AWS Solutions Architect – Associate (SAA-C03)

AWS Certified Solutions Architect - Associate showcases knowledge and skills in AWS technology, across a wide range of AWS services. The focus of this certification is on the design of cost and performance optimised solutions, demonstrating a strong understanding of the AWS Well-Architected Framework. This certification can enhance the career profile and earnings of certified individuals and increase your credibility and confidence in stakeholder and customer interactions.

1. ## Who should take this exam?

AWS Certified Solutions Architect - Associate is a great starting point on the AWS Certification path for individuals who may have any of the following:

- Experience in AWS technology
- Strong on-premises IT experience and understanding of mapping on-premises to cloud
- Experience working in other cloud services like microsoft azure, GCP, IBM cloud, etc

2. ## What you'll learn

Preparing for and attaining this certification will showcase:

- Knowledge and skills in compute, networking, storage, and database AWS services as well as AWS deployment and management services
- Knowledge and skills in deploying, managing, and operating workloads on AWS as well as implementing security controls and compliance requirements
- Knowledge and skills in using the AWS Management Console and the AWS Command Line Interface (CLI)Understanding of the AWS Well-Architected Framework, AWS networking, security services, and the AWS global infrastructure
- Ability to identify which AWS services meet a given technical requirement and to define technical requirements for an AWS-based application

3. ## Why to get AWS Solutions Architect - Associate certified?

The cloud computing market is one of the fastest growing ones, approximately growth at a CAGR of 20% every year. The cloud market is expected to grow four fold by 2029. Now that more and more applications are built & migrated to

the cloud it is becoming a norm for enterprises to seek professionals who have knowledge in the cloud. Due to this surging demand and fast transition, cloud engineers and developers need to have cloud proficiency. Proficient engineers in the cloud domain are highly valued. AWS SAA is the certification that will establish an individual's competency in using AWS for application development in various phases like planning, designing, building, etc.

Developers, cloud engineers, devops engineers or any individual who wants to start or grow his AWS skills can also take this certification to showcase their competency in various services like EC2, AWS elastic load balancer, S3, RDS, etc. This certificate also helps cloud/devops engineers show that they have enough AWS knowledge required to architect/understand common and simple AWS Architecture patterns for various purposes.

4.Syllabus for the AWS Solutions Architect - Associate exam

The syllabus of this exam is actually quite vast because to architect a solution in AWS, you should know the available resources first (ofcourse!). The AWS resources are distributed based on the domain which are listed below with their weightage in brackets [%] out of 100 in exam.

- Domain 1: Design Secure Architectures [30%]
- Domain 2: Design Resilient Architectures [26%]
- Domain 3: Design High-Performing Architectures [24%]
- Domain 4: Design Cost-Optimised Architectures [20%]

As the passing score for the exam is 720 and the total score will be between 100-1000, you cannot skip an entire domain. Apart from certain resources which are used mostly for ML (Machine Learning), CICD (pipelines & other devops tools), etc all other services need to be studied at least at a high level so that you know what they do and don't get confused when you see them in exams as options.

Exam will have questions of below two types-

• Multiple choice: Has one correct response and three incorrect responses (distractors)

• Multiple response: Has two or more correct responses out of five or more response options

Many exam questions will have Multiple choice questions where all or more than one option will be a correct solution for the scenario, but you will have to figure out the most simple, most budget-friendly, most resilient, most secure or most high performing one from them based on the question.

Tip - If you are confused while facing such questions & there is no explicit mention if the solution should be cost-optimised or secure,etc. Just imagine if you were to implement all those solutions which are correct in mentioned options, which one will be the easiest to implement & will require minimum application changes, the easiest one will be the correct option more often than not.

5.How to prepare for the AWS Solutions Architect - Associate exam?

Now that we know who, what and why of the exam, let's look into the "How" part of it.

Whenever taking a certification of AWS associate level it is expected for the candidate to have at least 1 year of hands-on experience. So it is of paramount importance for you to perform exercises in hands-on lectures as suggested in the exam course if you don't have the prescribed experience. Even if you have the experience it never hurts to get a refresher!

For the exam only one learning course and one practice test course are enough which are mentioned below-

- Ultimate AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate SAA-C03 (Udemy)

This is the one stop solution if you want to get AWS SAA certified. The course covers every topic expected in the exam + a few extra details that will help you enhance your AWS knowledge and make you understand things better. There are handson lectures as well which you can practise along if you don't have working experience with AWS. The course also has a short quiz after the end of each module which will help you verify your understanding of that module.

The course is neatly distributed into sections based on exam syllabus. The concepts are explained with the help of visual representations and in a proper

flow which makes it easy for you to sail through the course. There are introductions to related concepts for the concerned AWS resources also like introduction to docker for AWS ECS. The course has a few lectures related to architecturing solutions based on resources covered in the course by milestone. These lectures are fantastic and really helpful.

The course includes one practice test and a few lectures at the end that tell you everything about how to register for the exam and other details on getting extra time and discounts for the exam.

Course link -[Ultimate AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate SAA-C03](#)

This course has more than 380 videos and 26+ hrs content, it might feel overwhelming to go through all this stuff at first glance. To help you with planning and getting through the course to prepare for the AWS SAA exam I have added some tips below in this article.

- Practice Exams | AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate (Udemy)

This course has 6 exam sets with 65 questions each which are based on the real exam pattern and it is a great way to see if you are ready for the exam. It also helps you identify your weak spots so you can revisit those topics. If you pass the practice exams with a 90%+ score then there are very high chances that you will pass the exam for sure!

I will recommend you to take these practice exams when you are less than 10 days away from giving your AWS SAA exam and after completing your learning course. If you solve these before this timeframe you might forget the question patterns and will be more prone to repeat the same mistakes.

Note - You can skip the practice exam in "Ultimate AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate SAA-C03 (Udemy)" if you are giving the practice exams in this course as those same questions will be covered in this one as well.

Course links - [Practice Exams | AWS Certified Solutions Architect Associate](#)

- AWS official tests

AWS has its own official sample and practice tests which you must go through before taking the exam. Combined these both have 20+10 = 30 questions which will help you better understand the scenarios that might appear in the exam. Below are the links-

AWS official practice test (DVA) - [Practice-tests](#)

AWS official Sample questions (DVA) - [Sample Questions](#)

6.Tips (Select from these)

- Set a deadline

  I have completed 4 certifications in the past 9 months (Including AWS DVA & AWS SAA). Many people tell me that they were struggling with their first certification itself! I always suggest people to have deadlines set for their certification exam also. Depending on your level of preparation for the exam you can schedule your exam max up to 3 months later(in case you are yet to start). Schedule your exam, pay your fees and promise yourself to not reschedule it! Deadline forces you to commit yourself more strongly!

- Plan milestones to meet the deadline

  Let us consider the course suggested above, it has 33 sections and 380+ lectures of approx 27 hrs of content. Now that you have set your deadline after 90 days from today, assuming you are going to start from scratch. You can decide to have weekly milestones so that you will be exam ready before the 90th day. So you break the course as -

  380/10 = ~38 lectures per week for 10 weeks

  (You can divide by sections/number of hours per week as well)

  Remaining 2 weeks can be utilised to solve the practice exam sets and revising the weak topics.

  I have followed the same practice for every certification or for other tasks as well. It helps you get things done and to have a track of it.

- Don't just get the certificate get the proficiency as well

If you are a student, a fresher or a working professional willing to change roles/job it is very important for you to "Know" the stuff. If you are AWS SAA certified and you are mentioning it in your resume then you should expect the interviewer to ask you the questions based on the AWS services in detail & common architecture patterns as well. You should be prepared with the answers to these questions because you get an edge over non-certified candidates if you answer correctly but if you are not able to answer the interviewer's questions correctly your other credibility is lost and your chances of selection are reduced.

Hence, I sincerely request you to not just learn for the exam but to get the true knowledge as well. It will help you everywhere.

- Lookout for discounts/reimbursements(for working professionals)

  If you are a working professional check with your HR or concerned Talent development authorities about certification policies for employees. Many companies provide training/ coupons/ reimbursements (partial or full) to their employees. Also, AWS provides 50% off on your second certification enrolment if you have passed your first one.

- Making list of weak topics and playing with it

  It might happen that you struggle with a particular or a set of AWS resources or that you are completely new to them. I will recommend that you list them and play(practice) with them until you get comfortable with them. Go through the lectures again if you make mistakes about a particular AWS resource in practice exams or you are confused about them. Although AWS SAA is not much of a hands-on exam, still for your professional journey you should have hands-on experience.

Final words -

This exam is a bit more difficult not because of the depth of knowledge about AWS resources but because of the number of resources that you need to understand for this certification. Practise enough and it will be easy for you to become an AWS Certified Solutions Architect - Associate & get ahead in your cloud journey.

I will also suggest to follow the above mentioned courses thoroughly, follow the tips mentioned in the article, they will be helpful for your AWS SAA certification journey.

Wishing you best of luck for your certification journey!