**7 certifications software developers should consider to grow their career**

The necessity of professional certifications is debated, with many software developers pooh-poohing their relevance when it comes to securing a job. But in a competitive job market, anything that can give you an edge or help you stand out as a candidate is worth considering.

If you’re at the early stage of your [career](https://thenextweb.com/topic/career), or looking to pivot, securing certification can offer assurances of your skills when you’ve not yet built up the experience. Professional certification will also demonstrate your commitment to continuous learning and keeping up with the latest technologies and best practices — an essential skill for any [software developer](https://thenextweb.com/topic/software-developer).

What’s more, the educational materials for certifications are often free — it’s the assessment that will cost you — so you can always use them as a way to build up your industry-ready skillset, and find other ways to demonstrate that to potential employers.

1. AWS Certified Developer

To give you an idea of how much your daily digital interactions rely on Amazon Web Services (AWS), an outage at some of the company’s [cloud](https://thenextweb.com/topic/cloud-computing) servers in December 2021 not only affected online media and streaming services, it also took out some security cameras, interactive retail screens, automatic vacuums, and electric vehicles.

AWS is such a dominant feature of the cloud marketplace that evidence of your expertise can be required in a job spec. This [cloud data architect role at Adesso](https://talent.thenextweb.com/job/cloud-data-architect-aws-google-cloud-all-genders-1-at-adesso-se/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), for example, asks for proven technology expertise in AWS, which would ideally be supported by manufacturer certifications or project experience.

There are no prerequisites to become an [AWS Certified Developer](https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-developer-associate/), however, AWS recommends you have at least one year’s experience working with apps built on its platform before you tackle it. The assessment involves a 130-minute exam that costs €138 and you’ll come away with certified knowledge of the best practices for AWS architecture, user support, web development and deployment, debugging, and software lifecycle management.

2. Microsoft Certified: Azure Fundamentals

Microsoft’s Azure is the world’s second-largest cloud service after AWS. Complete beginners who want to build a career working with this platform should consider getting an [Azure Fundamentals certification.](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/credentials/certifications/azure-fundamentals) Having this certification will demonstrate to potential employers that you understand the basics of Azure architecture and it’s a prerequisite for many of Microsoft’s more advanced Azure certifications.

This [Microsoft developer role in Rennes](https://talent.thenextweb.com/job/developpeurse-microsoft-dynamics-365-power-platform-fh-at-cgi-2/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), for example, notes that having at least one Microsoft certification would be a plus for candidates.

It’s a 45-minute exam that costs €99 or less (depending on your location). Developers should also note that Microsoft’s specialty certifications can expire if they aren’t renewed.

3. Oracle Certified Professional: Java SE Developer

Almost one-third of developers globally use Java and for good reason: its platform is massively popular when it comes to enterprise development. If your previous work has been limited to Java SE 8 or an older version, getting certified in SE 11 or 17 will demonstrate to employers that you are up to date on the latest capabilities. This [Java developer role at CGI](https://talent.thenextweb.com/job/developpeurse-java-fh-14-at-cgi-2/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), for example, specifies Java 11 as one of the key technologies.

The exam for either a professional certification as a [Java SE 11](https://education.oracle.com/oracle-certified-professional-java-se-11-developer/trackp_OCPJAV11) or [SE 17 developer](https://education.oracle.com/oracle-certified-professional-java-se-17-developer/trackp_OCPJSE17) takes 90 minutes, consists of 50 multiple-choice questions, and costs €228. There are no prerequisites for these exams but some hands-on experience with Java is most certainly recommended.

4. Salesforce Platform Developer

As customer relationship management (CRM) platforms go, Salesforce has long been top of the charts with nearly a quarter of the market share. To gain [Salesforce Platform Developer I](https://trailhead.salesforce.com/en/credentials/platformdeveloperi) certification, some prior experience as a developer is recommended, as well as some experience with Lightning, Salesforce’s app development platform.

The exam takes up to 105 minutes, consists of 60 multiple-choice questions, and costs $200 (€185). Salesforce certifications also require maintenance modules to be completed annually.

5. Certified Scrum Developer

The Scrum Alliance is a non-profit delivering training and certification in Agile development. Becoming a[Certified Scrum Developer](https://www.scrumalliance.org/get-certified/developer-track/certified-scrum-developer) is less about testing and proving your technical skills as a developer and more about showcasing your soft skills and ability to work within an Agile team framework.

This training and certification could be a great step for developers who want to gain or improve their skills in leading and managing teams. Right now, there are a number of scrum master roles available in companies across The Netherlands, for example, at the [JEX software agency in Rotterdam](https://talent.thenextweb.com/job/scrum-master-1-at-jex/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), IT business [Capgemini in Eindhoven](https://talent.thenextweb.com/job/scrum-master-3-at-capgemini-3/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), and [Utrecht University](https://talent.thenextweb.com/job/scrum-master-at-universiteit-utrecht-1/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024).

The certification requires at least 14 hours of training followed by an evaluation. Pricing varies depending on the course you sign up for. The certification is valid for two years and renewable for a fee.

6. Certified Software Development Professional

This [professional software development certification](https://www.computer.org/product/education/professional-software-developer-certification) is issued by the IEEE, a member-driven organisation promoting professional development. Its online exam covers software requirements, design, construction, and testing across 160 questions and takes three hours.

Though it’s not required, those taking the test are advised to have at least two years of higher education in computer science or a related discipline and a further two years of professional experience. Taking the exam costs up to $485 (€448), with discounted rates for students and IEEE members.

The cost and experience level create higher barriers to this certification but it carries the esteem of the IEEE, which claims that its certifications are used as a benchmark for hiring at companies such as [Siemens](https://talent.thenextweb.com/company/siemens-2/jobs/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), [IBM](https://talent.thenextweb.com/company/ibm-2/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024), and [Oracle](https://talent.thenextweb.com/company/oracle-2/?source=article&utm_source=article&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=TNW2024).

7. Certified Secure Software Lifecycle Professional

Issued by the (ISC)2, a professional body specialising in the training and development of [cybersecurity](https://thenextweb.com/topic/cybersecurity) professionals, the [CSSLP certification](https://www.isc2.org/certifications/csslp) is for software developers who want to enhance their security credentials. The focus is on skills in authentication, authorisation, and auditing, and candidates must have four years of professional experience in software development to qualify.

At a cost of €555, the four-hour exam consists of 175 multiple-choice questions. Cybersecurity is one sector where being accredited is particularly pertinent, and this (ISC)2 certification is even recognised by the US Department of Defence.

NEXT ARTICLE:   
**Do programming certifications still matter?**

Software developers are in high demand and learning on the job is back in vogue. Here's why experts say some programming certifications are still worth your time.

Demand for programmers remains high across industries, as companies look to develop new technology solutions to solve business challenges or take advantage of growth opportunities.

Considering the state of supply and demand, is it really worthwhile for software developers to pursue certifications? Based on input from those in the field, company executives, and recruiters, the answer is a resounding *yes*.

Pros and cons of programming certifications

Some critics deride software developer certifications as pieces of paper that [don’t actually demonstrate programming skills](https://www.infoworld.com/article/2268762/4-reasons-to-get-kubernetes-certified-and-4-reasons-not-to.html); however, as anyone updating their resume knows, a stack of programming certifications definitely does influence your perceived value to an organization.

“The primary benefit of certifications is to verify your skill sets,” says Archie Payne, president of the recruiting firm CalTek Staffing. “The exams to obtain these credentials cover the basic skills you’ll need to use that particular language, database, technique, etc. in a professional context.” Certifications can be used to “reinforce the experience on your resume or demonstrate competencies beyond what you’ve done in the workplace in a prior role.”

Certifications show that you are committed to your field, invested in career growth, and connected to the broader technology landscape, Payne says. “Obtaining certification indicates that you are interested in learning new skills and continuing your learning throughout your career,” he says.

“It is extremely important for developers—as [with] any other professional—to continue improving their theoretical and practical knowledge,” says Natalia Rodriguez, head of talent acquisition at BairesDev, a provider of nearshore software outsourcing services.

“Certifications are a particular way to address this need for improvement, adding a special something to the mix, as it allows developers to do more things than before, due to their acquired expertise,” Rodriguez says.

Cloud certifications are in demand

The massive shift to the cloud is a key reason for [increased demand for specific skills and certifications](https://www.infoworld.com/article/2335237/do-you-still-need-a-degree-to-be-a-cloud-pro.html).

“Public and hybrid cloud adoption has witnessed significant growth over the last few years, with cloud becoming the key enabler for digitalization across sectors,” says Shashank Rajmane, principal analyst with global technology research and advisory firm Information Services Group (ISG). “Also, enterprise demand for cloud modernization is at an all-time high. Much of this modernization is taking place on hyperscale clouds.”

However, effectively exploiting hyperscale cloud capabilities requires expertise in building and supporting a new cloud-based architecture. “Consequently, we have observed rising demand for certifications related to the top three hyperscalers—AWS, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform,” Rajmane says.

Enterprises increasingly are turning to the IT services sector to source this expertise, Rajmane says, and providers are dramatically ramping up their hyperscale cloud certifications to meet demand.

“Notably, the move to remote working spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased online learning by professionals,” Rajmane says. “With the elimination of long commutes, many professionals utilized the ‘extra’ time to augment their skills sets, leading to a rise in relevant professional certifications.”

All three of the [leading hyperscale cloud platforms](https://www.infoworld.com/article/2336857/which-cloud-is-for-you.html) have created education roadmaps to enable individuals to build their career around their certifications, Rajmane says. “Multiple certifications help ensure alignment with and the ability to support multi-cloud engagements.”

Programming certifications and hiring

Hiring is one area where programming certifications definitely play a role.

“One of the key benefits of having programming certifications is that they provide validation of a candidate’s skills and knowledge in a particular programming language, framework, or technology,” says Aleksa Krstic, CTO at Localizely, a provider of a cloud-based translation platform. “Certifications can demonstrate that the individual has met certain standards and has the expertise required to perform a specific job.”

For employers, programming certifications offer several advantages, Krstic says. “They can help streamline the hiring process, by providing a benchmark for assessing candidates’ skills and knowledge,” he says. “Certifications can also serve as a way to filter out applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements.”

In cases where multiple candidates are equally qualified, having a relevant certification can give one candidate an edge over others, Krstic says.

“When it comes to certifications in general, when we see a junior to mid-level developer armed with programming certifications, it’s a big green light for our hiring team,” says Michał Kierul, who is CEO of software company INTechHouse.

“It’s not just about the knowledge they have gained,” Kierul says. “It speaks volumes about their passion, their drive to excel, and their commitment to continuous learning outside their regular work domain. It underscores a key trait we highly value: the desire to grow, learn, and elevate oneself in the world of technology.”

INTechHouse values a good personal match over the skills people have, “because it’s better and easier to train a motivated employee with desire to grow, than to hire a technical genius and teach them soft skills,” Kierul says. “So sometimes even if the certifications they have do not correspond to our needs strictly, we proceed with the candidate to see what they have to offer on personal level.”

Some certifications jump out if a company is looking for a particular area of expertise.

“Whenever we come across the Certified Kubernetes Administrator (CKA) on a resume, it immediately catches our attention,” Kierul says. “The CKA is a testament to a developer’s comprehensive understanding of Kubernetes, which is essential in most of our daily work.”

Given the breadth of topics the certification covers, including cluster architecture, installation and configuration; workloads and scheduling; services and networking; storage; and troubleshooting; “completing the CKA is no minor achievement,” Kierul says.

The company has found that individuals who have achieved this certification typically fare significantly better during technical interviews. “They demonstrate structured knowledge that often outpaces those who claim familiarity, or some previous experience, without such a certification to back it up,” Kierul says.

Other factors recruiters consider

Certifications can certainly help make candidates more appealing to organizations, but they need to be accompanied by work experience and desirable character traits.

“Programming certifications can definitely catch the eye of recruiters and hiring managers, and are especially valuable for those early in their career or who are switching careers to demonstrate their skills and competency,” Payne says.

But for Payne, certifications are a secondary consideration that can make a difference in which candidates he presents to clients. “I look at the candidate’s experience and whether they can verify their skills with real-world examples of their capabilities,” Payne says. “For most roles, a certification alone isn’t going to warrant consideration if they’re lacking in these areas. However, when it comes to paring this list of candidates down to a short list for interviewing, that’s where credentials do often factor into my selection process.”

Certifications “should not be the sole determining factor in the hiring decision,” Krstic says. “They should be considered alongside other qualifications, such as practical experience, problem-solving skills, and the ability to collaborate effectively within a team.”

“While expertise validated by certifications like Certified Associate in Python Programming does hold its charm in resumes, it’s been the innovative, problem-solving mindset that truly stood out in the stellar team members we’ve brought on board,” says Christoph Cemper, founder and CEO of artificial intelligence prompt management platform [AIPRM](https://www.aiprm.com/).

“In essence, while my team does glance at certifications when hiring, it’s the skills and the innovative solutions to real-world problems that we focus more keenly on,” Cemper says. “It’s imperative to stress that we seek a story that goes beyond the parchment of the certificate. Your programming prowess, your inventive solutions to real-world problems, and your unwavering curiosity to explore beyond what is known—these intangibles, though not certifiable, have been the true north in my career and have been pivotal in sculpting the culture at AIPRM.”

A [certification in Java](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/java-certifications) “might well cater to the aspirations of budding web developers, but does it fully equip them for the dynamic and ever-evolving challenges of the tech world?” Cemper says. “My hypothesis here leans towards a broader spectrum, where consistent learning and adaptable skills play a significant role. Certifications, while delineating a measure of technical knowledge, might be seen as mere checkpoints in the continuous journey of a programmer, rather than a final destination.”

Popular programming certifications

Some programming certifications are more in-demand than others. Here’s are some of the most popular programming certifications as of this writing:

* [AWS Certified Solutions Architect](https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-solutions-architect-associate): From Amazon Web Services, this certification can be valuable for programmers working on cloud-based applications. It is in high demand as companies migrate to the cloud.
* [AWS Certified Developer](https://aws.amazon.com/certification/certified-developer-associate): Demonstrates expertise in the design, deployment, and management of applications on the AWS platform.
* [Microsoft Certified: Azure Developer Associate](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/credentials/certifications/azure-developer): For software engineers working with Microsoft Azure, this certification demonstrates proficiency in developing applications and services on the Azure platform.
* [Microsoft Certified: Azure Solutions Architect Expert](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/credentials/certifications/azure-solutions-architect): Demonstrates proficiency in Azure cloud technologies.
* [Google Professional Cloud Architect](https://cloud.google.com/learn/certification/cloud-architect): For developers working with Google Cloud Platform (GCP), this certification demonstrates the ability to design and manage cloud applications that use GCP services.
* [Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)](https://projectmanagementacademy.net/certified-scrum-master-training): This certifications is helpful for developers interested in agile and scrum methodologies and understanding agile project management. Because these methodologies are prevalent in software development, CSM is a valuable certification for project management roles.
* [Certified Kubernetes Administrator (CKA)](https://training.linuxfoundation.org/certification/certified-kubernetes-administrator-cka): Addressing containerization and the widespread adoption of Kubernetes for container orchestration, CKA is a high-demand certification for devops and container orchestration roles.
* [Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)](https://www.isc2.org/certifications/cissp): Enhancing cybersecurity is one of the biggest priorities for organizations today, so a CISSP certification is especially valuable. While it’s mainly focused on cybersecurity, this certification can also be valuable for programmers who need to understand security practices in software development.