ClearanceJobs®   BAE SYSTEMS

TOP 10
CERTIFICATIONS FOR CLEARED PROFESSIONALS

THE POWER OF CERTIFICATIONS

Pete Drucker, author and widely known management expert once said, "If you think training is expensive, try ignorance." Whether your employees foot the bill for certifications or you cover costs, ignorance will always cost you. A certified project team tells clients that the skillsets on paper are backed up with actual experience, and that's a powerful message in every step of the contracting process. And it's not one the government takes for granted, with DoD 8570 creating baseline IT requirements for all professionals in cybersecurity roles, and increasing the requirement for IT certifications.

TOP 10

CERTIFICATIONS FOR CLEARED PROFESSIONALS

In the 2021 Security Clearance Compensation Report, 49% of respondents said they had at least one certification, signifying the growing trend of a cleared and certified workforce. Average total compensation for those who selected at least one certification was $110,857, while average compensation for uncertified respondents was $96,177. That's a difference of $14,680 in compensation, making it clear companies are willing to pay for those certifications. Certifications meld education and experience, making the certified candidate a safer bet for a recruiter and increasing a candidate's marketability.

Average Total Compensation by Certification

Certification	Average Total Compensation
Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE)	$152,057
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	$143,294
Project Management Professional (PMP)	$142,120
ScrumMaster	$137,704
Amazon Web Services (AWS)	$134,393
GIAC Certifications	$134,262
Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)	$134,226
VMware Certified Professional/VMware Certified Advanced Professional (VCP/VCAP)	$132,792
Microsoft Certified: Azure Administrator Associate	$127,922
Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE)	$127,564

$125,000 $135,000 $145,000 $155,000

1 CISCO CERTIFIED INTERNETWORK EXPERT (CCIE) - $152,057

With software, networking, and infrastructure getting more connected every day, expert-level Cisco certification capitalizes on meeting that need. While the certification process may seem straightforward, completing this program is a clear signal that a candidate has the skills and knowledge to back up the expert price tag.

2 CERTIFIED INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY PROFESSIONAL (CISSP) - $143,294

The cybersecurity field has a lot of needs, and the candidate holding a CISSP certification has the proof that they can design, implement, and manage an organization's cybersecurity program. Whether you're looking for a network architect or an IT director, this certification can give your hiring process a boost of security.

3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL (PMP) - $142,120

While many think they can lead a project successfully across the finish line, not everyone has the skills to keep requirements in scope and within budget. Not every project manager needs a PMP, but high performing projects benefit from a PMP certified leader at the helm. The certification is offered by the Project Management Institute (PMI) and is recognized globally. By standardizing all phases of a project, contractors reduce the risk of losing future contracts due to poor performance.

4 SCRUM MASTER - $137,704

Supporting the federal government means finding creative solutions to complex problems, and the Scrum Master certification can give leaders a leg up against their competition. While not everyone needs to be a Scrum Master, it's a certification that can be the deciding factor on the next leadership hire, proving a candidate has what it takes to provide innovative products or implement an important organizational change.

5 AMAZON WEB SERVICES - $134,393

With cloud adoption across the government growing, more players are rising in the cloud computing space. However, the biggest cloud provider is Amazon Web Services. Some of Amazon's most popular cloud services are Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2), Glacier, and Simple Storage Service (S3)—all are becoming widely adopted. Amazon offers AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner, AWS Certified Solutions Architect (Associate), and AWS Certified Solutions Architect (Professional).

6 GIAC CERTIFICATIONS - $134,262

The GIAC certifications help employers know who is actually skilled in cybersecurity and who is just skilled on paper. GIAC bridges the gap between hands-on skill and theory in the information security world. As cyber attacks become more sophisticated and go after specific vulnerabilities, having certifications that target key capabilities is an added advantage for employers.

7 CERTIFIED INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGER (CISM) - $134,226

The Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) is not for the fresh out of college, as it's a certification designed for roles focused on overseeing and designing or assessing an organization's information security. The certification process strengthens knowledge on information security governance, risk management, program development, and incident management.

8 VMWARE CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL/ VMWARE CERTIFIED ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL (VCP/VCAP) - $132,792

A VMware certification is a stamp of dedication on a resume, as it's a large investment in time and money. But it also proves that a candidate has the knowledge and skills needed in order to provide a scalable and reliable virtualization platform. The live exam setting requires preparation and requires an ability to perform under pressure, with test takers solving real world IT problems on the spot.

9 MICROSOFT CERTIFIED: AZURE ADMINISTRATOR ASSOCIATE - $127,922

In the world of IT, the cloud plays an integral role, and the (still contested) award of the Department of Defense's $10 billion JEDI contract to Microsoft has increased the stake in professionals with Azure skills. Azure administrators manage their organization's cloud services, which includes a variety of tasks from storage to security to networking capabilities. The certification validates understanding levels and capabilities in network security.

10 MICROSOFT CERTIFIED SOLUTIONS EXPERT (MCSE) - $127,564

While this certification has been retired by Microsoft, it is still a factor in earning a six-figure salary in the cleared IT industry. As part of Microsoft's cloud certification line-up, the MCSE was just one component in proving IT experts have the ability to move their organization to the cloud and improve data security. Despite the certification's retirement, candidates with this on their resume generally use this certification now as a step in their process for Microsoft specific role-based certifications - like the Azure Administrator Associate.

Other popular certifications that provide six-figure salaries, but missed the top 10 are (in compensation order) Certified Professional Contract Manager (CPCM), Cisco Certified Design Expert (CCDE), Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Foundations, COMPTIA CLOUD+, Six Sigma, Certified Federal Contract Manager (CFCM), Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), Google Certified Professional (GCP), COMPTIA NETWORK+, and COMPTIA Security +. While 'COMPTIA SECURITY+' was by far the most selected certification at 21%, average total compensation was well outside the Top 10, at $103,404.

CERTIFICATIONS IMPACT RECRUITING AND RETENTION STRATEGY
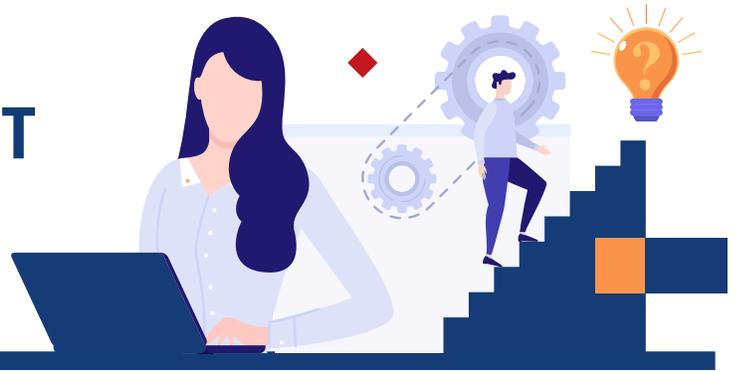
The correlation between certifications and salary isn't one for one. But on both the candidate and recruiter side, a certification brings confidence. Whether it's the candidate seeking out a certification as a part of the onboarding process, or it's an employer footing the cost, someone is paying—in both time and money. For cleared recruiters, a certification gives a validated experience level as well as a willingness to do the effort required. Having certified talent on the bench can also help with revenue by sealing the deal on a contract win.

For many candidates, obtaining a new certification can be a sign to move onto greener pastures (and higher salaries) with a different company. That means competitive companies are increasingly making paid bonuses a part of their incentive package for professionals who have obtained in-demand certifications.

"The pace of technology advancement requires companies to stay relevant by offering continual opportunities for employee skills development and demonstrating achievement through high-level certifications," said Peder Jungck, vice president and general manager of BAE Systems Intelligence Solutions business. "At BAE Systems, we are driving innovation across multiple large-scale IT programs for the U.S. government, modernizing legacy systems and integrating cutting-edge technologies. We are always looking for top talent to join us and we offer a highly competitive compensation packages, which include the company covering costs of training, exam vouchers, higher-level certifications (e.g., engineering, cloud and IT, cyber, analyst), and up to a $10,000 bonus for achieving certain advanced certifications."

Certifications bridge the gap between what a candidate knows and a company needs, and this list of IT certifications shows where the demand and compensation are highest. They display the continued need for cybersecurity and vendor knowledge, along with the consistent demand for program managers to keep it all on track. Cleared, certified professionals will continue to be in demand. A certification is only one aspect of compensation, but it's an important one.

ClearanceJobs

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CLEARANCEJOBS CAREER EVENTS
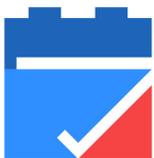
Our career events are turnkey—scheduled, organized, and advertised to deliver prime cleared candidates for your in-person and virtual. Simply show up! With over 30 career fairs held each year throughout the country, ClearanceJobs Career Events is the leading producer of career fairs catering to security-cleared professionals.