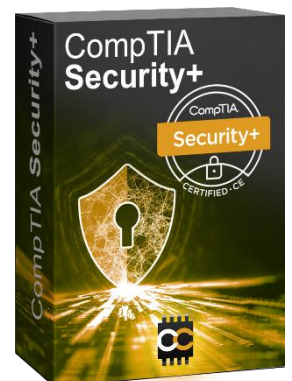
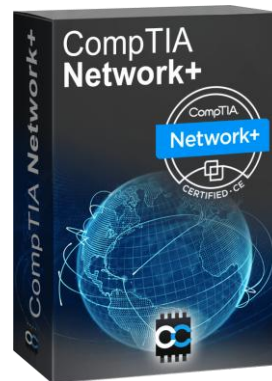
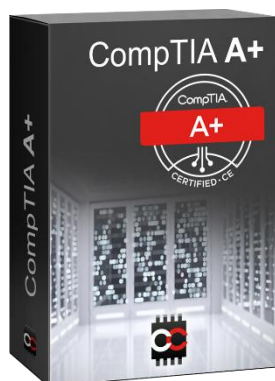


IT Certification Roadmap

“Measure Twice, Cut Once”. The road to a new IT career begins with a little planning. Deciding what you want to do in IT is the first step. If you don’t know, then don’t worry, you’re not alone.

IT is a vast field of specialties. And it is easy to travel down many different paths. This document will help you get started. But every specialty requires a good foundation of information. Thankfully, there are several certifications that lend themselves towards creating that base of knowledge.

Basic Certifications that everyone in IT should obtain regardless of their specialty

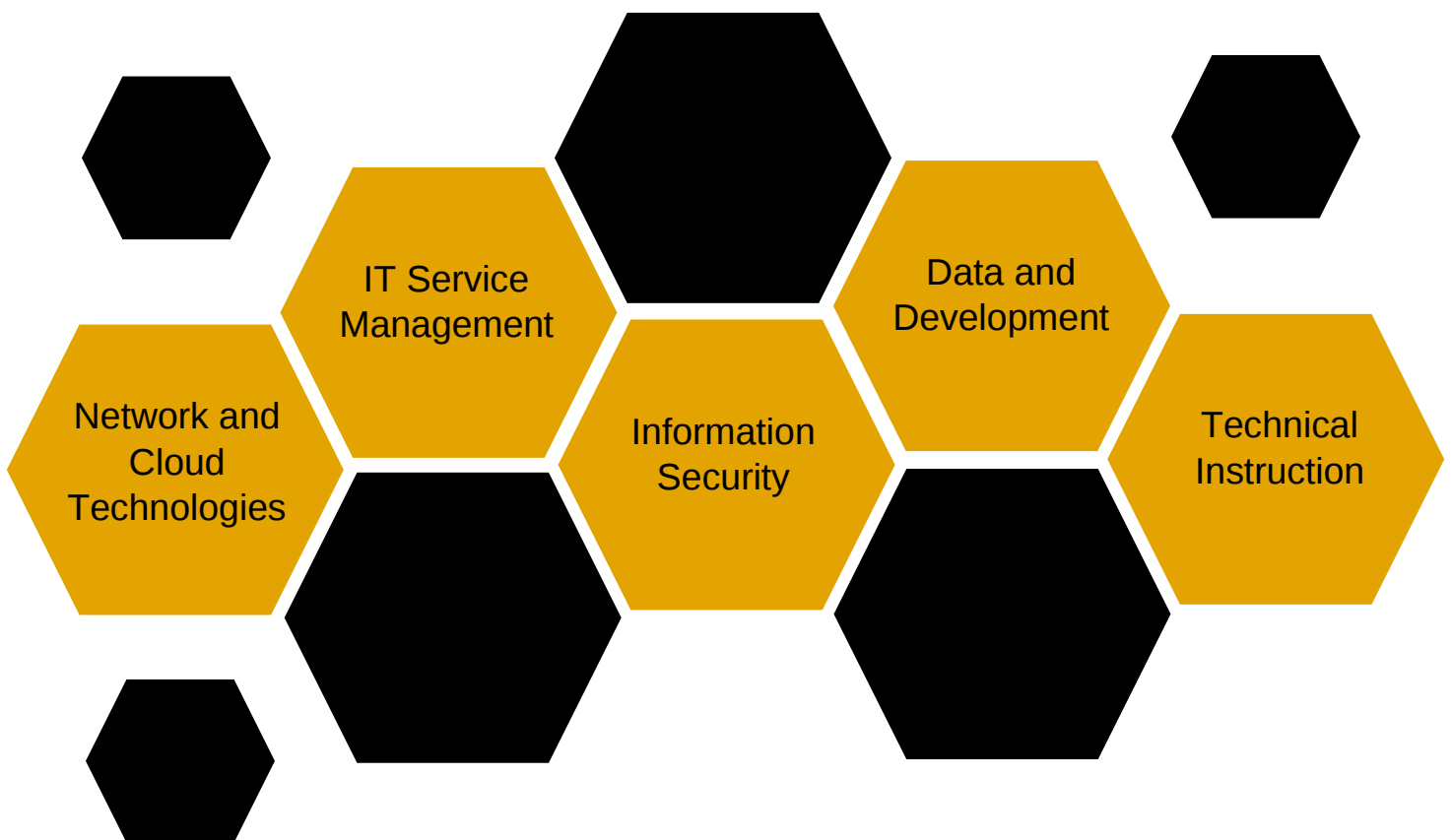


The Five Basic IT Specialties

Knowing that IT is short for “Information Technology” helps us to remember that all IT is about the flow of information. IT is a combination of software, hardware, cloud services, and networking equipment all working together in a secure manner.

Once you acquire a fundamental understanding of basic IT topics, you will begin to see which specialties interest you most and where you naturally excel.

There are five basic specialties you can pursue in IT. Each comes with its own challenges and will appeal to different people. See these below:



The IT Certification Path

Your path forward will likely branch into one of the five specialties. Learn more about each of them.

Information Security

Information security includes a wide range of jobs titles including Ethical Hacker, Cyber Security Analyst, Penetration Tester, and System Administrator. These jobs can be consulting based or offer full-time employment and will appeal to people who like to set up projects and knock them out.

You will find openings in this field across all sizes of organizations and anywhere in the world.

Network and Cloud Technologies

Network Administrators, Data Center Technicians, Networking Engineers, Cloud Solutions Architects and more are jobs you can find when you specialize in Network and Cloud technologies. You will often find yourself specializing in a specific brand of technology. Cisco certifications will give you specialist knowledge with Cisco hardware, and Amazon's AWS has a whole slew of certificates for helping you work with cloud networking technologies. Finding a job in Network and Cloud Technologies begins with the Network+ certification.

IT Service Management

Servers and workstations, both local and in the cloud, are the core of this specialty. This path lends itself towards System Administration, IT Help Desk, Managed Service Provider, or Computer Repair jobs.

Many job posts for these positions require only an A+ certification. Additionally, this field is great for those with exceptional communication skills.

Once you gain a strong understanding of each area of IT, the next logical step is to manage others. Management positions include Chief Technical Officers (CTO) or Project Managers. The road to management often starts with Project+ certification. Good managers are near impossible to come by. If you fit the bill, you will be in high demand.

Data and Development

Software development is a HUGE industry in and of itself and rarely gets the attention it deserves. Those who enjoy programming are usually very excited by their ability to CREATE.

Programming jobs can range all across the board. You can work a standard day job as a developer in many industries. Many more developers find themselves working as consultants or start small businesses creating software for others or themselves to resell.

This industry is also closely tied to data storage and analysis. Database Administrators, Backup Managers, Data Center Technicians, and more can benefit from traveling down this specialty. With current trends, you will likely find yourself focusing on cloud technology such as Google's Cloud Platform, Amazon's Web Services, or Microsoft's Azure.

These jobs require a strong understanding of both how data flows, how it is manipulated, and how data is stored so you will spend time learning networking, database management, and hardware in addition to common programming languages.

Technical Training

Like Software development, training is really a world unto itself. Training is a fabulous career for those who get excited by helping others succeed. Teachers have a unique skill of breaking down complex ideas into bite-sized chunks and explaining concepts to people in an easy-to-understand manner.

Training is on fire these days as there is just too much to know. A mastery of even a single area of IT will give you a leg up on others also looking to switch into this career. So, it is best to work in the industry before switching to a role in training.