



Announcement Date: June 30, 2018

Energizing Master Specializations

Improving Ease of Doing Business

During the Cisco Partner Summit 2017, Cisco announced a revitalization of the Master Specializations. The new [Master Networking Specialization](#) acted as a blueprint for you to deliver the Intent-Based Network to your customers. On June 30, 2018, we are launching the revised versions of the remaining Master Specialization portfolio for Security, Collaboration, and Cloud Builder. Service Provider remains unchanged at this time.

Master Specializations have been updated two primary ways:

- **Skill development**, including an increased focus on business skills (in addition to technical and sales skills) to ensure partners are more effectively enabled for line-of-business (LOB) engagements
- **Audit requirements**, evolving into a stream-lined validation process and a points-based system that provides partners with options for higher-value business activities, better aligned with their practice areas, to fulfil their annual renewal requirements

Transition Plan

- There will be a transition plan for all existing Master Specialized partners renewing their specialization(s) and moving to the new Master points system (see Figure 1).
- Partners renewing an existing Master specialization will earn their first year's points by completing a technical skills check-in, based on a subset of the Technical Skills Evaluation requirements.
- This is scheduled as a review with a Cisco subject matter expert (SME) once the renewal application has been submitted and all prerequisites verified as complete.
- Successful demonstration of skills will earn renewal points. The intention is to confirm partners have maintained expertise in target topics. This will satisfy the renewal requirements for partners with anniversary dates between October 1, 2018 and October 1, 2019.
- Partners with anniversary dates up to October 1, 2018 will continue to be waived for Master Collaboration and Cloud Builder Specializations, while those with Master Security may opt to renew using the current program audit requirements or the technical skills check-in.
- After the initial renewal under the new process, partners may begin to earn points from the options offered for each Master specialization toward their next renewal. Points reset each anniversary date.
- Partners may opt for a full audit instead of earning points for any Master Specialization renewal. In addition, partners will have to pass a full audit if they fail to earn points, any given year, by their anniversary date (no grace period).
- All documentation with details of evaluation, check-in and points requirements may be found on the appropriate [Master Specialization requirements pages](#).

Figure 1: Master Specialization Update Transition Plan

	2018							2019				
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	...	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Transition Period				Technical Check-In				Points / Audit			
Master Cloud Builder	Waive Master Cloud Builder				Technical check-in for year one renewal points				Points process (partners choose how to earn points) OR Full audit per policy			
Master Collaboration	Waive Master Collaboration				Technical check-in for year one renewal points							
Master Security	Old or New Master Security				Technical check-in for year one renewal points IF no audit within past 24-months							

Note: Master Networking Specialization was the first Master Specialization to start using the new points-based approach, so there no transition plan needed.

Find out more information on the revitalized Master Specializations: www.cisco.com/go/specializations.

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