CISSP®

**Certified Information
Systems Security Professional**

ISC2 Certification

Be Exam-Ready

So, you're preparing for your Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) exam. Congratulations! Earning the CISSP proves you have what it takes to effectively design, implement, and manage a best-in-class cybersecurity program. It helps you negotiate a higher salary and secure more senior roles.

However, the CISSP exam period can be highly taxing. You'll have to learn and memorize a lot of information, juggle work and personal commitments, and deal with nerves and exam anxiety – all while avoiding burnout.

But don't worry, we're here to help. This booklet contains everything you need to prepare for your CISSP exam: from what to expect on exam day to study tips, advice on managing your workload, and everything in between; we've got you covered.

ISC2™

Contents

About the Exam

Knowing what to expect from the CISSP exam can help reduce the stress and anxieties surrounding it. So, here's everything you need to know.

Experience Requirements
Before we get into the details, it's worth checking to see if you're eligible to earn a CISSP certification. You must have at least five years of cumulative, full-time experience in two or more of the eight domains of the current CISSP Exam Outline (listed below).

Earning a post-secondary degree (bachelor's or master's) in computer science, information technology (I.T.), or related fields may satisfy up to one year of the required experience, or an additional credential from the ISC2-approved list may satisfy up to one year of the required experience. Part-time work and internships may also count towards the experience requirement.

If you don't have the required experience to become a CISSP, you may become an Associate of ISC2 by successfully passing the CISSP examination. The Associate of ISC2 will then have six years to earn the five years required experience. You can learn more about CISSP experience requirements and how to account for part-time work and internships here.
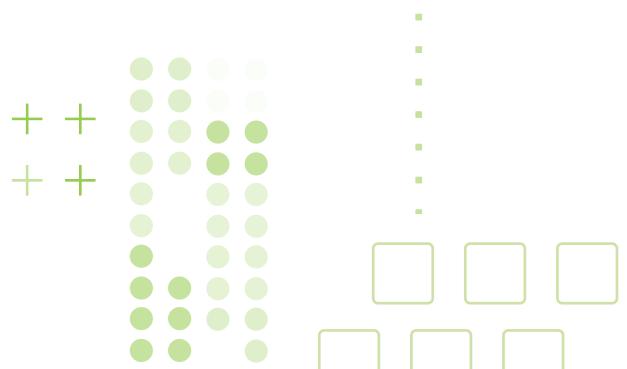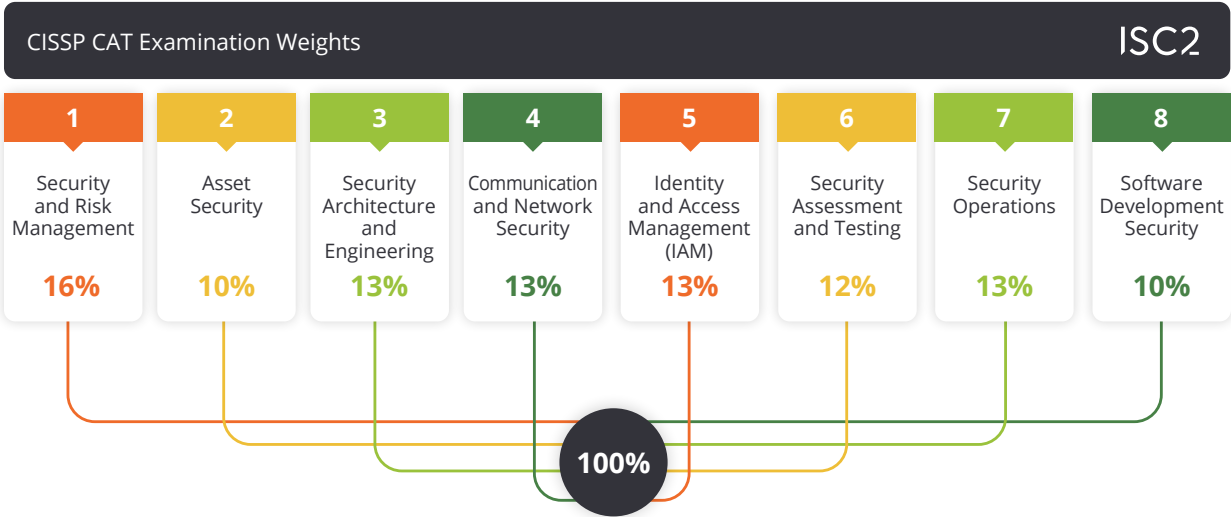
Computerized Adaptive Testing
ISC2 uses a Computerized Adaptive Testing (CAT) model for all our English CISSP exams, allowing you to prove your knowledge by answering fewer items and completing the exam in half the time compared to a linear, fixed-form exam. The CISSP exam in CAT format is also available in Chinese, English, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

You'll start the exam with an item well below the passing standard. With each answer, the scoring algorithm re-estimates your ability based on the difficulty of all items presented and answers provided. The computer can estimate your ability more accurately as you answer more items. This process has reduced the maximum exam administration time from six to three hours and the items necessary to accurately assess your ability from 250 on a linear, fixed-form exam to as little as 100. You can find more information about the ISC2 CISSP CAT model here.

CISSP Exam Information
The CISSP exam contains 100-150 items and covers a broad range of topics to ensure its relevance across all information security disciplines. Below is a list of all eight CISSP exam domains and their average weighting.
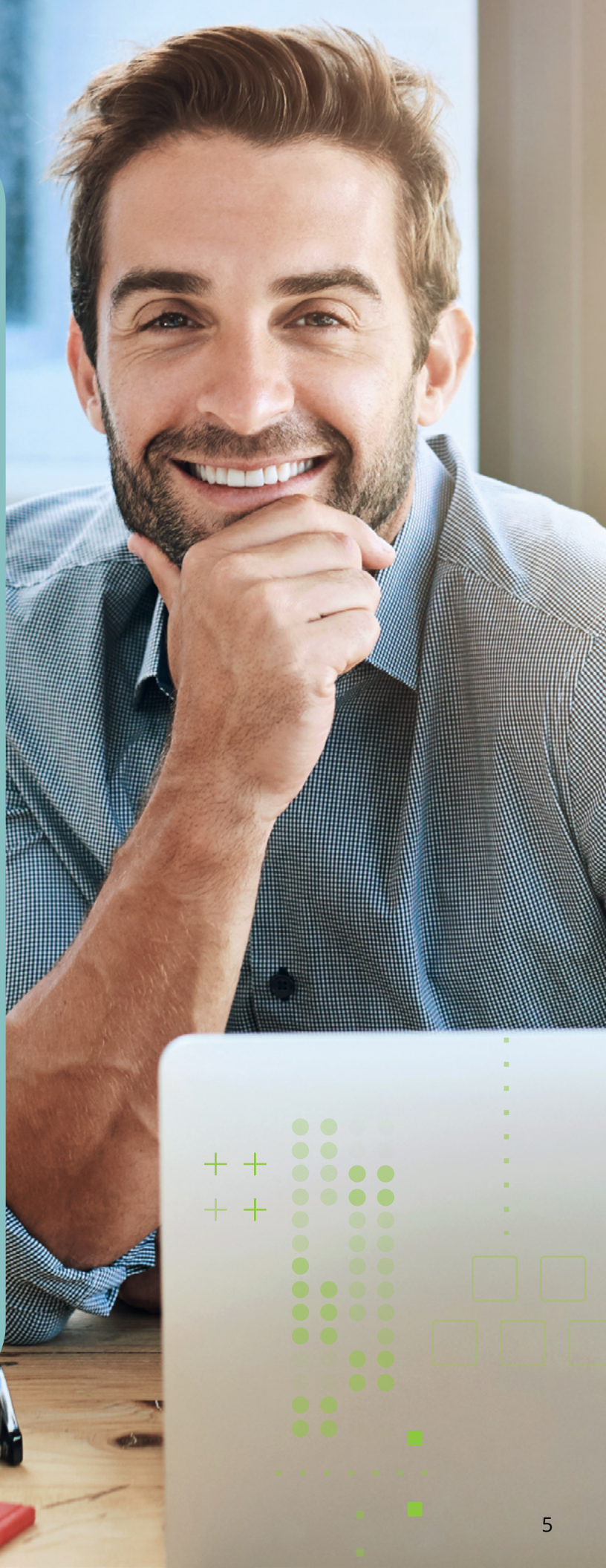
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Security and Risk Management	Asset Security	Security Architecture and Engineering	Communication and Network Security	Identity and Access Management (IAM)	Security Assessment and Testing	Security Operations	Software Development Security
16%	**10%**	**13%**	**13%**	**13%**	**12%**	**13%**	**10%**

100%

Check out the complete exam outline for a more in-depth look at what each domain entails. CISSP exam and exam outlines are available in **English**, **Chinese**, **Japanese**, **German**, and **Spanish**.

You will have 3 hours to complete the exam and must score 700 out of 1000 points to pass. Exams are only held at Pearson VUE testing centers.

Length of exam
3 hours

Number of items
100 - 150

Testing center
ISC2 Authorized PPC and PVTC Select Pearson VUE Testing Centers

Item format
Multiple choice and advanced innovative items

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CISSP CAT Examination Information

Exam language
English, Chinese, Japanese, German, Spanish

Passing grade
700 out of 1000 points

Your Exam Day Checklist

There are several things you'll need to do and provide before and on the day of your exam. Review the information below to ensure you're completely prepared.

Request Special Accommodations
ISC2 is committed to ensuring that exams are accessible to all. If you need special accommodations, it's important to let us know as early as possible so we can ensure you are appropriately catered for. You'll also need to take a slightly different approach to scheduling your exam.

To request accommodations, you must complete the **Exam Accommodation Form** and return it to examadministration@isc2.org before registering for your exam. You'll need to explain the examination accommodation you need, provide documentation supporting them, and specify the exam you want to take and the location of it.

Examination accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis. Once ISC2 approves your examination accommodation, we'll send it to Pearson VUE Accommodations. Please allow Pearson VUE two to three business days to get this information. Then, call Pearson VUE at +1.800.466.0450 so you can schedule your exam. Please get in touch with ISC2 first. Do not start by scheduling through Pearson VUE's website or their main registration phone line.

Ensure You Have the Proper Identification

You must provide two forms of identification at the testing center to take the CISSP exam. Both IDs must be valid (not expired) original documents (not photocopies or faxes). Your primary identification must include your photo and signature, and your photo must be permanently affixed to the document. Your secondary identification must include your signature. If either document lacks a signature, it must be a legal, official form of identification approved by local government. Of the following are acceptable forms of primary identification:

- Government issued driver's license or identification card
- U.S. state-issued driver's license
- U.S. state-issued driver's learner's permit (card only with photo and signature)
- National/state/country Identification card
- Passport
- Military ID
- Military ID for spouses and dependents
- Alien registration card (green card; permanent resident visa)
- Government issued local language ID (plastic card with photo and signature)
- Employee ID
- School ID
- Credit card (only if it contains both your photo and a signature)

The following are acceptable forms of secondary identification:
- U.S. Social Security card
- Debit/ATM card
- Credit card (providing that your signature is on it, and it isn't expired)
- Any form of ID on the primary ID list

Check that Your Names Match

Ahead of your exam, you must ensure that the first and last name on your ID **exactly match** the first and last name that you used to register with Pearson VUE. (For example, if your driver's license shows your name as Charles, be sure to register as Charles — not as Chuck or Charlie.)

We'll email you prior to your exam asking you to **log in and verify** that the name on your exam registration exactly matches with your two forms of ID. If the name displayed is different, please update your name in the form and resubmit. Name changes cannot be made on exam days, including at the testing center.

If your names don't match, you'll be asked to leave and you'll forfeit your testing fee. If you have recently had a legal name change, you'll need to bring proof to the test center on exam day. Your document must be an original (not a photocopy or fax). Pearson VUE will only accept marriage licenses, divorce decrees, or court-sanctioned legal name change documents.

Reschedule or Cancel Your Exam

If you need to reschedule or cancel your exam, contact Pearson VUE. You can either do this **online** within 48 hours of your appointment, or over the **phone** at least 24 hours prior to your exam. Once your initial exam is scheduled, you may only reschedule within 365 days of your initial exam date. You must sit for your exam within 365 days of your initial exam date, or your exam fee will not be refunded.

Check In

On the day of your exam, you must arrive at least 30 minutes before your start time to complete the check-in process. To check in, you'll need to:

- Show two acceptable forms of ID
- Provide your signature
- Submit to a **palm vein scan** (unless it is prohibited by law). If you are not comfortable with this form of identification, please contact examadministration@isc2.org prior to booking your exam.
- Have your photo taken. Hats, scarves and coats may not be worn for your photo. You also can't wear these items in the test room.
- Leave your personal belongings outside the testing room. You'll have access to secure storage, however, space is limited. Pearson VUE test centers do not assume responsibility for your personal belongings.

The Test Administrator (TA) will give you a short orientation before escorting you to a computer terminal. Once you are seated at your desk and the TA has started your test, review and accept the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) within five minutes. If you do not review and accept the NDA within the allotted time, you cannot take the exam and your exam fee will not be refunded. You may review the NDA before your exam day **here**.

If you're still unsure of the check in process, check out this **video**. It explains what to expect when you arrive at your Pearson VUE test center.

Preparing for Your Exam

With the admin out of the way, it's time to focus on your exam prep. Exam preparation doesn't just mean studying hard; it also involves caring for your mental wellbeing, fighting burnout, and staying motivated.

Register for Your Exam
Before embarking on your CISSP study journey, it's crucial to **register for your exam**. Remember, the CISSP is intensive, and you'll need a relatively long study period. However, setting an exam date too far in the future can lead to losing motivation. We recommend a minimum study period of 6 weeks – provided you have extensive experience in several exam domains – and an absolute maximum study period of 3 months. Having a clear deadline will also help you craft a study plan.

Take Advantage of ISC2 Study Resources

ISC2 has many self-study resources to help you prepare for your CISSP exam. While our CISSP Study Pack covers these resources in more detail, here's a quick run-down of what we have available:

Official CISSP Online Self-Paced Training:
This resource enables you to tailor your learning to your needs. The experience includes interactive study materials, robust search functionality to home in on topics, analytics dashboards to track your progress, email support, and 24/7 course availability.

Official CISSP Instructor-Led Training: Offering the structure of a classroom with the flexibility of remote learning, ISC2 instructor-led training aligns with the CISSP exam outline and features live virtual instruction.

Official CISSP Flash Cards: This free self-study tool allows you to study for the CISSP exam anywhere, anytime, tests your knowledge, and gives real-time feedback to ensure you feel confident and prepared.

Official CISSP Practice Quiz: Determine your exam readiness with this short 10-item quiz. This resource recommends next steps and offers advice for your weakest areas.

Official CISSP Study App: Featuring more than 5000 realistic test questions and explanations, over 2000 flash cards, and a comprehensive glossary, the Official CISSP Study App is your gateway to exam success.

Official CISSP Online Study Group: Joining an Online Study Group connects you with fellow CISSP exam preppers to keep you motivated, accountable, and away from distractions.

CISSP Exam Outline: Get familiar with the CISSP exam structure and avoid any nasty surprises with this official Exam Outline.

Prioritize Your Mental Health

During your CISSP exam prep, looking after your wellbeing is important. Failing to deal with stress properly and letting your nerves get the better of you can be disastrous, often resulting in a failed exam. So, here are our tips for managing exam anxiety.

Practice Mindfulness: Mindfulness techniques, such as meditation, positive thinking, and visualization, are a great way to look after your mental health, overcome exam anxiety, and reduce the risk of burnout.

Look After Your Physical Health: Your physical wellbeing significantly impacts your mental health.

During your exam period, do your best to eat healthy, exercise regularly, and limit alcohol and caffeine intake.

Create a Schedule and Stick to It: You'll likely be juggling your CISSP studies with work and personal commitments, so it's crucial to maintain your work-life-study balance with a detailed schedule. Remember to book some downtime so you can rest and recuperate.

Remind Yourself What You're Working For: The CISSP exam period can be challenging, so it's worth reminding yourself why you chose to take the exam in the first place. Check out this blog for a reminder of the benefits of being CISSP certified.

Prepare for Exam Day: Few things are more anxiety inducing than feeling unprepared for an exam. Ensure you have done the work, given yourself plenty of time to get to the testing center, laid out clothes the night before, and generally done everything possible to make exam day

Testimonials

Need a reminder of why all this work is worth it? You don't have to take it from us: a huge number of cybersecurity professionals have benefitted from earning the CISSP and want to share their experience. Here's what they had to say.

Sudesh Kannan, PhD, known to his friends, colleagues, and students as "Dr K," is the Principal Engineer at Info Security Innovation and an instructor at ISC2. He believes that "having the CISSP credential is very important. It looks great on your resume. It makes the difference when you're being interviewed and when you get your job."

However, for Sudesh, the course content is often more valuable than the certification itself. He finds that when talking to his students, they most often talk about how studying the course material helped them better understand their profession and, as a result, can better follow their bosses' train of thought and follow through with an idea.

Kieran Masters, OT Cyber Security Consultant at PWC, had a similar experience to Sudesh's students. "The course has already significantly boosted my confidence in my knowledge and abilities. Passing the exam and becoming an ISC2 member has reassured me of my competence in this field. This enables me to provide meaningful and knowledgeable insights to help solve problems," he said.

For others, earning the CISSP is more about knowledge building than career advancement. **Matt Lee, Senior Director of Security Compliance at Pax8** argues that "the benefits are what you get out of actually learning and continuing your education and building upon that. I would encourage anybody to pursue the CISSP credential. Then, also after you do so, look for more. Don't stop learning. Our field is not static; it is ever-changing."

For **Parul Khanna, Director of Information Security and Manulife**, the benefits of earning the CISSP go beyond knowledge and career development. "The power of this certification is that it opens up numerous other options in which you can step into within the realm of cybersecurity, and it equips you with the right mindset as well as knowledge," she said. Alongside her day job, Parul is an accomplished industry speaker and found that "having the CISSP credential and its in-depth knowledge of the different domains also allows [her] to speak more confidently."

Aside from the CISSP itself, Parul has benefitted enormously from being an ISC2 member. "You get access to an exhaustive list of resources, not just limited to your certifications, but also skill builders, online training certificate courses, workshops, and new insights. You can also complete your Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits through the training. There are excellent sources of ISC2 webinars that you get to attend as well as different forms of publications," she said.

"Membership also opens up a lot of volunteering opportunities as well, such as The Centre for Cyber Safety and Education. There are different ISC2 committees, for example. I'm part of the industry advisory committees. There are exam development workshops. There's an opportunity to contribute to the blog, and content development. With the skill builders, there's an opportunity to contribute there. Last, but not least, there are also exclusive savings for the members, as well as your partner resources. So that's an additional benefit and bonus," Parul continued.

More Support

If you need more information or require further support, **visit our FAQ**, email us, give us a call, or fill out **this form**.

Email: examadministration@isc2.org

North America and Latin America:
877-863-0386

UK, Europe, Middle East and Africa:
+44-161-855-7455

Asia-Pacific: **+60-383-191-085**
(8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. AEST)

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