The current Microsoft Software and Systems Academy curriculum includes a Windows 8 Store Builder course for an exam that no longer exists, does not use the current operating systems, and is not in line with Microsoft’s vision for the future. Below is a list of courses that could possibly replace the defunct course until a proper replacement is implemented. The list is in order from the course I feel will be most beneficial, to the one I feel would be the least. Please keep in mind that none of these courses are needed for us to earn the MCSD: App Builder certification. This is accomplished simply with 70-483: Programming in C# and 70-486: Developing ASP.NET MVC Web Applications for the MCSA: Web Applications certification, along with 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions.

* 70-533: Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions
  + Pros: This exam along with 70-532: Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions will earn us MCSA: Cloud Platform certification. This exam has a structured course with labs.
  + Cons: This exam/course isn’t in the App Builder path (but diversity is a good thing).
  + Thoughts: With Microsoft focusing on the cloud, more training in Azure seems like the most logical and helpful course for students in a Cloud Application Developer cohort. In addition to this being in line with Microsoft’s vision for the future, this will afford the students an opportunity to earn and additional MCSA certification.
* 70-357 Developing Mobile Apps.
  + Pros: This exam along with the C# we are already taking will earn us the MCSA: Universal Windows Platform certification.
  + Cons: There is no structured course and this may be beyond the level of understanding that some of our cohort could comprehend.
  + Thoughts: This exam made the second spot on my list as it is the only other exam that would afford students an opportunity to attain an additional certification in addition to the benefit of learning how to develop mobile apps.
* 70-480: Programming in HTML5 with JavaScript and CSS3
  + Pros: This is an excellent course with skills that will be usable as a Cloud Application Developer. This exam has a structured course with labs.
  + Cons: This exam meets the same requirement as C# for path progression and is thus redundant in that aspect (but to be fair, we do not need ANY additional course for the MCSD).
  + Thoughts: Of all the remaining exams/courses that do not count toward additional certifications, this course would be the most beneficial to a Cloud Application Developer.
* 70-497: Software Testing with Visual Studio
  + Pros: Testing is a key part of the application development lifecycle and a very important skill.
  + Cons: There is no structured course for this exam.
  + Thoughts: Software testing is too important to put any lower on the list.
* 70-354: Universal Window Platform – App Architecture and UX/UI
  + Pros: UX/UI is a critical factor for any app and thus the skills required for this exam would be good to have.
  + Cons: There is no structured course and this is most likely beyond the level of understanding that most of our cohort could comprehend.
  + Thoughts: Although UX/UI are extremely important, I feel that this material is too advanced for many of the students.
* 70-355: Universal Windows Platform – App Data, Services, and Coding Patterns
  + Pros: Good knowledge to have
  + Cons: There is no structured course and this is way beyond the level of understanding that most of our cohort could comprehend.
  + Thoughts: This is too advanced for individuals new to programming; especially without a structured course.