The Pearson VUE 2015
Value of IT Certification Survey
Results summary

PEARSON

Overview

The 2015 Value of IT Certification survey was conducted online from August 3 to September 14, 2015. Survey invitations were emailed to 408,263 individuals who had taken a certification exam in the last year and had opted in to receive marketing communications from Pearson VUE. The survey yielded 26,603 completed responses from around the globe. All tables included in the report are based on total responses unless otherwise stated.
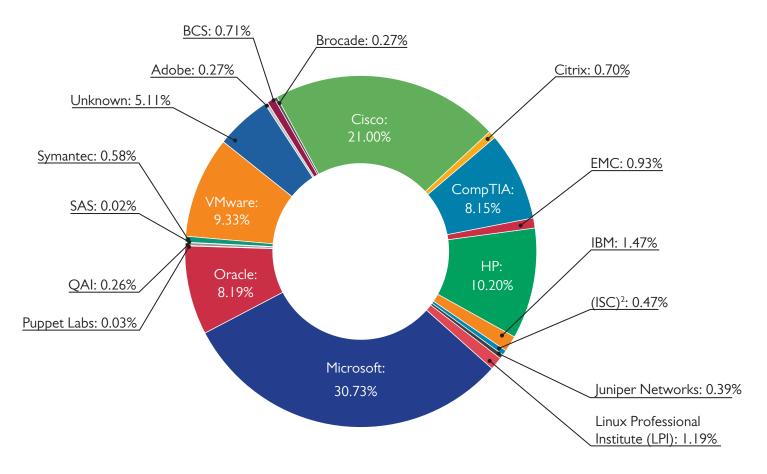
Survey objectives

1. To learn more about study habits, reasons for taking training and obtaining a certification, purchasing behaviors and intentions for future training and/or testing.
2. To gain insight into the value of IT certification for candidates.
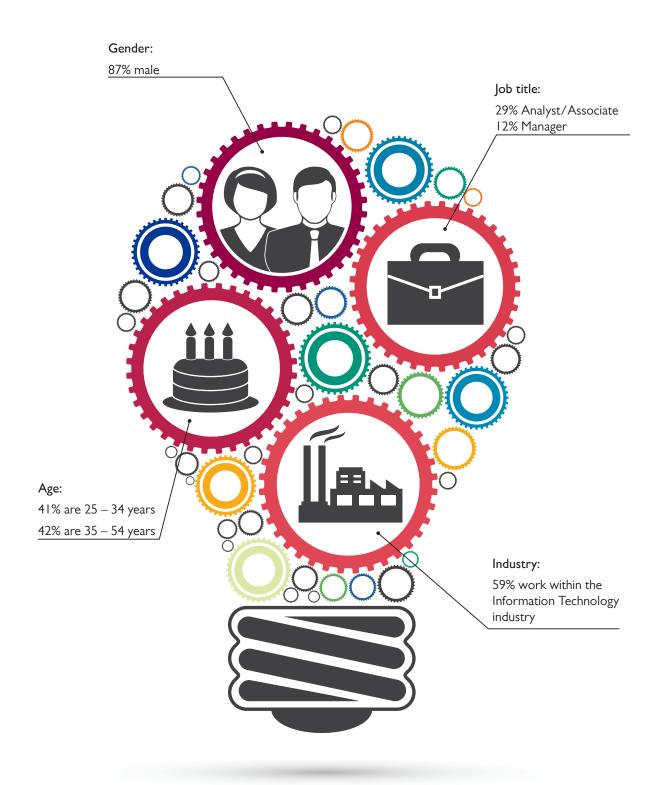
Survey incentive

The first 100 respondents to complete the survey in each region (Americas; Europe, Middle East and Africa; and Asia-Pacific) received an Amazon gift card worth $10 USD, or the appropriate currency equivalent.

IT professionals who completed the survey

Pearson VUE partnered with 19 leading IT organizations to conduct this survey using their exam registration data. The chart below represents the percentage of respondents from each organization who completed the survey in its entirety.

BCS: 0.71%
Brocade: 0.27%
Adobe: 0.27%
Citrix: 0.70%
Unknown: 5.11%
Symantec: 0.58%
EMC: 0.93%
SAS: 0.02%
IBM: 1.47%
QAI: 0.26%
(ISC)²: 0.47%
Puppet Labs: 0.03%
Juniper Networks: 0.39%
Linux Professional Institute (LPI): 1.19%

Cisco: 21.00%
CompTIA: 8.15%
HP: 10.20%
Microsoft: 30.73%
Oracle: 8.19%
VMware: 9.33%

Respondent demographics

Gender:
87% male

Job title:
29% Analyst/Associate
12% Manager

Age:
41% are 25 – 34 years
42% are 35 – 54 years

Industry:
59% work within the
Information Technology
industry

What is your gender?

Male	87.0%
Female	11.3%
Prefer not to answer/ Did not answer	1.7%

What is your age?

18 – 24	10.1%
25 – 34	41.0%
35 – 54	41.5%
55 – 64	4.3%
65+	0.6%
Prefer not to answer/ Did not answer	2.5%

What is your current job title?

Analyst/Associate	29.4%
Manager	12.1%
Entry-level	11.8%
Student	5.2%
Unemployed	4.6%
Senior Manager	3.8%
Intern	2.6%
Owner	2.1%
Director	1.5%
C-Suite (CIO/CTO, etc.)	0.6%
Vice President	0.2%
Prefer not to answer/ Did not answer	26.1%

In what industry do you currently work?

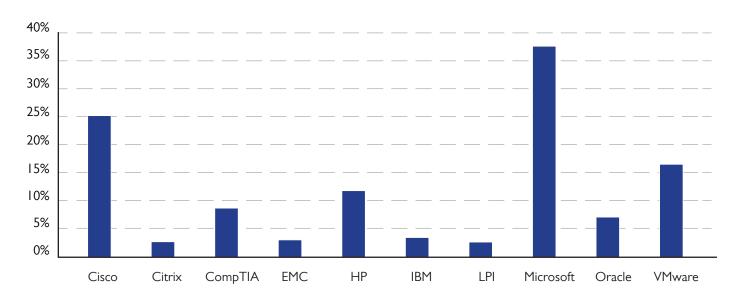|					
Information Technology	59.0%	Consumer Services	1.1%	Pharmaceuticals	0.3%
Telecommunications	7.2%	Electronics	1.1%	Entertainment	0.2%
Government	3.5%	Energy	0.8%	Agriculture & Forestry	0.1%
Financial Services	3.0%	Construction	0.5%	Fishing, Mining & Extraction	0.1%
Business Services	2.6%	Aerospace	0.4%	Real Estate	0.1%
Education	2.4%	Food & Drink	0.4%	Prefer not to answer/Did not answer	13.4%
Healthcare	1.7%	Media & Broadcasting	0.4%		
Manufacturing	1.4%	Hospitality	0.3%		

Training

In the past 12 months, have you taken any training courses (either through an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training) for any of the following IT programs? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:

Adobe	2.35%	Cisco	25.19%	Filemaker	0.09%	Lenovo	1.50%	Ruijie Networks	0.03%
Alcatel Lucent	0.44%	Citrix	3.03%	Google	1.64%	LinkedIn	1.03%	SAP	0.98%
Apple	1.39%	CIW	0.23%	HP	11.86%	LPI	3.24%	SAS	0.27%
AppSense	0.14%	CompTIA	8.91%	IBM	3.98%	Microsoft	37.04%	Siemens	0.20%
Arista	0.15%	Dassault	0.06%	IIBA	0.11%	Nokia	0.21%	SQE	0.08%
ASQ	0.08%	Dell	2.70%	IIST	0.05%	Oracle	7.55%	Symantec	2.04%
Atlassian	0.22%	EC Council	1.10%	ISACA	0.42%	Palo Alto	0.90%	Teradata	0.15%
Autodesk	0.42%	EMC	3.48%	(ISC)[2]	1.11%	PeopleCert	0.19%	Tibco	0.13%
Avaloq	0.06%	Ericsson	0.29%	ISQI	0.07%	PMI	1.56%	VMware	16.55%
BCS	0.33%	EXIN	1.53%	ISTQB	0.62%	Puppet Labs	0.17%		
Brocade	1.12%	Facebook	0.55%	Juniper Networks	2.32%	QAI	0.12%		

Which task area(s) did your most recent training cover? Please select all that apply.

Networking and Servers are the two most popular areas of study at 40% and 33% respectively.

Networking	40%	Mobility and Wireless	8%
Servers	33%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	7%
Virtualization	28%	Project and Program Management	7%
Security	21%	Business Process Improvement	4%
Network Management	21%	Mobile Apps	4%
Cloud	19%	Leadership and Professional Skills	4%
Storage	18%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	2%
Software Development (General)	12%	Video and Web Conferencing	2%
Enterprise Architecture	11%	Other	9%
Web Application Development	8%		

Based on those who took training: 22,807 responses.

It's critical to have the right skills for the job.

With the vast diversity of specialties within the IT field, ongoing training in specialized areas of study — like Networking, Servers and Virtualization — can help close the skills gap while keeping workers current with the pace of technology development.

If you undertook training (either via an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training) within the last 12 months, who paid for the most recent training?

53% of training was paid for by employers.

Employer	53%
Self-paid	28%
Government funded	4%
There was no charge for the training	4%
School/University/College	2%
Other funding	4%
Prefer not to answer	5%

Based on those who took training: 22,807 responses.

Still thinking about the most recent training you undertook (either via an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training), from where did you purchase?

55% of training courses were purchased either directly from the training provider or from the IT certification program.
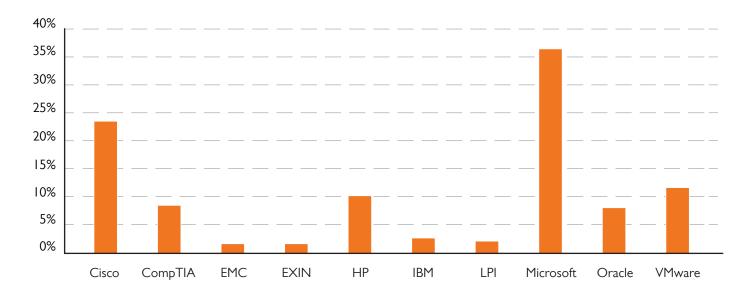
Training provider	31%
IT certification program	24%
Educational institution	12%
Amazon or online source	8%
Employer or company	5%
Friend or colleague	4%
mindhub.com, CompTIAstore.com, AdobeMarketplace.com or other certification e-commerce site	2%
Other	9%
Don't know	5%

Based on those who purchased training: 6,261 responses.

Certification exams

In the past 12 months, have you taken a certification exam for any of the following programs? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:

Adobe	1.04%	Cisco	23.61%	Filemaker	0.04%	Lenovo	0.59%	Ruijie Networks	0.04%
Alcatel Lucent	0.19%	Citrix	1.45%	Google	0.32%	LinkedIn	0.11%	SAP	0.25%
Apple	0.47%	CIW	0.22%	HP	10.29%	LPI	2.04%	SAS	0.12%
AppSense	0.05%	CompTIA	8.54%	IBM	2.68%	Microsoft	36.33%	Siemens	0.06%
Arista	0.06%	Dassault	0.04%	IIBA	0.06%	Nokia	0.10%	SQE	0.03%
ASQ	0.05%	Dell	1.27%	IIST	0.04%	Oracle	8.15%	Symantec	0.99%
Atlassian	0.07%	EC Council	0.61%	ISACA	0.30%	Palo Alto	0.33%	Teradata	0.05%
Autodesk	0.14%	EMC	1.84%	(ISC)[2]	0.73%	PeopleCert	0.20%	Tibco	0.05%
Avaloq	0.03%	Ericsson	0.12%	ISQI	0.05%	PMI	0.58%	VMware	11.54%
BCS	0.33%	EXIN	1.52%	ISTQB	0.69%	Puppet Labs	0.05%	NOTE:	
Brocade	0.62%	Facebook	0.16%	Juniper Networks	1.24%	QAI	0.23%	Certification exam data only. See page 4 for training data.	

Which task area(s) did your most recent certification exam cover? Please select all that apply.

As with training, the most popular task areas in which respondents certified were Networking and Servers (35% and 28% respectfully).

Networking	35%	Software Development	11%	Mobile Apps	2%
Servers	28%	Enterprise Architecture	8%	Leadership & Professional Skills	2%
Virtualization	20%	Web Application Development	6%	Video and Web Conferencing	2%
Security	16%	Mobility and Wireless	5%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	1%
Network Management	15%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	5%	Other	12%
Storage	13%	Project and Program Management	4%		
Cloud	12%	Business Process Improvement	3%		

Based on those who took certification exams in the last 12 months: 25,126 responses.

If you took an exam within the last 12 months, who paid for the most recent exam?

53% of exams were paid for by employers.

Employer	53%
Self-paid	34%
Government funded	3%
Cost included in a school/university/ college program	2%
There was no charge for the exam	2%
Other funding	3%
Prefer not to answer	3%

Based on those who took an exam: 25,126 responses.

For the most recent exam you took, where was this exam purchased?

73% of exams were purchased either online or directly from the training organization.

Online while scheduling the exam on the website	50%
From the training organization	23%
Amazon or other online source	4%
Educational institution	3%
mindhub.com, CompTIAstore.com, AdobeMarketplace.com or other certification e-commerce site	3%
Cost of exam was included with training	3%
Provided by employer/company	2%
Other	9%
Don't know	3%

Based on 8,433 responses.

57% Purchased their exam online

45% Did not have direct, out-of-pocket study material expense

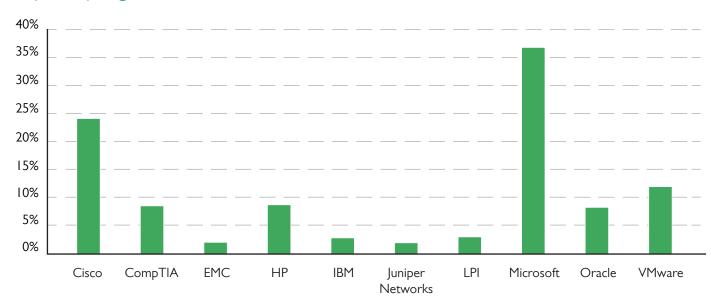**38%** Purchased study materials online

Use of study materials

For which of the following IT programs did you purchase self-study materials in the past 24 months? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:

Adobe	1.50%	Cisco	24.28%	Filemaker	0.08%	Lenovo	0.74%	Ruijie Networks	0.04%
Alcatel Lucent	0.23%	Citrix	1.81%	Google	1.26%	LinkedIn	0.28%	SAP	0.49%
Apple	0.68%	CIW	0.18%	HP	8.66%	LPI	2.94%	SAS	0.15%
AppSense	0.08%	CompTIA	8.78%	IBM	2.77%	Microsoft	36.83%	Siemens	0.08%
Arista	0.07%	Dassault	0.03%	IIBA	0.08%	Nokia	0.12%	SQE	0.05%
ASQ	0.05%	Dell	1.21%	IIST	0.03%	Oracle	8.43%	Symantec	1.15%
Atlassian	0.07%	EC Council	0.78%	ISACA	0.33%	Palo Alto	0.47%	Teradata	0.09%
Autodesk	0.18%	EMC	2.16%	(ISC)²	0.92%	PeopleCert	0.15%	Tibco	0.04%
Avaloq	0.03%	Ericsson	0.17%	ISQI	0.05%	PMI	0.92%	VMware	11.85%
BCS	0.27%	EXIN	1.31%	ISTQB	0.70%	Puppet Labs	0.10%	NOTE: Study materials data only. See page 4 for training data and page 7 for certification data.	
Brocade	0.73%	Facebook	0.32%	Juniper Networks	1.84%	QAI	0.20%		

In the past 12 months, did you use any self-study materials for your exam?

✔ **89%** Yes

✗ **11%** No

Nearly 9 in 10 of candidates used self-study materials in the past 12 months.

If you did use self-study materials within the last 12 months, who paid for the most recent set of self-study materials you used?

Over half of respondents purchased their own study materials and 29% noted that materials were funded by their employer.

Self-paid	51%
Employer	29%
IT certification program	5%
Included in a school/university/college program	2%
Government funded	2%
Other funding	6%
Prefer not to answer	5%

Based on those who used self-study materials: 23,655 responses.

Where did you purchase the most recent self-study materials you used?

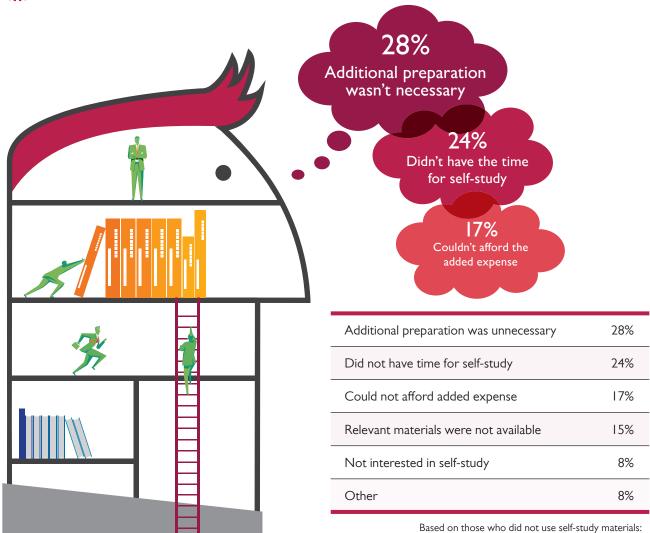38% of candidates purchased study materials online.

Amazon or other online source	34%
Training provider	14%
IT certification program	13%
Friend or colleague	9%
Employer or company	3%
mindhub.com, CompTIAstore.com, AdobeMarketplace.com or other certification e-commerce site	3%
Educational institution	3%
Other	18%
Don't know	3%

Based on those who purchased self-study materials: 12,203 responses.

Purchasing habits

If you did not use any self-study materials, what was the PRIMARY reason?

28%
Additional preparation wasn't necessary

24%
Didn't have the time for self-study

17%
Couldn't afford the added expense

Additional preparation was unnecessary	28%
Did not have time for self-study	24%
Could not afford added expense	17%
Relevant materials were not available	15%
Not interested in self-study	8%
Other	8%

Based on those who did not use self-study materials: 2,894 responses.

Was the cost of the exam included with the instructor-led training?

✔ **29%** Yes
🚫 **29%** Not applicable
✘ **42%** No

Was the cost of the exam included with the study materials?
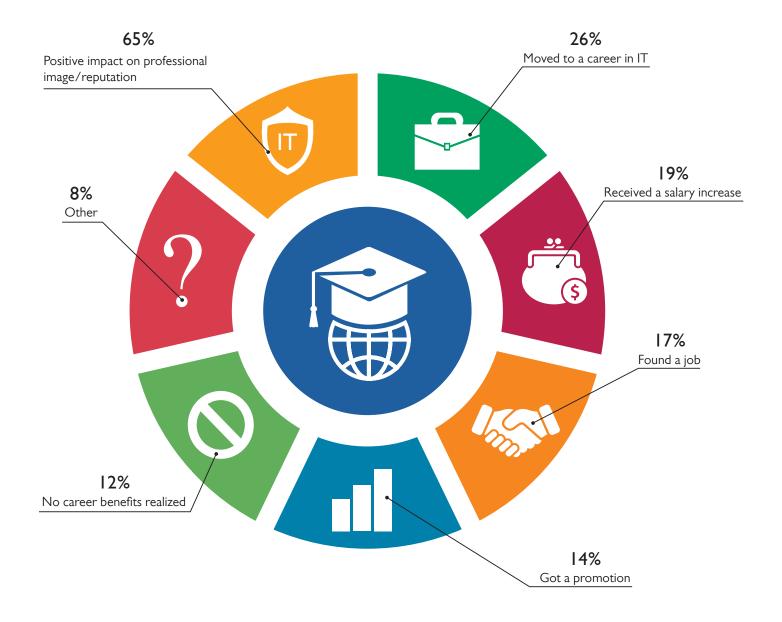
✔ **31%** Yes
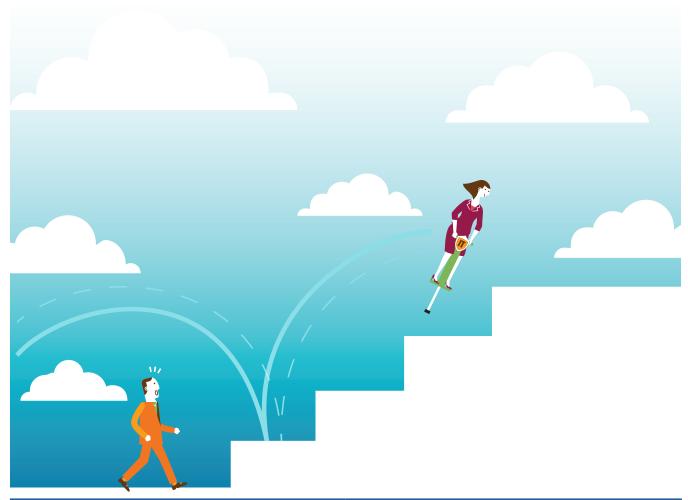🚫 **20%** Not applicable
✘ **49%** No

Impact of certification

Which of the following benefits did you get from completing your certification? Please select all that apply.

65%
Positive impact on professional image/reputation

26%
Moved to a career in IT

8%
Other

19%
Received a salary increase

17%
Found a job

12%
No career benefits realized

14%
Got a promotion

How did the certification help you most in your job?

59% of respondents reported that certification either helped them gain confidence in their job tasks or achieve higher performance ratings.

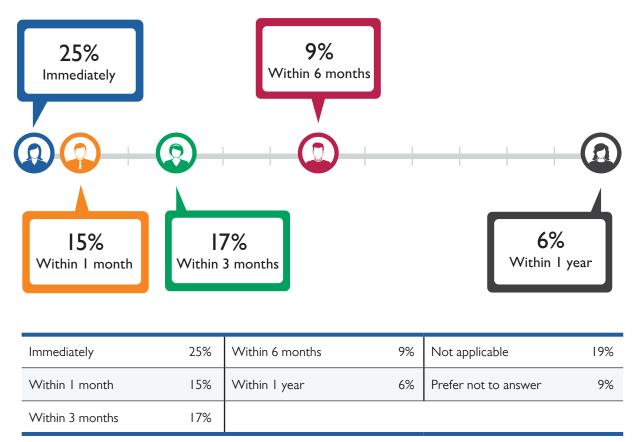|			
Helped me do my job more confidently	37%	Helped me to take on management responsibilities	8%
Helped me achieve higher performance ratings	22%	Other	12%
Helped me do my job more efficiently	21%		

Would you recommend certification to a colleague?

85% of respondents reported that they would definitely recommend certification to a colleague when discussing a career or advancement in IT.
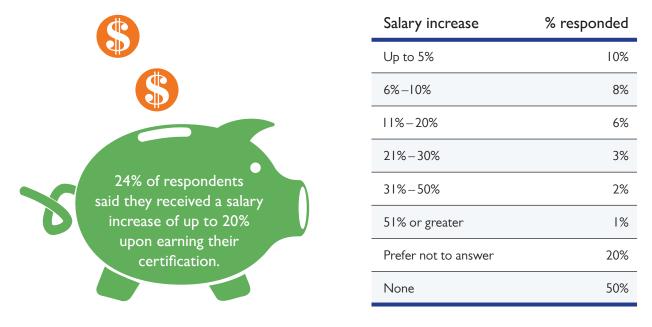
How long after you achieved certification did you experience the first benefit?

25%
Immediately

9%
Within 6 months

15%
Within 1 month

17%
Within 3 months

6%
Within 1 year

Immediately	25%	Within 6 months	9%	Not applicable	19%
Within 1 month	15%	Within 1 year	6%	Prefer not to answer	9%
Within 3 months	17%				

If you received a salary increase or a promotion, by what percentage did your salary increase from before the certification was earned?

24% of respondents said they received a salary increase of up to 20% upon earning their certification.

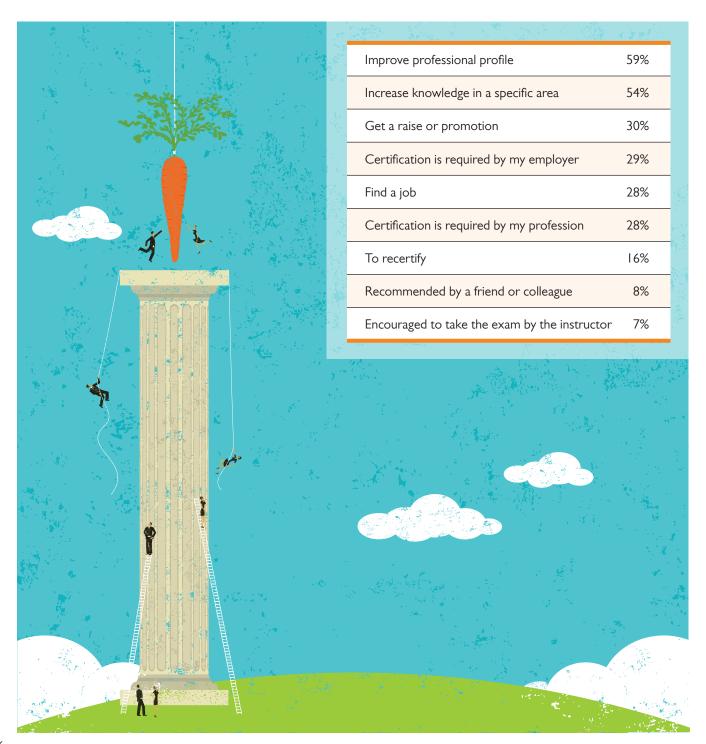| Salary increase	% responded
Up to 5%	10%
6%–10%	8%
11%–20%	6%
21%–30%	3%
31%–50%	2%
51% or greater	1%
Prefer not to answer	20%
None	50%

Motivations

What are your motivations for pursuing certification? Please select all that apply.

59% of respondents hoped to improve their professional profile with certification.

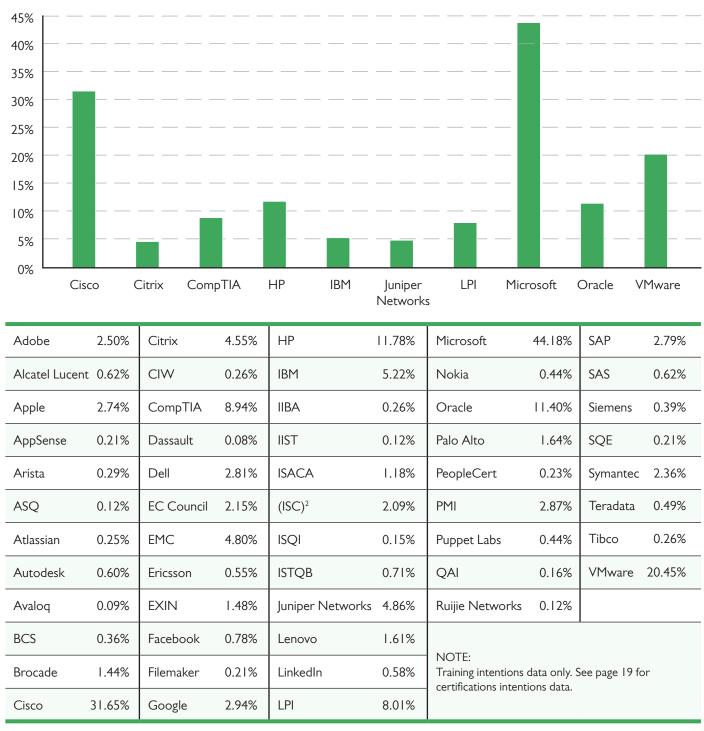|	
Improve professional profile	59%
Increase knowledge in a specific area	54%
Get a raise or promotion	30%
Certification is required by my employer	29%
Find a job	28%
Certification is required by my profession	28%
To recertify	16%
Recommended by a friend or colleague	8%
Encouraged to take the exam by the instructor	7%

Intentions

For which IT programs do you intend to take **training courses** (either via an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training) in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:

Adobe	2.50%	Citrix	4.55%	HP	11.78%	Microsoft	44.18%	SAP	2.79%
Alcatel Lucent	0.62%	CIW	0.26%	IBM	5.22%	Nokia	0.44%	SAS	0.62%
Apple	2.74%	CompTIA	8.94%	IIBA	0.26%	Oracle	11.40%	Siemens	0.39%
AppSense	0.21%	Dassault	0.08%	IIST	0.12%	Palo Alto	1.64%	SQE	0.21%
Arista	0.29%	Dell	2.81%	ISACA	1.18%	PeopleCert	0.23%	Symantec	2.36%
ASQ	0.12%	EC Council	2.15%	(ISC)²	2.09%	PMI	2.87%	Teradata	0.49%
Atlassian	0.25%	EMC	4.80%	ISQI	0.15%	Puppet Labs	0.44%	Tibco	0.26%
Autodesk	0.60%	Ericsson	0.55%	ISTQB	0.71%	QAI	0.16%	VMware	20.45%
Avaloq	0.09%	EXIN	1.48%	Juniper Networks	4.86%	Ruijie Networks	0.12%		
BCS	0.36%	Facebook	0.78%	Lenovo	1.61%				
Brocade	1.44%	Filemaker	0.21%	LinkedIn	0.58%				
Cisco	31.65%	Google	2.94%	LPI	8.01%				

NOTE:
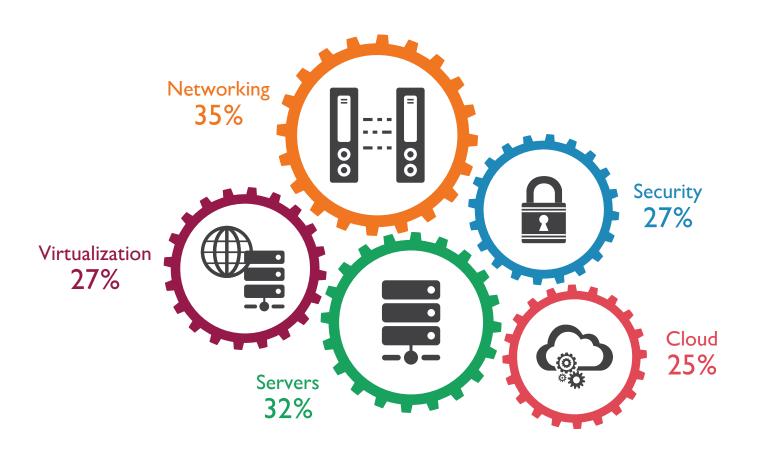Training intentions data only. See page 19 for certifications intentions data.

In which task area(s) do you plan to take training in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.

Networking and Servers are the disciplines of greatest interest to IT professionals who took training this year and intend to take training in the coming year.
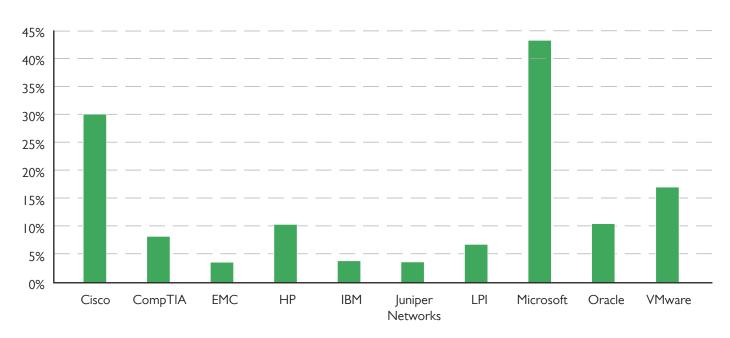
Networking	35%	Software Development (General)	14%	Mobile Apps	7%
Servers	32%	Enterprise Architecture	12%	Leadership and Professional Skills	6%
Virtualization	27%	Project and Program Management	10%	Business Process Improvement	5%
Security	27%	Web Application Development	10%	Video and Web Conferencing	3%
Cloud	25%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	9%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	3%
Network Management	20%	Mobility and Wireless	9%	Other	5%
Storage	18%				

Networking
35%

Security
27%

Virtualization
27%

Servers
32%

Cloud
25%

For which IT programs do you intend to take a certification exam in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.
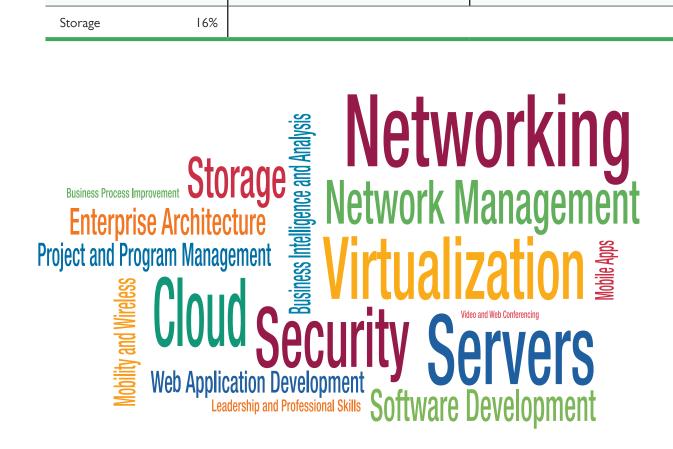
Top ten programs:

Adobe	1.94%	Citrix	3.53%	HP	11.03%	Microsoft	43.79%	SAP	2.12%
Alcatel Lucent	0.47%	CIW	0.21%	IBM	4.50%	Nokia	0.42%	SAS	0.55%
Apple	1.91%	CompTIA	8.65%	IIBA	0.23%	Oracle	10.98%	Siemens	0.27%
AppSense	0.15%	Dassault	0.07%	IIST	0.12%	Palo Alto	1.14%	SQE	0.17%
Arista	0.19%	Dell	2.16%	ISACA	1.06%	PeopleCert	0.22%	Symantec	1.79%
ASQ	0.10%	EC Council	1.89%	(ISC)[2]	1.91%	PMI	2.65%	Teradata	0.41%
Atlassian	0.15%	EMC	3.85%	ISQI	0.15%	Puppet Labs	0.27%	Tibco	0.18%
Autodesk	0.35%	Ericsson	0.41%	ISTQB	0.77%	QAI	0.17%	VMware	17.23%
Avaloq	0.06%	EXIN	1.34%	Juniper Networks	4.10%	Ruijie Networks	0.12%		
BCS	0.30%	Facebook	0.69%	Lenovo	1.21%				
Brocade	1.06%	Filemaker	0.12%	LinkedIn	0.42%	NOTE: Certification intentions data only. See page 17 for training intentions data.			
Cisco	30.70%	Google	2.06%	LPI	7.10%				

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In which task area(s) do you plan to take a certification exam in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.

As with those who plan to train in Networking and Servers, data shows they also intend to take a certification exam within these task areas in the coming year.

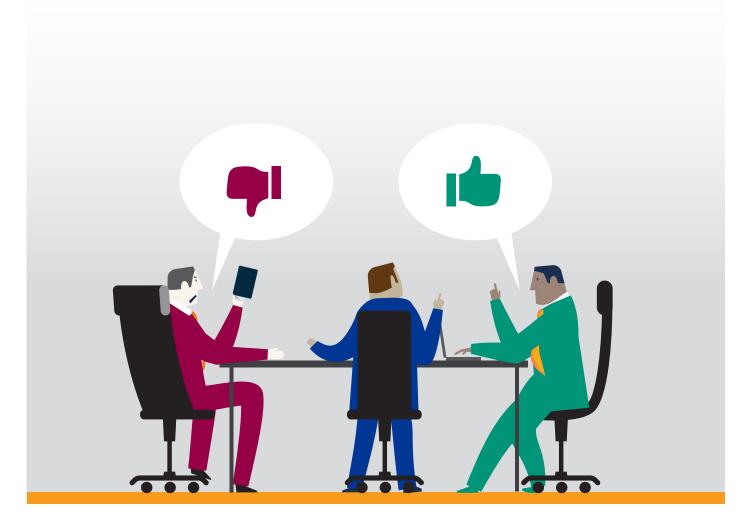|					
Networking	34%	Software Development (General)	12%	Mobile Apps	5%
Servers	31%	Enterprise Architecture	10%	Business Process Improvement	4%
Security	24%	Project and Program Management	9%	Leadership and Professional Skills	4%
Virtualization	23%	Web Application Development	9%	Video and Web Conferencing	2%
Cloud	22%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	8%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	2%
Network Management	18%	Mobility and Wireless	7%	Other	6%
Storage	16%				

When asked to rate how strongly they felt about a topic, respondents answered as follows:

It is important to improve the relevance of tests by also assessing soft skills (e.g. problem solving and time management), in addition to technical skills.

Strongly agree	19%
Agree	44%
Neutral	25%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	5%

There is a need to explore new ways of assessing/validating knowledge and technical skills (e.g. gaming, remote labs and other performance-based testing).

Strongly agree	20%
Agree	42%
Neutral	28%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	4%

73% Using self-study materials played a role in passing the certification exam.

69% Using self-study materials increased confidence to take the certification exam.

66% Would like to take more specialty certifications.

I would like the opportunity to take more specialized certifications (e.g. Security/ Coding).

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	40%
Neutral	24%
Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	5%

I would like the ability to share my credentials online via a badging community.

Strongly agree	12%
Agree	28%
Neutral	37%
Disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	10%

I would like certification training to be delivered via an online course.

Strongly agree	22%
Agree	41%
Neutral	25%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	5%

Using self-study materials played a role in passing my certification (e.g. practice tests, eBooks etc.).

Strongly agree	32%
Agree	41%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	5%

Using self-study materials gave me the confidence to sit for my certification exam.

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	43%
Neutral	21%
Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	5%

Please rate the following statements on how well they describe your intentions for the next 12 months.

There is a commitment to ongoing professional development among candidates with 93% responding they are likely or very likely to take a certification exam in the next 12 months. Additionally, nearly 60% are likely to undertake further instructor-led training and 72% intend to take an online course.

I will undertake instructor-led training.

Likely and very likely	59%
Unlikely and very unlikely	41%

I will take a certification exam.

Likely and very likely	90%
Unlikely and very unlikely	10%

I will purchase self-study materials.

Likely and very likely	71%
Unlikely and very unlikely	29%

I will take an online course.

Likely and very likely	72%
Unlikely and very unlikely	28%

Future research

Pearson VUE's 2016 Value of IT Certification Survey is part of an ongoing research effort. If your organization would like to participate in future surveys or for media inquiries related to this study, please contact market.research@pearson.com.

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