

All About the Cisco Certified Security Professional

Network security is a hot topic, and network security specialists are hot commodities in today's job market. It's no surprise, then, that the Cisco Certified Security Professional (CCSP) distinguishes itself as one of the most sought-after networking certifications available today.

The CCSP was promoted in late 2002 from a Cisco Qualified Specialist program to a full-fledged track, paralleling Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP), Cisco Certified Design Professional (CCDP), and Cisco Certified Internetworking Professional (CCIP). Like the other three primary certification tracks, the CCSP has the CCNA exam as a prerequisite.

Accomplishing the CCSP certification requires you to pass five challenging exams, which cover a wide range of Cisco hardware and application software. You work with routers and firewalls at your network perimeter or in your demilitarized zone (DMZ). You establish Virtual Private Network (VPN) concentrators for your remote access users. Intrusion detection systems can covertly keep tabs on your network, and you learn how to configure and administer those systems. You work with Cisco Works components, such as Cisco Secure Policy Manager (CSPM) and Cisco Secure Access Control Server (CSACS). You use web browser applications to configure the hardware devices that protect your network. You ensure secure connectivity in small and medium networks, based on the SAFE blueprint.

Some of the information contained in this book overlaps material from the other four topics covered by the CCSP series of exams. VPN technology is an important element in network security, and it is no accident that more than one CCSP course includes additional information on Internet Protocol Security (IPSec) VPNs.

The exam is a computer-based exam that has multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and drag-and-drop matching and ordering questions. The CCSP series of exams are some of the most interesting exams to take because of the variety of presentation methods used during the questioning. When you are required to enter a command, you must be precise in your syntax, and you must not use abbreviations.