

CSTE

CERTIFIED SOFTWARE TESTER



As the IT industry becomes more competitive, the ability for management to distinguish professional and skilled individuals in the field becomes mandatory. Certification demonstrates a level of understanding in carrying out quality assurance principles and practices.

Acquiring the designation of Certified Software Tester (CSTE) indicates a professional level of competence in the principles and practices of quality assurance in the IT profession.

CSTEs become members of a recognized professional group and receive recognition of their competence by business and professional associates, potentially more rapid career advancement, and greater acceptance in the role as advisor to management.

Program History

Quality Assurance Institute (QAI) was established in 1980 as a professional association formed to represent the software quality assurance industry. The first certification began development in 1985 and the first formal examination process was launched in 1990. Today, Software Certifications, administered by QAI, is global. Since its inception, Software Certifications has certified over 20,000 IT professionals in Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, and the United States.

Objectives and Benefits of Certification

The Certified Software Tester program is intended to establish standards for initial qualification and continuing improvement of professional competence. This certification program helps to:

1. Define the tasks (competency domains) associated with software testing duties in order to evaluate skill mastery.
2. Demonstrate an individual's willingness to improve professionally.
3. Acknowledge attainment of an acceptable standard of professional competency.
4. Aid organizations in selecting and promoting qualified individuals.
5. Motivate personnel having software testing responsibilities to maintain their professional competency.
6. Assist individuals in improving and enhancing their organization's software testing programs (i.e., provide a mechanism to lead a professional).

Code of Ethics

A distinguishing mark of a profession is the acceptance of responsibility by its members to the interests of those it serves.

Those certified must maintain high standards of conduct in order to effectively discharge their responsibility.

An applicant for certification must subscribe to the Software Certifications Code of Ethics that outlines the ethical behaviors expected of all certified professionals. Software Certifications programs include processes and procedures for monitoring certificant adherence to these policies. Failure to adhere to the requirements of this code is grounds for decertification.

Mission Statement

To support the needs of information services quality practitioners by providing certification of their professional development as they evolve over the course of their careers from entry-level novice to recognized and mature masters of their respective disciplines.

Software
CERTIFICATIONS



The Software Certifications Program is Proudly Administered by the Quality Assurance Institute.

SOFTWARE CERTIFICATIONS

Prerequisites

To qualify for candidacy, each applicant must meet one of three prerequisites:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college-level institution,
2. An associate's degree and two years of experience in the information services field, or
3. Six years of experience in the information services field.

The application requires the applicant to provide details supporting the option selected.

No formal proof of education or employment are required at the time of application; however, the candidate may later receive a request for verification of education, or verification of employment, or both, depending upon a compliance sample selected according to program criteria. If selected for verification, such verification must be supplied to the program prior to sitting for any necessary examinations.

Application Process

Individuals applying for CSTE Certification candidacy must submit:

1. A completed Certification Candidacy Application.
2. A \$350 (USD) non-refundable, non-transferable fee (payable by check or credit card).

All application forms and required fees must be submitted no later than 60 calendar days prior to any examination date selected. The candidate must sign the application form agreeing to support and abide by the Software Certifications Code of Ethics. Applications will not be processed if they are incomplete, incorrectly completed, or fees have not been paid. The candidate has sole responsibility to ensure that materials are submitted in a timely and orderly manner.

Note: When sending an application, please allow 2 weeks for processing.

Application Fee:

\$350

Certification Candidacy/Application

A completed Certification Candidacy Application must be submitted for entrance to Software Certifications as a candidate for any particular certification. This application is intended to be used by working professionals who feel they are prepared to sit for, and pass, the required examination for CSTE. It should only be submitted by individuals who:

- Have reviewed the CSTE Common Body of Knowledge,
- Are working in the field covered by the certification designation,
- Have significant experience and breadth to have mastered the basics of the entire Common Body of Knowledge, and
- Are prepared to take the required examination and therefore desire to establish candidacy.

Examination

Candidates for certification must pass a four-part written examination in order to obtain certification. The examination evaluates the candidate's knowledge and practice of the skill areas defined in the CSTE Body of Knowledge. Candidates must attempt the exam at least once in the first 12 months after applying or their application will expire. Candidates who do not successfully pass the examination may resit for the examination up to two times by submitting a retake application and paying all required fees. Subsequent additional examination efforts require reinitiating the entire application process.

Technical knowledge becomes obsolete quickly; therefore, the board has established these eligibility guidelines. The goal is to test on a consistent and comparable knowledge base worldwide. The eligibility requirements have been developed to encourage candidates to prepare and pass all portions of the examination in the shortest time possible.



Common Body of Knowledge

Knowledge Areas

- * **The Test Environment** - The CSTE shall demonstrate a knowledge of the environment in which effective testing can occur. The skills in this area include understanding the principles and concepts of testing, the tester's role in software development and acquisition, management of the test function, and how test processes are developed, implemented, used and improved, including the use of tools in the test processes.
- * **Test Planning** - The CSTE shall demonstrate the ability to plan tests including the selection of techniques and methods to be used to validate the product against its approved requirements and design. Test planning assesses the business and technical risks of the software application, and then develops a plan to determine if the software minimizes those risks. Test planners must understand the development methods and environment to effectively plan for testing, including regression testing.
- * **Executing the Test Plan** - The CSTE shall demonstrate the ability to execute tests, design test cases, use test tools, and monitor testing to ensure correctness and completeness.
- * **Test Analysis and Reporting** - The CSTE shall demonstrate the ability to develop testing status reports. These reports should show the status of the testing based on the test plan. Reporting should support the enumeration, status, and execution of tests and regression testing. To properly report status, the testers should review and conduct statistical analysis on the test results and discovered defects. The lessons learned from the test effort should be used to improve the next iteration of the test process.

Skill Categories

1. Software Testing Principles and Concepts
2. Building the Test Environment
3. Managing the Test Project
4. Test Planning
5. Executing the Test Plan
6. Test Status, Analysis and Reporting
7. User Acceptance Testing
8. Testing Software Developed by Outside Organizations
9. Testing Software Controls and the Adequacy of Security Procedures
10. Testing New Technologies

For a more detailed explanation of each category, visit the Software Certifications web site at www.softwarecertifications.org.



Recertification

The Software Certifications Board strives to maintain the highest degree of integrity within Software Certifications. To maintain this integrity, a certificant must maintain a current knowledge base of quality principles, practices, and technical knowledge as the information technology industry advances and technologies become obsolete. By requiring that the certificant maintain and increase their level of competency through various avenues of education and activity, the board is assured that the certification standards of integrity are being met and the value of the certification designation is being maintained.

To assure that the certificant is maintaining knowledge and skills that are state-of-the-art in the field, the certificant must demonstrate continuing professional education (CPE) activities. This may be done by:

- submitting a Recertification Journal of qualified Continuing Professional Education activities, **or**
- taking an Examination for Recertification to demonstrate your competence and skill in the certification competency domains.

Other Certifications

**Certified Software Quality Analyst
(CSQA)**

**Certified Software Project Manager
(CSPM)**

Please visit:

**www.softwarecertifications.org
for more information regarding other
certifications.**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the fee for certification?

The initial fee for CSTE is \$350 USD. This includes the application processing fee, administration fee, and your initial sitting fee. The fee also includes a CD of the Guide to the Common Body of Knowledge. If you sit for the exam the first time and do not receive passing marks, there is an additional fee of \$100 USD for each retake exam (limit two).

What is the exam format?

The four and a half-hour exam is made up of four parts; two parts multiple-choice and two parts essay and short answer. You will have forty-five minutes to complete each of the multiple-choice sections and one hour and fifteen minutes to complete each of the essay and short answer sections. There is a ten-minute break between each part.

How do I study for the exam?

There is no specific outline of study curriculum established by Software Certifications. Candidates are responsible for their own study and preparation. The Quality Assurance Institute, as administrator of Software Certifications, does not infer that attending specific courses or programs will significantly enhance the candidate's chances of passing the examination. Bibliographic references are included in the CSTE Body of Knowledge description for information purposes. Candidates are expected to know and pursue other and more recent resources.

Professional certification is a significant undertaking. Sufficient time and energy should be allocated by the candidate toward preparation. Most of the needed preparation involves reviewing and brushing up on the various competency domains in the certification's respective Body of Knowledge. If candidates have extensive experience in the quality practices described in the competency domains of the Body of Knowledge, the examination should not be difficult. Candidates should avoid last minute cramming, as it is rarely beneficial in the long term.

Software Certifications

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