

CCSK v5 FAQ

Explore the latest version of the CCSK

General Information



What is the CCSK?

The [Certificate of Cloud Security Knowledge](#) (CCSK) is widely recognized as the standard of expertise for cloud security and gives you a cohesive and vendor-neutral understanding of how to secure data in the cloud. CCSK is the fundamental foundation to gain the necessary knowledge to be able to work with cloud computing and to eventually extend your expertise to vendor specific training.

What is included in the CCSK v5 July 16 release date?

As of July 16, 2024, the release of CCSK v5 includes the exam, study guide, chatbot, self-paced course, and instructor-led training.

What are the benefits of earning CCSK v5?

Professionals earning the CCSK v5 not only demonstrate a mastery of essential and up to date cloud security knowledge but also retain permanent access to the first of its kind CCSK Chatbot, named CCSK Orb. This is a unique tool to help professionals learn the body of knowledge as well as providing ongoing assistance in daily challenges with its unique interactive capabilities. CCSK v5 is the mark of the modern cybersecurity professional.

Who is CCSK v5 for?

The CCSK is designed for any IT professional working in cloud computing. As the recognized gold standard of expertise for cloud security best practices and education, the CCSK is an essential credential for all security professionals to show proof of skills to current and future employers. Because the CCSK is

designed to deliver a well rounded view of cloud security, professionals with less experience or non-security backgrounds also find significant value in the training and certificate, particularly developers, IT operations, and audit, governance, risk management, and compliance.

I am not a cloud security professional. Does it make sense for me to take the CCSK exam?

Because the CCSK is designed to deliver a well rounded view of cloud security, professionals with less experience or non-security backgrounds also find significant value in the training and certificate, particularly executives and decision makers, developers, IT operations, pre-sales engineers, audit, governance, risk management, and compliance.

Are there required prerequisites?

There is no official experience required, however it is highly recommended that participants have a basic understanding of security fundamentals such as firewalls, secure development, encryption, and identity and access management. To learn more about these topics prior to taking the CCSK v5, visit CSA's [Knowledge Center](#) to check out our complete training portfolio.

What is the cost of CCSK v5?

| CCSKv5 Product/Component | What is included | Price |
|--|--|--|
| Study Guide | Study Guide | Free download |
| Exam | Exam + Chatbot | \$445 |
| Self-Paced Course | Courseware + Chatbot | \$495 |
| Self-Paced Course/Exam Bundle | Courseware + Exam + Chatbot | \$795 |
| Instructor Led Training: CCSK Foundation | ILT Course + Exam + Chatbot | *Starting at \$995 (See classes for details) |
| Instructor Led Training: CCSK Plus | ILT Course + Exam + Chatbot (includes labs) | *Starting at \$1695 (See classes with AWS and Azure Labs for details) |

*Baseline pricing only. Instructor-led pricing varies based on a variety of circumstances such as location, scope, duration, and more.

Does CSA offer corporate training discounts for our teams?

Yes. More information can be found [here](#).

Do CSA Corporate Members receive any CCSK v5 benefits?

Yes. Corporate members get training benefits, which can be used on v5 training material. Contact membership@cloudsecurityalliance.org to learn more.

How can I get CCSK training for my team?

Those interested in team training can email teamtraining@cloudsecurityalliance.org for more information.

Does CSA offer a military discount?

Yes. United States veterans can receive full coverage for the CCSK exam under the GI Bill. You can learn more about the requirements and reimbursement process [here](#). Veterans who do not qualify for a complimentary exam token under the GI Bill or veterans who are looking for a discount on CCSK training can contact support@cloudsecurityalliance.org to learn if they qualify for special pricing.

What is the CCSK v5 influenced by?

Developed through an extensive process that started with stepping back and reorganizing the entire structure of the training to better fit how cloud security is currently practiced, CCSK v5 was influenced by a decade's worth of knowledge gained about what skills and knowledge are needed to be successful in today's far more complex environments. CCSK v5 was built from the ground up. Instead of just adapting the previous material, every module was written from scratch leveraging previous material that has proven to work well based on a decade-plus of instruction.

How does the CCSK v5 set the standard for industry certificates?

The CCSK v5 certificate is at the forefront of cloud security education, incorporating the latest advancements in organizational management, cloud-native security, workload, network security, security monitoring, data security, and the latest strategic drivers such as AI and Zero Trust. It uniquely balances foundational knowledge with an exploration of specialized topics, emphasizing the practical application of security principles in real-world scenarios. This comprehensive curriculum equips professionals with

actionable skills, enabling them to effectively address modern challenges in complex cloud environments and set new standards in the industry.

How does CCSK v5 compare to other certificates currently in the market?

There are many fine cybersecurity educational programs that provide strong theoretical knowledge or focus on a specialized technology or organizational role. CCSK v5 is the one program that provides a survey of the important topics cybersecurity professionals will face day in and day out and is complementary to virtually any other education available.

Is the CCSK a viable substitute for other industry certifications?

The CCSK is not a substitute for other certifications in information security, audit and governance. Many certification programs help personal development within specific professional roles and job duties, and also provide vetting of individuals, which the CCSK does not do. The CCSK augments these other credentialing programs by encouraging a competency in cloud computing security best practices, which helps individuals better cope with the increasingly pervasive cloud computing issues they are now facing. The Cloud Security Alliance is a strong supporter of popular professional certification programs within our industry and looks forward to developing formalized relationships with these programs in the future.

CCSK v4 to v5 Information

What are the key differentiators between CCSK v4 and CCSK v5?

CCSK v5 has been substantially updated to provide a detailed understanding of modern cloud components and state-of-the-art security best practices. CCSK v5 provides a comprehensive catalog of the essential knowledge cybersecurity professionals need to master. This body of knowledge includes the latest in cloud architecture, cloud native security, workloads, virtual networking, data protection, DevSecOps, and incorporates introductory content on Zero Trust, Generative AI, and much more. CCSK v5 also includes vital information about managing risks, achieving compliance, optimizing organizational cloud security strategies and understanding the shared responsibility between the cloud provider and cloud user. The CCSK v5 program includes several training options as well as a groundbreaking CCSK Orb, CSA's new CCSK focused chatbot.

What is the CCSK Chatbot?

The CCSK Chatbot, named CCSK Orb, is a new tool that helps professionals learn the body of knowledge of the CCSK. CCSK Orb is included in the purchase of any CCSK v5 product, with the purchaser retaining permanent access to the chatbot so they can continue to benefit from ongoing assistance while managing the daily challenges they face as modern cloud security professionals. CCSK Orb is based on the Security Guidance and CCSK v5 Study Guide which can both be accessed in the CCSK v5 Prep-Kit. The chatbot is designed for transparency to allow users to set clear expectations for how it assists. After purchasing a CCSK v5 product, the purchaser will receive an email with further instructions on how to access the chatbot.

When can I use the Chatbot?

CCSK Orb, the chatbot, can be used as a learning aide at any time including while you study, are taking the exam, and after you complete the CCSK. It is intended to be used as a supportive reference tool that can be used as a learning assistant. Students are encouraged not to use it as the sole means of exam preparation or knowledge. Note that AI hallucinations are possible from the chatbot and users need to make their own educated decisions about the validity of the content provided.

What enhancements have been made to the CCSK v5?

CCSK v5 has undergone significant updates to align with modern cloud security needs. Enhancements include:

- Consolidated Domain Structure: The content has been reorganized into 12 domains instead of 14, with a more effective grouping of topics.
- Increased and Refined Focus Areas: The certificate now offers increased coverage on Cloud Workloads, emphasizing Serverless/FaaS, along with expanded material on Application Security, CI/CD, DevSecOps, and Automation.
- Strengthening Core Areas: There is extended and improved upon content across Governance, Auditing, Compliance, Organizational Security, IAM, and Incident Response.

What are the new additions to the CCSK v5 curriculum?

The CCSK v5 introduces several new critical elements to its curriculum:

- Artificial Intelligence: AI and Gen AI has replaced the previous Related Technologies chapter, shifting the focus away from topics like IoT and Mobile Data to more central issues in current cloud security.
- Zero Trust Strategy: Zero Trust concepts have been integrated across various domains.

- Data Lakes: Explicit reference to Data Lakes has been added.
- Organization Management and Security Monitoring.

Furthermore, the CCSK v5 has reduced coverage of Legal and Regulatory specifics, moving away from detailed discussions on Laws and Regulations. Additionally, Security as a Service (Sec-aaS) has been removed, with cloud security tools now discussed across several domains.

If I studied for CCSKv4, what additional information do I need to study to pass the CCSKv5?

Having studied for the CCSK v4, you are likely to have an advantage in understanding several core concepts as many of them are included in v5 as well as v4. We recommend that you thoroughly read the CCSK v5 Study Guide and pay particular attention to:

- Zero Trust
- AI / GenAI
- CI/CD
- Security Operations
- Resilience
- Security Monitoring, Cloud Telemetry & Analytics
- Data Lakes

If I have a CCSK v4 certificate, do I need to take another exam to upgrade my certificate to v5?

Yes. While your v4 certificate does not expire, you do need to take the v5 exam to get the v5 certificate.

If I have both a CCSK v4 course and exam token, can I upgrade them together?

No, the process to upgrade your v4 exam token and v4 course are handled separately. The exam token upgrade will be handled according to the token upgrade policy and the course upgrade will be handled according to the course upgrade policy. This applies even if you purchased the course and exam in a bundle.

What is the standard upgrade policy to CCSK v5?

Recent CCSK Holders

(Passed CCSK v4 between January 1, 2024, and July 16, 2024)

- A free single-attempt CCSK v5 upgrade token will be automatically distributed to those who passed their CCSK v4 exam between January 1, 2024 and July 16, 2024.

All Other CCSK Holders

(Passed any version of CCSK prior to January 1, 2024)

- Can purchase one single-attempt upgrade token for \$70.
- Additional tokens may be purchased at the full price of \$445.

Non-CCSK Holders

- Must purchase a new token at full price of \$445.

Remaining Exam Attempts

- Any remaining attempts can be used for CCSK v5.
- Any remaining attempts can be used for CCSK v4 until January 1, 2026.

Self-Paced Course Holders

(Less than 1 year since purchase)

- Will automatically receive a free upgrade to the CCSK v5 self-paced course on July 16, 2024. The upgraded v5 course will appear in your course list. You will continue to retain access to the v4 course.

Self-Paced Course Holders

(More than 1 year since purchase)

- Can upgrade to CCSK v5 self-paced course for \$95 upon request to support@cloudsecurityalliance.org after July 16, 2024.

Instructor-Led Training

- No discounts or reimbursements for previously purchased courses.

Is it free for me to upgrade if I am from a member organization?

The standard upgrade policy applies to people from member organizations. They may also be eligible for training credits through their organization.

How long will the CCSK v4 exam be available?

The CCSK v4 exam will be available until January 1, 2026.

How long will the CCSK v4 courses be available?

As of July 16, 2024 students will no longer be able to enroll in the CCSK v4 course. The v4 self-paced training and exam will be maintained for those currently enrolled until their expiration date (1 year per course). Students enrolled in the self-paced v4 course can continue to access their course from their profile page on the CSA Knowledge Center.

I passed the CCSK v4 training and certificate. Will I still have access to those items?

Yes. Even upon request for a CCSK v5 license, you will have access to your CCSK v4 training until it expires (1 year from purchase) and to your CCSK v4 certificate which never expires. You will receive a new certificate upon passing the CCSK v5 exam. Students enrolled in the self-paced v4 course can continue to access their course from their profile page on the CSA Knowledge Center.

Is the CCSK v5 Study Guide an updated version of the Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus in Cloud Computing v4?

No, they are not the same. The Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus in Cloud Computing v4 was the primary study material for v4 of the exam. For CCSK v5, we created study guides as the primary source material needed to prepare for the v5 exam. The CCSK Study Guide is a more condensed version of the Security Guidance v5 and only includes the information covered in the exam. The Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus in Cloud Computing v5 is a more comprehensive, deep dive into the 12 domains of the CCSK v5 and provides readers with a greater body of knowledge on each of those topics. It is not required to pass the CCSK v5 exam.

When will the Security Guidance for Critical Areas of Focus in Cloud Computing v5 be released?

The updated version of the [Security Guidance](#) is also available as of July 16, 2024.

Is the CCSK v5 Plus course available?

The option to take the Instructor-led CCSK Plus training that includes labs is available as of July 16, 2024. The labs in use at this time will be carried over for version 4, as they have been updated regularly and are not out of date. Revamped, version 5 labs will be released at a later date.

In what language(s) is the CCSK v5 available?

English. We are planning on offering translations in the future, and the timeline for that is unknown.

Exam Information

What is the structure of the exam?

This is an open-book, online exam, completed in 120 minutes with 60 multiple-choice questions selected randomly from the CCSK question pool. The minimum passing score is 80%.



Domain 1
**Cloud Computing
 Concepts & Architectures**



Domain 2
Cloud Governance



Domain 3
**Risk, Audit, &
 Compliance**



Domain 4
**Organization
 Management**



Domain 5
**Identity & Access
 Management**



Domain 6
Security Monitoring



Domain 7
**Infrastructure &
 Networking**



Domain 8
**Cloud Workload
 Security**



Domain 9
Data Security



Domain 10
Application Security



Domain 11
**Incident Response
 & Resilience**



Domain 12
**Related Technologies
 & Strategies**

How many questions are pulled for each domain?

| Domains | # of Questions |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Cloud Computing Concepts & Architectures | 5 |
| 2. Cloud Governance | 5 |
| 3. Risk, Audit & Compliance | 5 |
| 4. Organization Management | 5 |
| 5. Identity & Access Management | 4 |
| 6. Security Monitoring | 4 |
| 7. Infrastructure & Networking | 6 |
| 8. Cloud Workload Security | 7 |
| 9. Data Security | 5 |
| 10. Application Security | 6 |
| 11. Incident Response & Resilience | 5 |
| 12. Related Technologies & Strategies | 3 |

How many questions are on the exam?

The exam is made up of 60 multiple-choice questions. The questions are selected randomly from the CCSK question pool and are not always the same for every attempt.

Does my exam token expire?

Yes. Your exam token expires two years from the date it is issued. If necessary, it can be extended for six months at a time. Contact support@cloudsecurityalliance.org to request an extension.

How many attempts at the exam are included with my token?

Each regular token includes up to 2 attempts at the exam. The discounted upgrade token available to CCSK holders includes 1 attempt.

If I pass the exam on my first attempt, can I give my second attempt away to someone else?

No.

Can I give my discounted upgrade token to someone else?

No.

If I fail my first attempt, is there a waiting period to take my second attempt?

No. There is no enforced waiting period between attempts or token purchases. However, we recommend taking time to study after failing an attempt.

What study options are available to help me prepare for the exam?

Students can select from a variety of ways to study for the exam based on their preferred learning style and needs: study independently using the free CCSK Prep-Kit which includes the v5 Study Guide, take the self-paced online training, or enroll in instructor-led training (available online and in-person).

What is the benefit of enrolling in an instructor-led course versus self-paced study?

| CCSK Training and Certificate Options | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| CCSK v5 | CCSK Exam | CCSK Training & Exam <i>Self-Paced</i> | CCSK Training & Exam <i>Instructor Led</i> | |
| Course Title | CCSK Exam | CCSK Foundation | CCSK Foundation | CCSK Plus |
| Location | Online | Online | Online or In Person | Online or In Person with Labs |
| Study Mode | Self Study with Study Guides | Interactive multimedia with practice quizzes | Instructor Led | Instructor Led |
| Time to Complete | Based on time to read Study Guides independently | Hours will fluctuate as content is regularly updated | 2 days minimum <i>Online or In Person Classroom</i> | 2 days minimum <i>Online or In Person Classroom</i> |
| Digital Study Guides <small>Written Materials Only</small> | ✓ 365-day access | ✓ 365-day access | ✓ 365-day access | ✓ 365-day access |
| Fully Guided Study | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Audio/Video Materials | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Practice Quizzes or Sample Exam Questions | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Expert Instructor Access | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Expert Q&A | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community Support with CSA Circle | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Exam Tokens <small>One token, two attempts. Valid for 2 years.</small> | ✓ | ✓ Also available without exam tokens for \$495 | ✓ | ✓ |
| CCSK Orb <small>New Chatbot</small> | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hands-On Labs | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Price | \$445 | \$795 | Starting at \$995* <small>See classes for details</small> | Starting at \$1695* <small>See classes with AWS and Azure Labs for details</small> |
| Team Pricing | All versions are available for teams in enterprise organizations and government agencies. Contact teamtraining@cloudsecurityalliance.org for details. | | | |

*Baseline pricing only. Instructor-led pricing varies based on a variety of circumstances such as location, scope, duration, and more.

If I passed an earlier version of the exam on my first attempt, can I use my second attempt to take v5?

Yes.

Can I get extra time on the exam if English is not my first language?

Please contact support@cloudsecurityalliance.org to be considered for accessibility and testing accommodations.

Is there a time limit for the exam?

The time limit on the version 4 exam is 90 minutes. The time limit on the version 5 exam is 120 minutes.

Is the exam open book?

Yes.

Is the exam proctored?

No.

Do you offer in-person testing?

No. Users do not need to go to a testing center. The exam is available online at any time.

Do I need to schedule a testing date?

No. It is not necessary to schedule a time for the CCSK exam as it is online and available at your convenience.

What hardware and software requirements do I need to take the exam?

There are no hardware requirements or specific programs users need to install in order to take the exam. Please ensure that you have a steady internet connection before starting to ensure you have the best experience taking the exam.

Do you offer any testing accommodations for learning disabilities?

Yes, contact support@cloudsecurityalliance.org to request testing accommodations.

When do I find out my exam results?

Yes, the results are immediate. You will know your score after you finish the exam.

Can I review the questions I got wrong so I know what to study for future attempts?

In an effort to maintain the integrity of the exams, the platform is designed to avoid giving out the answers to specific questions. In order to assist those that do not pass the test to study for future attempts the exam platform will provide the user with the number of questions asked from each domain and how many questions were answered correctly in each of the domains.

To review any attempts they have made in the past, click on Exam Results in the Exams menu. Click into each attempt and scroll down to see the knowledge domain breakdown under certificate details. This can help users understand which areas of the material they should most focus on for their studies.

After Passing the Exam

What format is the CCSK v5 Certificate?

The certificate displays the recipient's name and primary email of their CSA Exams account and the verification code. The PDF is downloadable from their CSA Exams account. A hardcopy is not available, but the certificate can be printed.

How can I earn and claim a CCSK v5 digital badge?

You can claim your digital badge after you have successfully passed the exam. You can follow these steps to claim your digital badge:

- Log in to the [CSA Exams](#) site using the email associated with your CCSK exam.
- Go to the "Exam Results" section
- Click on the "Claim Badge" link
- You will need to give CSA the consent to share your data with Credly, the digital badge provider. All first-time eligible individuals need to opt-in before their first badge is issued. This invitation requires you to grant permission to CSA to pass your certification record details (name, surname, email address) to Credly.
- Once you click on the "I Consent" button, you should expect to receive (within minutes) an email from Credly with further instructions.