What jobs can I expect to be qualified for after earning the CCNP Data Center certification?

The CCNP Data Center certification is most frequently sought by data center professionals with three to five years of experience. Typical job titles of those who have obtained or are currently seeking the CCNP Data Center certification include Business Services Architect, Technology Architect, Pre-sales Engineer, Design Engineer, Implementation Engineer, and Support Engineer.

What is the CCNP Data Center certification?

The CCNP Data Center certification is a three-year job-role–based professional-level certification for business services architects, technology architects, pre-sales engineers, design engineers, and implementation engineers. The courses and exams cover advanced data center concepts within the areas of unified computing and unified fabric. The certification benefits data center professionals who want to save time and money on data center equipment design, installation, and maintenance. The CCNP Data Center certification program allows you to maximize your investment in your education and increase the value of your data center network. The certification provides a solid foundation for your career in installing, configuring, and maintaining data centers. You can further expand your expertise in data centers with the CCIE Data Center certification and grow your career.

How many exams do I need to pass to earn a CCNP Data Center certification?

The CCNP Data Center certification comprises four exams. Candidates choose four exams from a total of six exams that are available within the CCNP Data Center track. The six exams include Designing Cisco Unified Computing exam, Implementing Cisco Unified Computing exam, Designing Cisco Unified Fabric exam, Implementing Cisco Unified Fabric exam, Troubleshooting Cisco Unified Fabric exam and Troubleshooting Cisco Data Center Unified Computing exam. These are all 90-minute exams that include between 65 and 75 questions. The exams are available in English.

What will I learn by preparing for the CCNP Data Center exams?

The 642-996 DCUFD Cisco Data Center Unified Fabric Solutions Design exam tests a candidate's knowledge in designing Cisco data center unified fabric solutions. The exam also covers reference network topologies, routing protocols, traffic design concepts, storage and storage networking architectures, scalability, availability, and security and management architectures. Candidates can review the exam topics prior to the exam to better understand what topics will be covered: https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/docs/DOC-16178.

The 642-998 DCUCD Cisco Data Center Unified Computing Systems Design exam tests a candidate's knowledge in designing Cisco data center unified computing systems. Exam topics include design concept in a server virtualization environment, scalability, reliability, performance, and management. Candidates can review the exam topics prior to the exam to better understand what topics will be covered: https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/docs/DOC-16169.

The 642-999 DCUCI Cisco Data Center Unified Computing Systems Implementation exam tests a candidate's knowledge in implementing Cisco data center unified computing systems. Concepts such as setup of the computing environment in a standalone and rack-mountable configuration, provisioning of storage resources, backup, management functions, and deployment of a virtualized environment are covered by this exam. Candidates can review the exam topics prior to the exam to better understand what topics will be covered: https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/docs/DOC-16175.
The 642-997 DCUFI Cisco Data Center Unified Fabric Solutions Implementation exam tests a candidate's knowledge in designing Cisco data center unified computing systems. Security, management, high availability, virtualization in the network, and product descriptions are all exam topics. Candidates can review the exam topics prior to the exam to better understand what topics will be covered: https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/docs/DOC-16172.

The 642-035 DCUCT Cisco Data Center Unified Computing Troubleshooting exam tests a candidate's knowledge of Cisco data center unified computing troubleshooting. In addition, the exam tests a candidate's skills in troubleshooting a virtualized computing environment based on the Cisco Unified Computing System platform, focusing on features like storage and network connectivity, installation, memory issues, booting issues, drivers, BIOS, and adapter connectivity issues. Candidates can review the exam topics prior to the exam to better understand what topics will be covered: https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/docs/DOC-16194.

The 642-980 DCUFTS Cisco Data Center Unified Fabric Troubleshooting exam tests a candidate's knowledge of the key components and procedures needed to troubleshoot and resolve common issues with the Cisco Nexus 7000 Series, the Cisco Nexus 5000 Series, the Cisco MDS Series, and the Nexus 2000 Fabric Extenders in the network and SAN environment. Candidates can review the exam topics prior to the exam to better understand what topics will be covered: https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/docs/DOC-16181.

What prerequisites are required to attain a CCNP Data Center certificate?
Valid CCNA Data Center certification or any CCIE certification can act as a prerequisite.

How do I recertify my CCNP Data Center certification?
Three years before the certification expiration date, accomplish one of the following:

- Pass any current 642-XXX professional-level exam, or
- Pass any current CCIE written exam, or
- Pass any current CCIE lab exam, or
- Pass the current CCDE written exam, or
- Pass the current CCDE practical exam, or
- Pass the CCAr interview and the Architect board review to extend lower certifications.

How many years of experience are required to attain a CCNP Data Center certification?
There is no specific requirement for years of experience. However, Cisco does recommend at least four years of professional-level data center experience before starting the program.

How do I prepare for a CCNP Data Center exam?
There are a variety of ways to study for your exam. You can sign up for a class given by a Cisco certified learning partner. See the listings in the Global Learning Locator: http://tools.cisco.com/GlobalLearningLocator/LLocatorHome.do.

In addition, you can opt for self-study or a combination of self-study and instructor-led training. For those pursuing self–study, the Cisco Learning Network https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/community/certifications/ccnp_data_center provides practice exam questions, lists of study materials, study groups, and exam topics. In addition, the site provides forums where candidates can ask questions and get additional references for study materials or techniques. Be sure to review the study/learn...
section for specific resources: 

When are the CCNP Data Center exams given?
CCNP Data Center exams are given as needed. Check the Pearson VUE website to locate a testing center near you and schedule your exam: http://www.vue.com/cisco.

Where are the CCNP Data Center exams given?
Exams are given by Pearson VUE at their testing centers in 165 countries worldwide. To register for your exam or to see a list of exam locations, visit the Pearson VUE website: http://www.vue.com/cisco.

Where can I get more information regarding the CCNP Data Center certification program?
There is more information regarding the CCNP Data Center certification program on the Cisco Learning Network: www.cisco.com/go/ccnp-data-center.