



Frequently Asked Questions: New CCNA Curricula

New Curricula

Q. Why did Cisco® create two new CCNA® curricula?

A. We created the new CCNA curricula, CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration, in response to input from administrators, instructors, and students. CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration target different student segments based on their academic experience and goals. By using different methodologies to teach students with different educational backgrounds and interests, we can help students successfully achieve their learning goals.

Both curricula are designed to help students prepare for IT professional careers and the CCNA certification exam. CCNA Discovery is designed for students with basic PC skills and can be delivered as an independent curriculum or integrated into broader courses of study at secondary schools, technical schools, colleges and universities. CCNA Exploration is designed for students with advanced problem solving and analytical skills, such as those who are pursuing degrees in engineering, math, or science. CCNA Exploration can be integrated into technology curricula or continuing education programs at postsecondary schools such as career and technical schools, colleges, and universities.

Students who enroll in CCNA Exploration will be expected to know binary math and understand the concept of algorithms, whereas students who enroll in CCNA Discovery will not be expected to have this knowledge and the curriculum will provide expanded explanations or tools such as a binary calculator.

Q. Given their differences, how can CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration both align with the CCNA certification?

A. The CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses teach the same applied skills but present the information in different ways to appeal to the two student segments. Each curriculum provides relevant and effective lessons to engage students and ensure they are successful in learning the material in a way that aligns with their educational backgrounds and goals.

Q. Are there any tools available to help instructors and/or students choose between CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?

A. Yes. There are datasheets available for each curriculum and a CCNA Video that highlight the differences between the two curricula. In addition, instructors can also review a selection guidelines document available on Academy Connection to help in choosing the appropriate curricula.

Key Features and E-Doing

Q. What are the main features of CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?

A. The CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula help prepare students for IT professional careers and the CCNA certification exam.

New features in both CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration are as follows:

- Embedded e-doing, which uses the capabilities of a computer to provide guidance and opportunities for exploration and experimentation
- A new graphical user interface (GUI) that engages students and facilitates instruction with an attractive “look and feel” and more interactive activities
- An introduction to advanced technologies such as voice, video, wireless, and security, and an overview of converged networks
- A design that enables more efficient translation to support Cisco's commitment to delivering the curricula in multiple languages

Key Features of CCNA Discovery:

- Designed for students with basic PC skills
- Can be delivered as an independent curriculum or integrated into broader course studies at secondary schools, technical schools, colleges, and universities
- Maps directly to everyday experiences with networks and covers important networking concepts based on the types of practical network environments students may encounter; ranging from small office and home office (SOHO) networking to more complex enterprise and theoretical networking models covered later in the curriculum
- Offers a hands-on, career-oriented approach to learning networking that emphasizes practical experience
- Includes activities that emphasize the practical applications of networking in terms of implementation and career opportunities
- Teaches applied skills midway through the four-course series to make IT relevant, encourage students to consider additional education in IT, and help students prepare for entry-level networking support careers

Key Features of CCNA Exploration:

- Designed for students with advanced problem solving and analytical skills, such as those who are pursuing degrees in engineering, math, or science
- Can be part of an integrated curriculum or continuing education program at postsecondary schools such as career and technical schools, colleges, and universities
- Designed to allow students to learn skills in a more rigorous, comprehensive, theoretical, and practical way that is reflective of standard college and university-level educational practices
- Uses language that allows for integration with other engineering concepts
- Presents an integrated and comprehensive coverage of networking topics, from fundamentals to advanced applications and services
- Includes highly complex and challenging hands-on labs
- Offers more flexibility in the delivery of the courses
- Designed to help prepare students for continued education and IT professional careers after the completion of the four-course curriculum

Q. What is e-doing?

A. E-doing is a design philosophy that applies the principle that people learn best by doing. The Cisco Networking Academy® has always emphasized the hands-on practical aspects of learning. E-doing is an attempt to bring that same practicality to the computer experience. E-doing promotes meaningful student engagement by encouraging interactive exploration and experimentation using electronic tools for network simulation that provide rich feedback. E-doing also enables instructors to use multiple modalities to engage students in learning course objectives that are logically connected to each other and introduced in the context of students' lives and career opportunities.

Q. Why is e-doing such an important part of the new CCNA curricula?

A. The presence of e-doing in the new curricula effectively creates a toolkit that enables instructors to deliver an interactive, multi-modality learning experience with the following characteristics:

- Presents new concepts and skills in context, using real-world scenarios and examples
- Provides many opportunities for practice and feedback
- Emphasizes the use of computers to visualize complex ideas
- Promotes the exploration of networking concepts and experimentation with tools such as Packet Tracer and interactive Flash-based activities to help students develop a greater understanding of network technologies
- Provides network simulations to increase the amount of console-based practice a student can gain to supplement hands-on time with real equipment
- Uses global and multicultural scenarios to engage students
- Applies more specific scenarios and examples during in-class discussions and activities or homework assignments
- Applies learning strategies that support multiple learning styles such as visual, auditory, and hands-on

Articulation

Q. Will there be a clear articulation path from the CCNA Discovery curriculum to the CCNA Exploration curriculum?

A. The CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula have been developed with the goal of preparing students for the CCNA exam through the use of different pedagogical approaches. Articulation (course credit) agreements are generally developed at the institutional level based on existing programs and pathways. Students completing CCNA Discovery courses Networking for Home and Small Businesses and Working at a Small-to-Medium Business or ISP should have equivalent knowledge as students completing the CCNA Exploration course, Network Fundamentals. Moreover, an institution may choose to grant CCNA Exploration credit to students who complete the CCNA Discovery curriculum.

Q. Will both the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula help students prepare for enrollment in the Cisco CCNP® curriculum?

A. Yes, students who complete all four courses of either CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration will be prepared to start the CCNP curriculum.

Equipment

Q. What are the equipment requirements for the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula?

A. For equipment requirements, please reference the Equipment List document available on the Academy Connection course catalog webpage. Since equipment availability, prices, and discounts vary by theater and region, you should contact your technical manager for specific information. For your convenience, the technical managers are listed here by region:

- Asia Pacific – Bill Frey (bifrey@cisco.com)
- Europe, Middle East, and Africa – Michael Furminger (mfurming@cisco.com)
- Latin America – Kevin Johnston (kejohnst@cisco.com)
- United States and Canada – Snezhy Neshkova (sneshkov@cisco.com)

Current Academies are advised to start acquiring new Integrated Services Routers (ISRs) when possible, but these devices are not required to deliver either the CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration curriculum. New Academies are encouraged to acquire the new ISRs.

The current CCNA bundle can be found on the following Website:

<http://cisco.netacad.net/cnams/content/library/curriculum/Ccna.jsp>

Q. Can Packet Tracer be used to replace the lab bundles for the new CCNA curricula?

A. No, Packet Tracer is not a replacement for the CCNA hands-on lab equipment. We recommend the use of physical equipment for hands-on learning. This is a key differentiator relative to other programs. Packet Tracer simulations, which are embedded in the new curricula, are supplemental and designed to provide learning opportunities for environments that are not possible to re-create in the classroom.

Training

Q. What instructor training is required to teach CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?

A. For existing CCNA instructors, training is not required but strongly recommended. Existing instructors are encouraged to read the new CCNA curricula and the numerous training materials provided, e.g. Interactive Course Guide (ICG), Instructor Reference Guide (IRG) and slide presentations.

New instructors who have not completed CCNA v3.1 instructor training will be required to complete in-person training as well as an online assessment and skills-based assessment. New instructors are expected to complete approximately 60–80 hours of training per course, which is similar to the current time requirements for CCNA v3.x training.

Q. Will new instructors who complete in-person training for CCNA Discovery also need to complete CCNA Exploration in-person training in order to teach both curricula?

A. Once a new instructor completes training for all four courses of either curriculum they will be eligible to teach either CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration.

More details on instructor pre-requisites to teach a class can be found in the Cisco Networking Academy Training Guidelines available in the Tools section of Academy Connection.

Q. What materials will be available for instructor training, and in what environments?

A. A wide variety of materials will be available for instructor training, including Interactive Course Guides (ICGs), Instructor Reference Guides (IRGs), slide presentations, case studies, lab materials, and activities. The following types of instructor training will be available: in-person, remote, blended, and independent learning. Independent or self-paced learning will only be available for existing CCNA instructors who choose to pursue re-training upon the initial rollout of the new curricula.

Translation

Q. Will the new CCNA curricula be translated?

A. Translated curricula, including course content, the user interface, and assessments, are a major part of the Cisco Networking Academy growth strategy and global sustainability efforts. Cisco's goal is to support the translation of CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration to the greatest extent possible to meet instructor and student needs. Cisco plans to start translating the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses as soon as the English versions become available. The roadmap for each supported language will be announced in the July–August 2007 timeframe.

Q. What is the translation strategy for CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration?

A. Cisco's translation strategy focuses on two areas:

- Developing all CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses with special features designed to facilitate translation
- Designing and testing a funding approach to maximize the number of languages supported by the new curricula

Certain languages will be funded by Cisco. These will be called globally strategic translations. The selection criteria for these languages include sustained growth of the Academy program, Cisco priorities in emerging countries, and the availability of current translations.

Since the Network Academy program cannot fund all languages in all courses, we will be creating a process for high-quality, regional and locally strategic translations. The costs will be shared between the Network Academy program and the local sponsor, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Migration

Q. What are the migration plans for the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration courses?

A. Institutions that decide to offer the new CCNA curricula can adopt CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration, based on which curriculum best meets their needs. Unlike the rollout of CCNA versions 2.x to 3.x, there will be no bridge courses. If an institution is midway through delivering CCNA v3.1, the institution should continue with the CCNA v3.1 curriculum. Countries with translated versions of CCNA v3.1 courses may choose to wait until a translated version of the new CCNA curricula is available, or adopt the English version.

Q. Will the CCNA v3.1 courses continue to be offered once CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula are available?

A. Yes, they will continue to be offered. There are no immediate plans to retire the CCNA v3.1 courses. This curriculum will continue to be made available to existing and new Academies as long as it aligns with customer needs and certification requirements.

Availability

Q. **When will the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration curricula be available for teaching?**

A. The English versions of CCNA Discovery courses Networking for Home and Small Businesses and Working at a Small-to-Medium Business or ISP, and CCNA Exploration courses Network Fundamentals and Routing Protocols and Concepts, will be available on June 25, 2007.

The English versions of CCNA Discovery courses Introducing Routing and Switching in the Enterprise and Designing and Supporting Computer Networks, and CCNA Exploration courses LAN Switching and Wireless and Accessing the WAN, will be available in the November–December 2007 timeframe.

Q. **Why did you announce these new curricula so far in advance?**

A. This announcement was made well in advance of the availability date to allow Academies and instructors to consider these changes in their planning processes. We want to keep all audiences informed of planned changes as early as possible, but we are still finalizing some of the new curricula details, so some questions may not be answered in the materials that Cisco is providing at this time. We will update you with more information as it becomes available.

Course Delivery

Q. **How are you dealing with electricity and connectivity as part of the course design?**

A. We recognize that in some countries, particularly the LDCs, constant power and connectivity is a challenge. The Cisco Networking Academy will continue to stipulate that Academies provide a local-server environment for the delivery of curricular content. Cisco is improving the curriculum download function to better enable the process of procuring the content for local-server delivery. Cisco will also seek means to enable optimal assessment delivery to environments with limited or intermittent connectivity, but the solution and timeline for this capability has not been established.

Cisco Press Books

Q. **What Cisco Press books will support the CCNA Discovery curriculum and when will they be available?**

A. The following dates pertain to English-language versions of the books only and for orders outside the United States, please contact Kristin Schneider at Kristin.Schneider@pearsoned.com.

A new type of book will support the CCNA Discovery curriculum The Cisco Press **Learning Guides** are a *newly designed format* to complement and supplement the CCNA Discovery courses. The books focus on readability, study aids, pedagogy, and practice. They combine the textbook with the labs in one book per course.

Each of the books provides tutorial content that reinforces and supplements the corresponding online curriculum. Each book will also contain the hands-on labs for the course plus additional labs from the Cisco Press authors to strengthen the learners understanding of the course materials.

These books come in an 8 ½" x 11" inch paperback format with CD-ROM.

Networking for Home and Small Business, CCNA Discovery Learning Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-209-5

ISBN-13: 9781587132094

Publication Date: October 2007

Working at a Small-to-Medium Business or ISP, CCNA Discovery Learning Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-210-9

ISBN-13: 9781587132100

Publication Date: December 2007

Introducing Routing and Switching in the Enterprise, CCNA Discovery Learning Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-211-7

ISBN-13: 9781587132117

Publication Date: Early 2008

Designing and Supporting Computer Networks, CCNA Discovery Learning Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-212-5

ISBN-13: 9781587132124

Publication Date: Early 2008

Q. What Cisco Press books will support the CCNA Exploration curriculum and when will they be available?

A. The following dates pertain to English-language versions of the books only and for orders outside the United States, please contact Kristin Schneider at Kristin.Schneider@pearsoned.com

Two types of books will directly support each course within the CCNA Exploration curriculum. The two book formats support each course with flexible learning and study tools.

Companion Guides are portable desk references of the Cisco Networking Academy Program course material that students can use anytime, anywhere. Companion Guides are designed to reinforce online course material, helping students focus on important concepts and organize their study time for quizzes and exams.

Labs and Study Guides, a format introduced in 2006, provide students with a convenient, complete collection of course lab exercises PLUS supplemental exercises for each of the courses. The Study Guide section provides learning exercises. The course labs are designed to give students hands-on experience in a particular concept or technology. The supplemental labs from the authors provide additional hands-on practice as well as more advanced challenges.

Network Fundamentals course:

Network Fundamentals, CCNA Exploration Companion Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-208-7

ISBN-13: 9781587132087

Publication Date: October 2007

Network Fundamentals, CCNA Exploration Labs and Study Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-203-6

ISBN-13: 9781587132032

Publication Date: October 2007

Routing Protocols and Concepts course:

Routing Protocols and Concepts, CCNA Exploration Companion Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-206-0

ISBN-13: 9781587132063

Publication Date: October 2007

Routing Protocols and Concepts, CCNA Exploration Labs and Study Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-204-4

ISBN-13: 9781587132049

Publication Date: October 2007

LAN Switching and Wireless course:

LAN Switching and Wireless, CCNA Exploration Companion Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-207-9

ISBN-13: 9781587132070

Publication Date: Early 2008

LAN Switching and Wireless, CCNA Exploration Labs and Study Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-202-8

ISBN-13: 9781587132025

Publication Date: Early 2008

Accessing the WAN course:

Accessing the WAN, CCNA Exploration Companion Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-205-2

ISBN-13: 9781587132056

Publication Date: Early 2008

Accessing the WAN, CCNA Exploration Labs and Study Guide

ISBN-10: 1-58713-201-X

ISBN-13: 9781587132018

Publication Date: Early 2008

Q. What about Early Adopters who start new CCNA Discovery or CCNA Exploration courses before books are published, will anything be available to support them from Cisco Press?

A. Cisco Press can make available to early adopters a select number of chapters from the books in PDF format. These chapters can be photocopied by instructors and provided to students to be used until the books are available. More details on the availability of this material will be announced via the Cisco Press Website as well as the Cisco Press Instructor Newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter, visit www.ciscopress.com/newsletters .

Certification Exams

Q. What changes are happening to the CCNA certification to align with the new curricula?

A. On June 25, 2007 Cisco announced an expansion of the Career Certifications program to develop and certify skills required in entry level IT jobs. Revisions were made to the CCNA certification and a new exam was released that aligns with the new curricula. We also introduced CCENT™ (Cisco Certified Entry Network Technician) a new entry level certification aligned with the new CCNA curricula to establish an entry level foundation for a successful long term career in networking.

For more information, visit our CCNA certification website at <http://www.cisco.com/go/ccna> or CCENT certification website at <http://www.cisco.com/go/ccent>.

Q. What courses do students need to take to prepare for the new entry level certification?

A. Cisco Networking Academy students currently have to complete all four CCNA courses to be fully prepared to take the CCNA certification exam. With the introduction of the CCENT certification, students have an additional certification option. The CCNA Discovery curriculum prepares students to take the new entry level certification exam after completing the first two courses, Networking for Home and Small Businesses and Working at a Small-to-Medium Business or ISP. Students are prepared to take the CCNA certification exam after completing all four courses.

Q. What influenced the need for a new entry level certification?

A. There were multiple drivers behind the introduction:

- There is a high demand and need for entry level network support positions. Research confirmed interest by employers for a certification to validate entry level skills
- While the highly respected CCNA certification is an industry standard, there is an opportunity to establish an earlier connection with students and new professionals entering the network support field.
- Provide the opportunity for Cisco Networking Academy students to certify as they follow the CCNA curricula path.

Q. Why would a student want the new entry level certification?

A. It will certify the practical skills required for entry-level network support positions. CCENT validates the ability to install, operate and troubleshoot a small branch network, including configuring a router and switch, connecting to a WAN, and implementing basic network security. It is a tangible, but optional, first step in earning Cisco CCNA® network associate certification which is the foundation level certification for networking careers. Recipients of the new certification also gain access to the Cisco Certification Community to access additional training resources and use of the new logo to indicate their achievement.

Q. Is this new certification available to only Cisco Networking Academy students or is it open to everyone?

A. CCENT certification is open to everyone, not just Cisco Networking Academy students. Cisco Learning Partners are also rolling out new curricula aligned with these exams.

Q. The exams for earning CCNA certification today are Intro and ICND, will they be replaced?

A. The table below illustrates the current exams and their corresponding replacements:

Current CCNA Exams	New CCNA Exams
INTRO 640-821	ICND1 640-822
ICND 640-811	ICND2 640-816
CCNA 640-801 (composite)	CCNA 640-802 (composite)

- Q. **Will the current CCNA v3.1 curricula align to the new entry level certification?**
A. No. CCNA v3.1 will continue to align with the current CCNA 640-801 exam and CCNA certification. The first two courses of CCNA Discovery will align to the new entry level certification.
- Q. **Will students taking the first two courses of the CCNA Exploration curriculum be prepared to pass the new entry level certification exam?**
A. No. CCNA Exploration covers protocols and theory at deeper levels with switching covered in the LAN Switching and Wireless course. CCNA Discovery covers networking based on application and therefore introductory elements of routing and switching are both introduced in the first two courses, Networking for Home and Small Businesses and Working at a Small-to-Medium Business or ISP.
- Q. **What does ICND stand for?**
A. Interconnected Cisco Network Devices
- Q. **How much do the new ICND1 640-822 and ICND2 640-816 exams cost?**
A. The ICND1 and ICND2 exams cost \$125 USD or equivalent worldwide. Vouchers will be available to help Cisco Networking Academy students with exam costs. For more information, visit our Exam Information page website at http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/le3/le11/learning_about_certification_exams.html.
- Q. **How long is CCENT certification valid and how do I recertify?**
A. Like other Cisco career certifications, CCENT is valid for three years from the date you pass your last exam. To recertify, candidates must pass either the 640 associate level exam, any 642 professional level or Cisco Specialist exam (excluding Sales Specialist exams), or any 350 CCIE written exam. For more information, visit our CCENT website at www.cisco.com/go/ccent
- Q. **What is the difference between the A+ certification and the new entry level certification?**
A. The CompTIA A+ certification validates PC hardware and software skills. The new entry level certification validates networking skills.
- Q. **What is the difference between Net+ certification and the new entry level certification?**
A. CompTIA Net+ certification validates basic networking concepts common to multiple vendor devices. Cisco's new entry level certification validates that knowledge, plus the practical ability to install and verify actual Cisco networking equipment.
- Q. **If a student has already passed the current INTRO exam, does that provide credit for CCENT certification?**
A. To earn CCENT certification you must pass the ICND1 640-822 exam. Taking the INTRO 640-821 exam will not qualify you for the CCENT certification.
- Q. **If I pass the INTRO exam and pass ICND2, will I achieve CCNA certification?**
A. Yes. The INTRO 640-821 exam may be combined with the ICND2 640-816 exam to complete CCNA certification for as long as the INTRO exam is valid--up to three years from date the INTRO exam is passed, per standard policy.

Q. Currently when you take the first exam (INTRO), you have a 3 year window to take the second exam (ICND) and complete CCNA. Will this option still exist?

A. Yes, students will still be able to take and pass the first exam (ICND1) and have a three year window to pass the second exam (ICND2) before the first exam expires.

Q. If I've passed INTRO already and then pass the second exam required for CCNA, will I receive the CCENT certification along with my CCNA? Or, if I pass the combined CCNA 640-802 composite exam, will I receive both the CCNA and CCENT certifications?

A. No, if you certify directly at the CCNA level first, you will not receive a CCENT certification since CCENT certifies skills at a lower level than CCNA. The purpose of the CCENT certification is to provide an option for those who aren't yet ready for CCNA.

Q. Are there significant differences between the current CCNA exam and the new ones?

A. Exam questions have been updated to validate the skills necessary to implement today's small to medium-sized branch networks, and include new topics such as network address translation and IPv6, basic security controls, and basic WLAN concepts. A full list of exam topics is provided at www.cisco.com/go/ccna. The new exams also feature more performance-based questions, to better assess candidate competency.

Q. What is the translation strategy and schedule for the new certification exams?

A. Translating the new certification exams to meet demand in local markets is a high priority. We will announce our first priority for localization in the June-August 2007 timeframe.

Q. How long will the existing CCNA exam be available?

A. While certification exams for the public are usually replaced 135 days after general availability of a new exam, special arrangements are being made for the Cisco Networking Academy. Vouchers for the existing CCNA, INTRO and ICND exams will be available for an extended period of time to coincide with the availability of the CCNA v3.1 curriculum. Exact dates will be communicated in the July-August timeframe.

Q. When will the new certification exams be available?

A. The new CCNA certification and new entry level CCENT certification are publicly announced on June 25, 2007 and the corresponding exams will be available August 1, 2007. Experienced instructors should already have most of the skills required to pass the CCENT exam, if they would like to take the exam to help promote the new entry level certification.



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