

Evaluating the Value of Certification for Software Test and Quality Professionals



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Who am I?

- Started professional life in 1975 as a programmer.
- Moved to the U.S. in 1981 to get a Master and Ph.D. in Computer and Information Systems.
- Worked for several companies as a developer then as a QA tester.
- Worked as a professor of Software Engineering at the UST in Minnesota.
- Consulted for many companies on all aspects of software development and testing.
- Founded Software Dimensions in 1996
- Founded IIST in 1999
- Currently chairman and CEO of IIST



Why Should Test Professionals get Certified?

- To gain education that helps them do their job better
- To contribute in a positive way to the success of their organization
- To improve the image and boost credibility of the test profession in their organizations
- To demonstrate professionalism on the job

How to Evaluate a Certification Program

- How comprehensive is the Body of Knowledge? Does it truly represent a distinct significant course of educational accomplishment?
- What do I have to do to earn the certification, is it merely passing an exam or will I receive education on how to do my job better?
- How would my current or future employer benefit from or value the certification?

How to Evaluate a Certification Program (cont.)

- If there is a prep courses, how practical the training is and how it relates to my job
- What is the experience of the instructors?
- Will I receive any evidence of completing the course of study?
- Will I be able to choose from a variety of courses and topics to help me do a better job in my projects *while* satisfying areas of the Body of Knowledge areas?

Finally

- Will I be a better professional and will have learned better ways to do my job as a result of the certification?

Two Main Approaches to Certification

- Exam-based
 - Self study
 - Optional prep course
 - Body of Knowledge is typically covered in 2-3 day course
 - Currently offered by QAI, ISTQB, ASQ
- Education-based
 - Formal classroom training and hands on workshops
 - Training covers a well-defined Body of knowledge
 - Body of knowledge requires 10 days of training
 - Exam on each course
 - Currently offered by IIST



Certifications from IIST

- Certified Software Test Professional (CSTP)
 - Seven areas of Body of Knowledge developed by an Industry Advisory Board
 - Minimum 10 days of classroom training and workshops
 - Exam in each course with 80% passing score
 - Job experience requirement: evidence of ability to apply learned topics to their job
 - Re-certification required in 3 years



Certifications from IIST

- Certified Test Manager (CTM)
 - Seven areas of Body of Knowledge developed by an Industry Advisory Board
 - Minimum 10 days of classroom training and workshops
 - Exam in each course with 80% passing score
 - Job experience requirement: evidence of ability to apply learned topics to their job
 - Re-certification required in 3 years



CSTP and CTM Requirements

- Formal Education Requirements
- Job Experience Requirements
 - At least one year in test-related job



Formal Education Requirements

- Ten days of training and workshops to cover all seven areas of the Body of Knowledge
- Courses are selected by candidate but must cover all seven areas of the Body of Knowledge
- Up to two days credit transfer from other institution
- Two day credit for holder of CSTE and ISTQB foundation
- Must pass an exam in each course and achieve 80% performance
- Exams essay and short answer questions. No multiple choice.
- Exams are closed book although some question might be of open-book nature
- One chance to re-take an exam without having to re-take the course
- Re-certification required every 3 years



How are IIST Certifications Different?

- Education-based certification that teaches you methods and techniques to improve the way you do your job as opposed to just passing an exam.
- Flexibility in selecting courses that benefit you the most and helps you improve your performance
- Education is based on a Body of Knowledge developed by an independent Advisory Board.
- Courses taught by practitioners and experts in software quality testing



How are IIST Certifications Different?

- All courses leading to certifications are available as online interactive sessions as well as pre-recorded sessions.
- When conducted on-site, courses are tailored to use example from current projects
- Attendees receive an official educational record (transcript) from IIST that lists courses attended and performance in each course.



Why IIST Certification

- Because of the proven value of education.
- Certification is only a side product of the educational process.
- You certainly will learn much more about how to do your job better.
- You will benefit from the experience of possibly 10 different experts.
- Documented achievement through transcript of courses and scores
- Most importantly, the cost of the certification training is less than the cost of receiving the same type of training anywhere else



Conclusion

- Software Testing has become a recognized profession and a career to be pursued.
- No career without education
- Do not just get certified. Get education that helps you do your job better and demonstrate professionalism on the job.