



University of Phoenix®

5 jobs IT certifications can help you get

By Jill Elaine Hughes

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Information technology (IT) is constantly changing, so it's crucial to keep your skills current. But how? With certifications, says Treg Gardner, an IT specialist who teaches in the University of Phoenix [A+ Fundamentals](#) and [Network+ Technologies](#) certificate programs.

"I've been in this business for almost 30 years, but employers only care about what you've done in the past one or two years," he says. "Degrees get you the interview, but the certification gets you the job."

Here are five hot IT jobs and their required certifications:



Desktop support

These entry-level positions usually require the [CompTIA A+™ certification](#), in addition to an associate or bachelor's degree, Gardner says, noting that this certification trains you in the fundamentals of computer systems repair and maintenance.

"The A+ certification is the simplest to get of all the big certs," he says, adding that you can be ready for the exam in about three months.



Network administrators

The next step up from desktop support is network administration, which requires one or more networking certifications. Network administrators maintain and troubleshoot computer networks and must hold the [CompTIA Network+™ certification](#), Gardner points out, emphasizing, “This is a really big employment area right now.”

Knowledge of Cisco® systems also is a must-have for anyone interested in computer networks, since much of today’s Internet runs on Cisco server technology, he says. These jobs usually require the [Cisco Certified Network Associate \(CCNA®\)](#) Routing and Switching certification.

One way to gain the knowledge you’ll need to take the certification test is through [CCNA exam preparation](#), says Lisa Sims, an independent IT consultant and an instructor in the University’s [web development program](#).



Network engineers

The rise of cloud computing networks — which allow storage, management and processing of data over the Internet rather than via local servers housed and maintained on-site — has led to new senior-level networking certifications like the [Microsoft® Certified Solutions Expert \(MCSE\) Private Cloud](#) designation.

This certification requires passing multiple exams after months of intense study — either independently or through classes, Gardner says. “Expect to have no life while you’re studying for this,” he stresses, noting it took him four tries to pass the MCSE test. “You’ll work, sleep and prepare for the exam.”

Other MCSE designations, such as Server Infrastructure and Communication, Sims notes, will qualify you to design and maintain entire large-scale networks.



Cybersecurity specialists

With the rise of hacking, identity theft and even cyberespionage, cybersecurity positions are emerging in criminal justice, at major corporations and in the federal government.

These jobs require the [Certified Information Systems Security Professional \(CISSP®\) certification](#), Gardner says, which involves five years of information security experience, related coursework and passing a national exam.

Learn about current security issues and prepare for the CISSP test, Sims says, by taking [information systems security courses](#).



Software developers

If you want to get into programming, Gardner says, you'll need the Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer (MCS D) certification to develop apps for the Windows® operating system, the web and mobile technologies. Like other Microsoft certifications, this one requires coursework and an exam.

The MCS D is in high demand. "With the growth of mobile technologies today," Gardner says, "companies love to hire in-house application developers."

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*For more information about each of these programs, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit: phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.

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