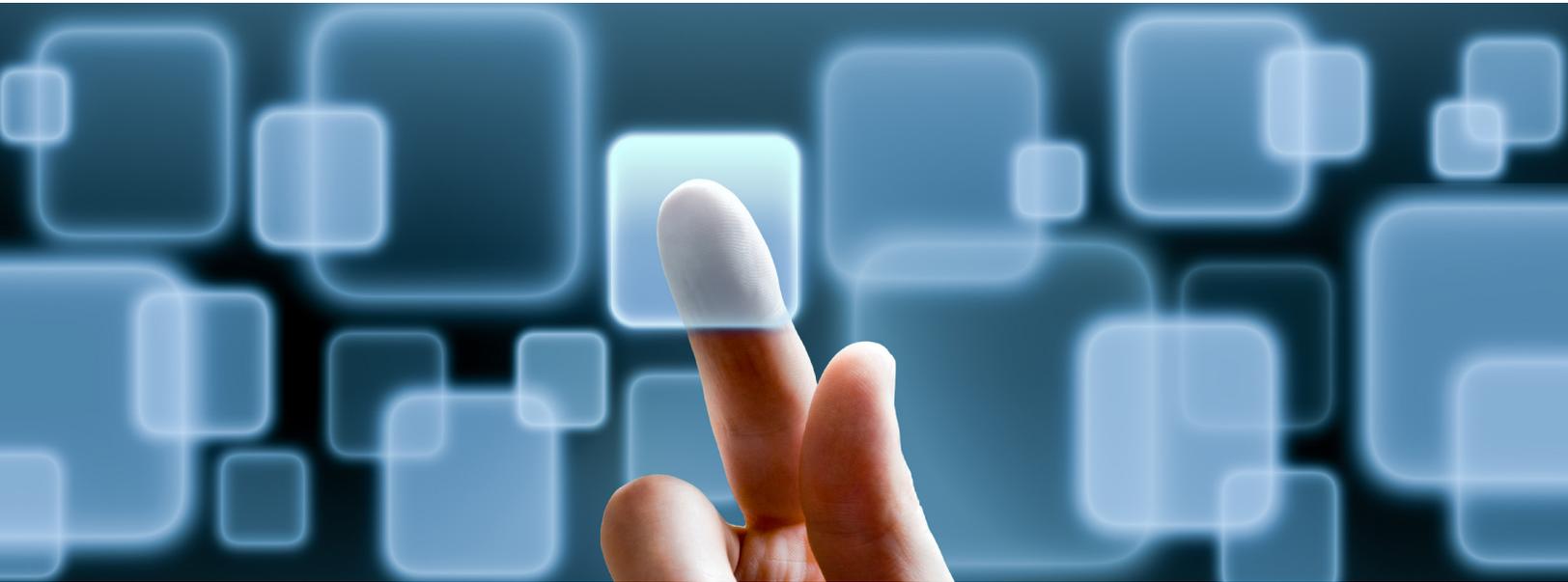# Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge (CCSK™)

Seldom has a technology offered more opportunity and more risk than the cloud. Let the marketplace know you are ready for the challenge with the first credential dedicated to cloud security, offered by the world's thought leader in cloud security.

This is the mother of all cloud computing security certifications. The Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge certification is vendor-neutral, and certifies competency in key cloud security areas.

—CIO.com, Top Ten Cloud Computing Certifications

CCSK™
Certificate of
Cloud Security Knowledge

Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge (CCSK™)

It took a special group of people to perceive from the start the likely impact cloud would have on computing. Those same early adopters recognize that the degree of potential risk and reward attached to the cloud calls for a deep understanding of cloud-related security and assurance issues.

They know there is an advantage to differentiating themselves from other professionals by master leading-edge thought in this growing field and having an objective, third-party credential reflecting their expertise. And they are taking action, by earning the CCSK from the CSA.

The professionals who have earned a CCSK come from a variety of backgrounds and have pursued their cloud certificate for different reasons:

- **Cloud providers and information security services firms** wish to demonstrate expertise in cloud as a competitive advantage, and have therefore encouraged their employees to earn the CCSK from its inception. Being able to state that their employees hold the CCSK allows their potential clients to rest easy, knowing that the necessary skills will be brought to bear on their project.

- **All Third Party Assessment Organizations** (3PAOs) within the US government's FedRamp program have CCSKs on staff because they need an objective, consistent level of cloud security knowledge and mastery of good practices.

- **Cloud customers** are faced with an increasing number of providers and services, and corresponding risks and benefits. Enterprise users who engage with many different cloud providers find CCSK especially helpful in establishing a baseline of security best practices as they deal with broad array of responsibilities, which may range from cloud governance to configuring technical security controls.

- **Individuals and firms that provide audit, attestation or certification services** know that, as more and more systems are migrated to cloud computing, they can grow their business by demonstrating, through a globally recognized credential, special knowledge of the cloud and cloud-specific security assurance.

What is CCSK?

The CCSK is a credential verifying successful completion of an exam that tests a broad foundation of knowledge about cloud security. Here are a few "fast facts":

- **Content:** 14 domains, covering topics such as architecture, governance, compliance, operations, encryption and virtualization

- **Body of knowledge:** CSA's "Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus in Cloud Computing V3.0" (English language version), the CSA Cloud Controls Matrix (CCM) and the ENISA report, "Cloud Computing: Benefits, Risks and Recommendations for Information Security"

- **Exam:** Taken online, completed in 90 minutes. 60 multiple-choice questions selected randomly from the CCSK question pool; passing score—80%

- **CPEs:** The CCSK can be used to satisfy continuing professional education credits for several other IT credentials

Preparing for the exam

Training is not required, but candidates are strongly encouraged to pursue formal courses to improve their chances at passing the exam. In addition to exam preparation, training offers a powerful opportunity to share real-world experience with peers and gain hands-on access to cloud systems to apply best practices, both of which are extraordinarily valuable.

CCSK is a requirement for any auditor providing services for CSA STAR Attestation, CSA's cloud provider assessment specification co-developed with the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).

Class Options:

- **CCSK Foundation** provides students a comprehensive, one-day review of cloud security fundamentals and the certificate's body of knowledge and prepares them to take the CCSK exam.

- **CCSK Plus** builds on the CCSK Foundation class with a second day of training that covers expanded material and offers extensive hands-on activities that reinforce classroom instruction. Students engage in a scenario of bringing a fictional organization securely into the cloud, which gives them the opportunity to apply their knowledge by performing a series of activities that would be required in a real-world environment.

These courses are available via CSA's training partner network. Some trainers can provide distance learning options or onsite training to make the learning experience as convenient as possible.

Navigating the certification ecosystem

The IT field is littered with certifications, of which designations related to security form a large part. CSA is committed to working with key user certification and accreditation providers to make its research and the CCSK itself available and aligned for continuing professional education (CPE) credits. You get the best bang for your buck while differentiating your cloud-security expertise.

CCSK dovetails well with two of the most common certifications earned by professionals with job duties related to cloud security.

For those holding ISACA's Certified Information Systems Auditor® (CISA®) designation, better understanding of how clouds work and how they can be secured makes it easier to identify the appropriate measures to test control objectives and make appropriate recommendations.

Holders of the Certified Information Systems Security Professional® (CISSP®) from (ISC)2® benefit from the alignment between the bodies of knowledge of the two credentials. All of CISSP's 10 domains have an analog in CCSK's 14 domains; where the domains overlap, CCSK builds on the CISSP domain and provides cloud-specific context.

The path ahead

The CCSK is under constant review and revision to ensure that it appropriately reflects the knowledge required by cloud professionals in a rapidly changing environment. The next update to the exam (July 2015) includes greater emphasis on the CSA CCM. Version 4 of CCSK will be available in the first quarter of 2016 and will include the latest cloud security innovations, such as the Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB).

In addition, CSA is working on:

- Education addressing best practices for cloud developers

- Education geared to cloud governance, risk and compliance for assurance professionals

CSA maintains a constant "finger on the pulse" of cloud evolution and, through its global network of subject matter experts, will ensure that CCSK certifies the latest knowledge required for cloud security professionals. Wherever your career path takes you within the IT environment, the CCSK will be a valuable addition to your portfolio.

Discover how formal recognition of your cloud knowledge can help your career and contribute to your enterprise's/client's success.

Get started with CSA CCSK

Learn more about the CCSK:
https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/education/ccsk/

View CCSK class schedule and locations:
https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/education/training/ccsk

Take the CCSK Exam Online:
https://ccsk.cloudsecurityalliance.org/

About CSA

The Cloud Security Alliance is the world's leading organization dedicated to defining and raising awareness of best practices to help ensure a secure cloud computing environment. CSA harnesses the subject matter expertise of industry practitioners, associations, governments, and its corporate and individual members to offer cloud security-specific research, education, certification, events and products. CSA's activities, knowledge and extensive network benefit the entire community impacted by cloud—from providers and customers, to governments, entrepreneurs and the assurance industry—and provide a forum through which diverse parties can work together to create and maintain a trusted cloud ecosystem.

CSA Milestones

- Not-for-profit association, launched in April 2009
- Issued the first comprehensive best practices for secure cloud computing, "Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus for Cloud Computing"
- Created the first and only user credential for cloud security, the Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge (CCSK), named the top cloud computing certification by CIO.com only three years after its introduction
- Created and maintains the Cloud Controls Matrix (CCM), the world's only meta-framework of cloud-specific security controls, mapped to leading standards, best practices and regulations
- Maintains a registry of cloud provider security practices, the CSA Security, Trust and Assurance Registry (STAR), and offers certification and attestation