Best AWS Certifications to Launch Your IT Career

As AWS cloud environments become the standard for the majority of the globe's largest corporations, the demand for qualified professionals to keep these complex software systems running has also grown. Whether you plan to pursue a new IT role within your current company or launch a personal consulting business in this field, it's critical to invest in AWS certifications as part of your training.

Below are the core AWS certs that IT professionals use to achieve their career goals:

- AWS Certified Practitioner
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect (associate)
- AWS Certified Developer (associate)
- AWS Certified SysOps Administrator (associate)
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect (professional)
- AWS Certified DevOps Engineer (professional)

The importance of AWS certs to organizational operations is undeniable when comparing salaries and demand growth. It is also apparent that these same companies are willing to do what it takes to keep this talent by providing superior benefits packages and help pay for additional training to keep their teams at top performance.

How AWS Certification Tiers Work

Before you decide on pursuing an AWS certification, it is time well-spent to review all available, determine which best fit your career goals, and the costs involved. This two-part series will cover the previously listed certs, provide you with a general overview of each, current costs, and any requirements necessary to complete the certification program.

In this installment, you will learn about:

- AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect (associate)
- AWS Certified Developer (associate)

If you are still mulling over AWS certifications, consider that many of these roles can earn you a six-figure salary on average. According to Indeed, AWS-certified software architects earn an average of $139,777 a year, and this is just one of the top six certifications out there to

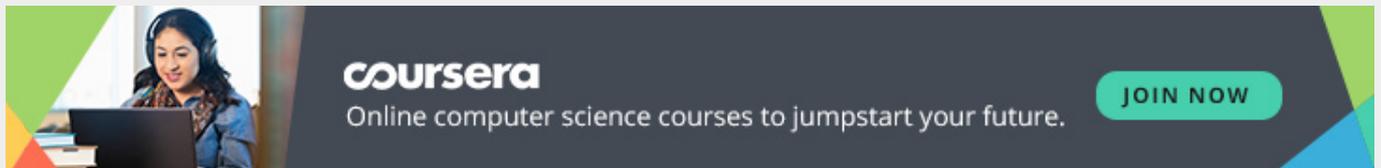propel your IT career further, faster.

AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner Certification

If you need a general understanding of the AWS cloud platform, this exam covers the foundational core principles. The benefits of achieving an AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner certification are seen across numerous roles, both technical and non-technical. This program will demonstrate your ability to speak with some level of authority when discussing everything from AWS investments to simply communicating effectively with other IT professionals.

While there aren't any prerequisites for this particular certification, Amazon recommends having at least 6 months of experience within the AWS space before attempting the test. Even though the test is multiple-choice, you should also set aside dedicated study time so you can better cover exam topics such as:

- AWS support, billing and price points
- AWS cloud resource deployment
- AWS services

You have 90 minutes to complete this exam, and the cost is $100.

AWS Certified Solutions Architect (Associate)

For professionals looking to prove their knowledge about constructing and deploying systems within the AWS cloud, this is an essential certification to garner. A moderate amount of experience is necessary for this exam that should include:

- Networking
- Storage
- Database services
- Deployment
- Configuring
- Computing

Having a foundational understanding of security and compliance within AWS is extremely useful for this certification, as well. This exam will ask questions about cloud-based solutions for deployments that follow strict requirements and require you to demonstrate a knowledge of architectural best practices.

Amazon also emphasizes already having a year or more working experience in the deployment of distributed systems and cloud services. You will get 130 minutes to complete the exam of multiple-choice/answer questions, and there is a $150 fee.

Preparing for the Solutions Architect exam? <u>*Don't miss our review of courses to help you pass the test!*</u>

AWS Certified Developer (Associate)

This certification focuses on your ability to create native applications for the AWS cloud. There is a sharp focus on using the AWS SKD to not only optimize the AWS services within your application but also tests your understanding of code-level security best practices like encryption strategies and the creation of credentials.

Before taking this certification exam, it is best to first have a year or more of AWS cloud application maintenance under your belt. Additionally, having a solid grasp of the AWS platform and its associated services and principles is a must. Familiarity and working knowledge of AWS Elastic Beanstalk, AWS CloudFormation, and related programs are key to successfully passing this exam.

When ready to take the test, you can expect a multiple-choice/answer format with 80 minutes to complete it, as well as a $150 fee.

Be Well-Prepared for AWS Certification Exams

A concern expressed by prospective AWS exam takers is the ever-changing nature of the AWS platform. The good news is that while AWS cannot specifically state the details of test topics, they do have guidelines in place to allow you better focus when preparing for your exam.

- AWS shares in general terms what subject matter you will likely see on the exam
- Any new services or tools must be available six months or more before appearing on

a certification test
  - You can expect the questions to change, but they will remain on topic

It is important to note that any topic you lack experience should be a flag for more study and practice before attempting to get your cert. For perspective, many of the associate level exams typically require a few weeks of concentrated review and studying. Professional level exams will likely require even more dedication so you should adjust your day-to-day routine accordingly. Taking the time to beef up your working understanding of your certification's qualifications will go a long way in benefiting your career.

Make a Smart Career Investment with AWS Certifications

Using the word investment may seem odd given AWS certifications are relatively inexpensive, but the focus is on the long term impact on opportunities available for earning them. The reality is that AWS is quickly becoming an expected benchmark for professionals in the cloud-based marketplaces. With exponential growth fueled by industry demand for qualified IT team members isn't going away any time soon, and this creates a prime opportunity for rewarding careers financially and professionally.

Firms around the globe are just starting their cloud services and platforms, and this translates into AWS creating many years of new tech and the creation of more job roles. By determining your IT career goals, you can leverage these certifications to your advantage. Be prepared to study and try to get as much working experience as possible before attempting these exams so you can pass with confidence and launch your career path.