



Value of Specialization

Rich Opportunities

By taking advantage of the Cisco Systems® Channel Specialization Program to expand your company's technical expertise, you can create new opportunities, open up larger markets, and lay the foundations for a higher-margin business model.

Formidable Skill Set

Cisco specialization gives you the skills you need to deliver exceptional customer support and satisfaction.

Engagement Lifecycle

Use the proven, repeatable Cisco Lifecycle Services approach to provide you with opportunities to successfully sell and deploy network products, build stronger customer relationships, and increase profitability.

Business Customization

Choose from three levels of specialization—Express, Advanced, and Master—according to your business needs and your staff's professional goals.

Higher Profile

Cisco specializations enhance your company's business profile by validating your competencies and differentiating your offerings in the marketplace.

Ready for Certification

Specialization puts your organization on the path to becoming a Cisco Certified Partner, entitling you to a wealth of additional benefits.

Build Your Expertise—And Your Business

The depth and breadth of your technical expertise is what distinguishes your company and largely determines your success. The Cisco® Channel Specialization Program helps build your skills base and focus your strengths, so you can offer customers better service and a more compelling value proposition.

Superior technology skills translate to exceptional customer support and a reputation for excellence. When you earn specialized status from networking leader Cisco Systems®, it validates your competency and sends a powerful message to customers, helping you grow your business and boost profitability.

Specialization is a key element in the Cisco Channel Partner Program and a requirement for Cisco certification. The Cisco Lifecycle Services approach built into the technical specializations helps you successfully sell, deploy, and support Cisco technologies, optimizing performance over the life of the products.

www.cisco.com/go/partner/specialization

The Benefits of Specialization

The Cisco Channel Specialization Program not only provides direct benefits to your company, it also makes you eligible for the Cisco Channel Certification Program. By qualifying as a Cisco Premier, Silver, or Gold Certified Partner, your company can take advantage of the power of the Cisco brand, engagement with the Cisco sales force, a wealth of world-class product and service resources, technical support, productivity tools, online training, and marketing and sales promotion tools.

The benefits of acquiring Cisco specializations include:

Business growth. Build on your existing investment, while developing and enhancing key customer-driven capabilities.

Sharper skills. Increasing your level of expertise lets you offer a broader set of more advanced solutions and applications.

Greater recognition. Specialization gives you more recognition in the marketplace, allowing you to better differentiate your offerings.

Access to resources. Gain access to the Cisco Virtual Lab and other related technical symposia, so you can hone your skills using Cisco resources and expertise.

Career advancement. Cisco technical and sales training, and personal recognition such as Cisco Career Certification, allows individuals in your organization to advance their careers by becoming more valuable employees.

Qualify for certification. Specialization contributes to becoming a Cisco Certified Partner status. And as you add specializations, you can attain higher certification levels.

More product access. Cisco specialized partners enjoy convenient access to specific products and solutions. (Offers may vary by region.)

Promotional tools. Some specializations entitle you to participate in special financing, laboratory discounts, rebates, and more. Master specializations spotlight partners that offer an exceptional depth of expertise.

High-margin opportunities. Cisco specializations can help your company move up to higher-margin offerings that boost revenues.

Convenient training. Cisco technical training courses have been enhanced and simplified. Partners can also take sales and Cisco Lifecycle Services courses free of charge. Forty percent of all courses are offered through E-Learning.

Business Focus. Specialized training helps you develop skill sets that are more closely aligned with your business goals.

What's in it for You

The enhanced Cisco Channel Partner Program lets your company add to its expertise and acquire new skills that will help you deliver intelligent, integrated network solutions. And Cisco rewards you for doing so.

The partner program offers levels of certification based on specializations. The Cisco Channel Specialization Program lets you develop and demonstrate your organization's technical skills through structured training roadmaps and knowledge validation processes. Cisco specialization assures your customers that your staff has the knowledge and Lifecycle Services capabilities necessary to deliver outstanding technical support. And customer satisfaction verification provides objective evidence of your company's commitment to excellence. This expertise enables your company to differentiate itself from competitors, pursue new markets, and migrate to higher margin services-based and solutions-based business models.

Specialization Tiers

Cisco specializations are organized into three tiers according to the degree of technical depth and focus, as well as sales and Cisco Lifecycle Services capabilities to provide more differentiation opportunities.

Express Specializations

- Express Foundation specialization provides training in the areas of routing and switching, wireless LANs, and security technologies that allows partners to deliver integrated network solutions.
- Express Foundation is the minimum requirement for all Cisco Premier Certified Partners.
- An Express Unified Communications specialization is also offered for voice/data/video networking.

Advanced Specializations

- Advanced specializations are offered in the areas of routing and switching, wireless LANs, security solutions, and unified communications.
- An Advanced specialization focus is on developing sales, technical, and services capabilities that distinguish partners as being among the industry's elite in providing integrated, collaborative, adaptive solutions.
- Cisco Silver Certified Partners may acquire two Advanced specializations or they may opt for Express Unified Communications specialization and one Advanced specialization, excluding Advanced Unified Communications specialization.
- Cisco Gold Certified Partners must attain all four Advanced specializations.

Master Specializations

- Master specializations are offered in Unified Communications and security technologies.
- Master specialization distinguishes an elite group of partners who have proven themselves as having the most in-depth technology skills and customer success in selling, deploying and providing services for more sophisticated, value-added Cisco business solutions
- The Master Specialization designation builds on the Advanced Specialization providing greater opportunities for competitive differentiation, branding, and the highest Cisco economic incentive.

Program Requirements

Base and Optional Specializations

Cisco specializations directly reflect a partner's depth of technical, sales, and services expertise in a particular technology. Specializations may also be used to attain Cisco Certified Partner status at the Premier, Silver, or Gold designations.

The Base specializations listed under the Express specializations and Advanced specializations tiers in the following table count toward Cisco certification. These specializations include the latest Cisco

products, Cisco Lifecycle Services training, and sales training. Two Master and four Optional specializations are also available, but do not count toward certification.

For more information on certification, see the Cisco Channel Certification Program brochure or go to www.cisco.com/go/partner/certifications.

As the markets for networking technology and customer needs evolve, so does the strategic importance of Cisco specializations. Occasionally Cisco makes modifications to the specialization program. For the latest information, refer to www.cisco.com/go/partner/specialization.

Table 1. Cisco Channel Specializations

Base Specializations	
Express Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum requirement for Premier certification level • Technical competency in integration of routing and switching, wireless LAN, and security • Focused on building customer network infrastructure and supporting new network capabilities • Includes Cisco Lifecycle Services Express E-Learning
Express Unified Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to transition customers from legacy telephony systems to digital and IP telephony • Expertise in selling, designing, installing, and supporting a Cisco Unified Communications solution for small and midsize businesses, particularly enterprise autonomous branch offices • Focused on single-site and limited-site entry-level converged networks with a low degree of complexity • Includes Cisco Lifecycle Services Express E-Learning
Advanced Routing and Switching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to build, configure, and troubleshoot campus networks and remote access networks using the latest Cisco Catalyst multilayer switching technologies and high-speed Ethernet and Cisco routers connected in LANs and WANs • Includes Cisco Advanced Routing and Switching Lifecycle Services E-Learning
Advanced Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in selling, designing, installing, and supporting a comprehensive Cisco Self-Defending Network solution • Focused on the entire Cisco suite of security products • Includes Cisco Lifecycle Services Advanced Security E-Learning
Advanced Wireless LAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in building and maintaining end-to-end wireless network connections throughout or between buildings • Focused on three major segments for profitable growth: Corporate Office, Commercial, and Vertical • Includes Cisco Lifecycle Services Advanced Wireless E-Learning
Advanced Unified Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of how to deploy and support a highly scalable, reliable, and available distributed multiservice Cisco Unified Communications solution based on a converged architecture in a single office, remote site, or enterprise • Includes Cisco Lifecycle Services Advanced IPC E-Learning
Master Specializations	
Master Unified Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and rewards capability to integrate multiple, sophisticated Unified Communication solutions combined with a full menu of Lifecycle Services • Requires additional sales, technical, and support capabilities • Full pre- and post-sales processes and capabilities • Advanced Unified Communications Specialization is a prerequisite
Master Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and rewards capability to integrate multiple, sophisticated security solutions combined with a full menu of Lifecycle Services • Requires additional sales, technical, and support capabilities • Full pre- and post-sales processes and capabilities • Advanced Security Specialization is a prerequisite
Optional Specializations	
Express Customer Relationship Management Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills associated with integrating Cisco CallManager® Express (CME) with the Microsoft CRM application • Complements the Cisco Unified Communications strategy
Security VPN/Firewall Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in selling, designing, installing, and supporting a network security solution to small and midsize business (SMB) customers • Ability to deliver a network security solution that integrates both VPN capabilities and firewall protection
Storage Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation that your organization fully understands the Cisco MDS 9000 Intelligent SAN Family of products, including how to assess, design, deploy, and optimize them in advanced storage networking solutions
Global Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a global presence and proven capability in providing consistent commerce and product logistics services to global customers • Demonstrated practices and capabilities in global order management, invoicing, product delivery logistics, and negotiating global customer agreements

Dedicated Role Requirements

Role dedication helps strengthen technical and sales skills, and reduces the risk that turnover in trained employees could affect your company's ability to perform specialized tasks and satisfy customer expectations. Individual specialization roles may be used to satisfy requirements for Premier, Silver, and Gold Certification. The CCIE certification roles are required for Silver and Gold certification.

Each Base specialization role must be satisfied by a unique individual in your organization. An individual occupying a role in the Express Foundation specialization may also be used to fill one role in one other Base specialization.

To provide added flexibility, the 2x2 role-sharing rule may be used in all Optional specializations. This means that an individual can fill two roles in any two Optional specializations without affecting a Base specialization role.

The table below summarizes the Base specialization role requirements, including the dedicated job roles and the total number of unique individuals needed for each specialization.

For details about the training and examination requirements for Cisco Career Certifications, visit www.cisco.com/go/partner/certifications.

Profit From Your Expertise

When it comes to successfully deploying broad or deep networking technologies and providing services, it pays to be specialized. By participating in the Cisco Channel Specialization Program, your company can acquire valuable skills and expertise that puts you in position to increased business and higher customer satisfaction. Take advantage of the product access, resources, experience, and the Cisco Lifecycle Services approach that only Cisco can offer.

The Cisco Channel Specialization Program is another way that Cisco is teaming with partners to grow their businesses, create value for customers, and increase profitability.

For more information, or to become a Cisco Specialized Partner, go to www.cisco.com/go/partner/specialization.

Table 2. Certification Dedicated Role Requirements

	Account Manager Role	System Engineer Role	Field Engineer Role	Total Individuals Required
Express Foundation	CSE (1)	CCDA (1)	CCNA (1)	3
Express Unified Communications	CSE (1)	CCDA or CCNA (1)		2
Advanced Routing and Switching	CSE (1)	CCDA (1)	CCNP (1)	3
Advanced Security	CSE (1)	CCDA (1)	CCSP (1)	3
Advanced Wireless LAN	CSE (1)	CCDA (1)	CCNA (1)	3
Advanced Unified Communications	CSE (1)	CCDA (1)	CCVP (1)	3

CCIE requirements for certification: Gold = 4, Silver = 2
CCIE can satisfy any technical specialization role



Americas Headquarters

Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters

Cisco Systems, Inc.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters

Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

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