Frequently Asked Questions: New Cisco CCNA Curricula

New Curricula and Certification

Q. Why did Cisco® create two new CCNA® curricula?
A. The new CCNA curricula were created in response to input from administrators, instructors, and students. CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration target different student segments based on their academic experience and goals. By using different methodologies to teach students with different educational backgrounds and interests, we can help students successfully achieve their learning goals. This will improve both student and instructor satisfaction and help increase enrollment rates.

Both curricula are designed to help students prepare for IT professional careers and the CCNA certification exam. CCNA Discovery is designed for students with basic PC usage skills and can be delivered as an independent curriculum or integrated into broader courses of study at upper-secondary institutions, career and technical schools, and colleges. CCNA Exploration is designed for students with advanced problem solving and analytical skills, such as those who are pursuing degrees in engineering, math, or science. CCNA Exploration can be integrated into technology curricula or continuing education programs at postsecondary institutions such as universities, colleges, and career and technical schools.

Students who enroll in CCNA Exploration will be expected to know binary math and understand the concept of algorithms, whereas students who enroll in CCNA Discovery will not be expected to have this knowledge and the curriculum will provide expanded explanations or tools such as a binary calculator.

Q. Given their differences, how can CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration both align with the CCNA certification?
A. CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration teach the same applied skills but present the information in different ways to appeal to the two student segments. Each curriculum provides relevant and effective lessons to engage students and ensure they are successful in learning the material in a way that aligns with their educational backgrounds and goals.

Key Features and E-Doing

Q. What are the main features of CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?
A. The CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula help prepare students for IT professional careers and the CCNA certification exam.

New features in both CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration are as follows:

- Embedded e-doing, which uses the capabilities of a computer to provide guidance and opportunities for exploration and experimentation
- A new graphical user interface (GUI) that engages students and facilitates instruction with an attractive "look and feel" and more interactive activities
- An introduction to advanced technologies such as voice, video, wireless and security, and converged networks
- A design that enables more efficient translation to support Cisco's commitment to delivering the curricula in multiple languages

**Key Features of CCNA Discovery**

- Designed for students with basic PC usage skills
- Can be delivered as an independent curriculum or integrated into broader course studies at upper-secondary institutions, career and technical schools, and colleges
- Maps directly to everyday experiences with networks and covers important networking concepts based on the types of practical network environments students may encounter; ranging from small office and home office (SOHO) networking to more complex enterprise and theoretical networking models covered later in the curriculum
- Offers a hands-on, career-oriented approach to learning networking that emphasizes practical experience
- Includes activities that emphasize the practical applications of networking in terms of implementation and career opportunities
- Teaches applied skills midway through the four-course series to make IT relevant, encourage students to consider additional education in IT, and help students prepare for entry-level IT careers

**Key Features of CCNA Exploration**

- Designed for students with advanced problem solving and analytical skills, such as those who are pursuing degrees in engineering, math, or science
- Can be part of an integrated curriculum or continuing education program at postsecondary institutions, such as career and technical schools, colleges and universities
- Designed to allow students to learn skills in a more rigorous, comprehensive, theoretical, and practical way that is reflective of standard college and university-level educational practices
- Uses language that allows for integration with other engineering concepts
- Presents an integrated and comprehensive coverage of networking topics, from fundamentals to advanced applications and services
- Includes highly complex and challenging hands-on labs
- Offers more flexibility in the delivery of the courses
- Designed to help prepare students for continued education and IT professional careers after the completion of the four-course curriculum

**Q. What is e-doing**

**A.** E-doing is a design philosophy that applies the principle that people learn best by interacting with computer-based activities. The Cisco Networking Academy® Program has always emphasized the hands-on practical aspects of learning. E-doing is an attempt to bring that same practicality to the computer experience. E-doing emphasizes meaningful student engagement by promoting exploration and experimentation with electronic tools for scientific visualization and network simulation that results in rich feedback and interactivity. E-doing also enables instructors to use multiple modalities to engage students in learning course objectives.
that are logically connected to each other and introduced in the context of students' lives and career opportunities.

**Q. Why is e-doing such an important part of the new CCNA curricula?**

**A.** The presence of e-doing in the new curricula effectively creates a toolkit that enables instructors to deliver an interactive, multi-modality learning experience with the following characteristics:

- Presents new concepts and skills in context, using real-world scenarios and examples
- Provides many opportunities for practice and feedback
- Emphasizes the use of computers to visualize complex ideas
- Promotes the exploration of networking concepts and experimentation with tools such as Packet Tracer and interactive Flash-based activities to help students develop a greater understanding of network technologies
- Provides network simulations to increase the amount of console-based practice a student can gain to supplement hands-on time with real equipment
- Uses global and multicultural scenarios to engage students
- Applies more specific scenarios and examples during in-class discussions and activities or homework assignments
- Applies learning strategies that support multiple learning styles such as visual, auditory, and hands-on

**Articulation**

**Q. Will there be a clear articulation path from the CCNA Discovery curriculum to the CCNA Exploration curriculum?**

**A.** The CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula have each been developed with the goal of preparing students for the CCNA exam through the use of different pedagogical approaches. Articulation (course credit) agreements are generally developed at the institutional level based on existing programs and pathways. CCNA Discovery courses 1 and 2 should enable students to earn CCNA Exploration course 1 equivalent credit. Moreover, an institution may choose to grant CCNA Exploration credit to students who complete the CCNA Discovery curriculum.

**Q. Will both the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula help students prepare for enrollment in the Cisco CCNP® curriculum?**

**A.** Yes, students who complete CCNA Discovery courses 1–4 or CCNA Exploration courses 1–4 will be prepared to start the CCNP curriculum.

**Equipment**

**Q. What are the equipment requirements for CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?**

**A.** For existing Academies, we anticipate minimal or no new equipment expenses. Since equipment availability, prices, and discounts vary by theater and region, you should contact your technical manager for specific information. For your convenience, the technical managers are listed here by region:
Current Academies are advised to start acquiring new Integrated Services Routers (ISRs) when possible, but these devices are not required to deliver either the CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration curriculum. New Academies are encouraged to acquire the new ISRs.

The current CCNA bundle can be found on the following Website:
http://cisco.netacad.net/cnams/content/library/curriculum/Ccna.jsp

Q. Can Packet Tracer be used to replace the lab bundles for the new CCNA curricula?
A. No, Packet Tracer is not a replacement for the CCNA hands-on lab equipment. The Network Academy program recommends the use of physical equipment for hands-on learning. This is a key differentiator relative to other programs. Packet Tracer simulations, which are embedded in the new curricula, are supplemental and designed to provide learning opportunities for environments that are not possible to re-create in the classroom.

Training

Q. What instructor training is required to teach CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?
A. For existing CCNA instructors, training is optional but strongly recommended. Our goal is to offer a self-paced distance learning solution for current CCNA instructors at no extra cost.* Current CCNA instructors are encouraged to complete the self-paced distance learning for the new technology content and pedagogy. The recommended time per course is a minimum of 8 to 10 hours for each CCNA Discovery course, and a minimum of 4 to 8 hours for each CCNA Exploration course. The optional training materials will be available approximately one month before the new CCNA curricula become available.

New instructors who have not already completed CCNA v3.1 instructor training will be required to complete in-person training as well as an online assessment and skills-based assessment. New instructors are expected to complete approximately 60–80 hours of training per course, which is similar to the current time requirements for CCNA v3.x training. Costs generally range from US$50 to US$150 per day, and vary according to location.

*Training Academies may offer additional training opportunities to their instructors. As such, there may be fees associated with these learning events, as determined by the training Academy. Please refer to your training Academy for exact costs.

Q. What materials and options will be available for instructor training?
A. A wide variety of materials will be available for instructor training, including interactive course guides, instructor reference guides, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, lab materials, and activities. The following types of instructor training will be available: in-person, remote, blended, and independent learning. Independent or self-paced learning will only be available for existing CCNA instructors who choose to pursue re-training upon the initial rollout of the new curricula.

Translation

Q. Will the new CCNA curricula be translated?
A. Translated curricula, including course content, the user interface, and assessments, are a
major part of the Networking Academy program's growth strategy and global sustainability efforts. Cisco's goal is to support the translation of CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration to the greatest extent possible to meet instructor and student needs. Cisco plans to start translating the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses as soon as the English versions become available. The roadmap for each supported language will be announced in the June–August 2007 timeframe.

Q. What is the translation strategy for CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?
A. Cisco's translation strategy focuses on two areas:
   1. Developing all CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses with special features designed to facilitate translation
   2. Designing and testing a funding approach to maximize the number of languages supported by the new curricula

Certain languages will be funded by Cisco. These will be called globally strategic translations. The selection criteria for these languages include sustained growth of the Academy program, Cisco priorities in emerging countries, and the availability of current translations.

Since the Network Academy program cannot fund all languages in all courses, we will be creating a process for high-quality, regional and locally strategic translations. The costs will be shared between the Network Academy program and the local sponsor, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Migration

Q. What are the migration plans for the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses?
A. Institutions that decide to offer the new CCNA curricula can adopt CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration, based on which curriculum best meets their needs. Unlike the rollout of CCNA versions 2.x to 3.x, there will be no bridge courses. If an institution is midway through delivering CCNA v3.1, the institution should continue with the CCNA v3.1 curriculum. Countries with translated versions of CCNA v3.1 courses may choose to wait until a translated version of the new CCNA curricula is available, or adopt the English version.

Q. Will the CCNA v3.1 courses continue to be offered when the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula are available?
A. Yes, they will continue to be offered. There are no immediate plans to retire the CCNA v3.1 courses. This curriculum will continue to be made available to existing and new Academies as long as it aligns with customer needs and certification requirements.

Availability

Q. When will the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula be available for teaching?
A. The English versions of CCNA Discovery courses 1 and 2 and CCNA Exploration courses 1 and 2 will be available in the June–August 2007 timeframe. The English versions of CCNA Discovery courses 3 and 4 and CCNA Exploration courses 3 and 4 will be available in the November–December 2007 timeframe. Cisco is committed to translating the new CCNA curricula into other languages. Information about the translations that will be performed directly by Cisco will be announced in the June–August 2007 timeframe.

Q. Why are you announcing these new curricula so far in advance?
A. This announcement is well in advance of the availability date to allow Academies and
instructors to consider these changes in their planning processes. We want to keep all audiences informed of planned changes as early as possible, but we are still finalizing some of the new curricula details, so some questions may not be answered in the materials that Cisco is providing at this time. We will update you with more information as it becomes available.

**Q. When will Cisco Press books be available for these new CCNA courses?**

**A.** Cisco Press is actively working with the Cisco Networking Academy Program team to develop companion books for the new CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula. More details on the titles and their publication dates will be announced via the Cisco Press Website as well as the Cisco Press Instructor Newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit [www.ciscopress.com/newsletters](http://www.ciscopress.com/newsletters).