

A GUIDE TO STARTING A CAREER IN CYBER SECURITY

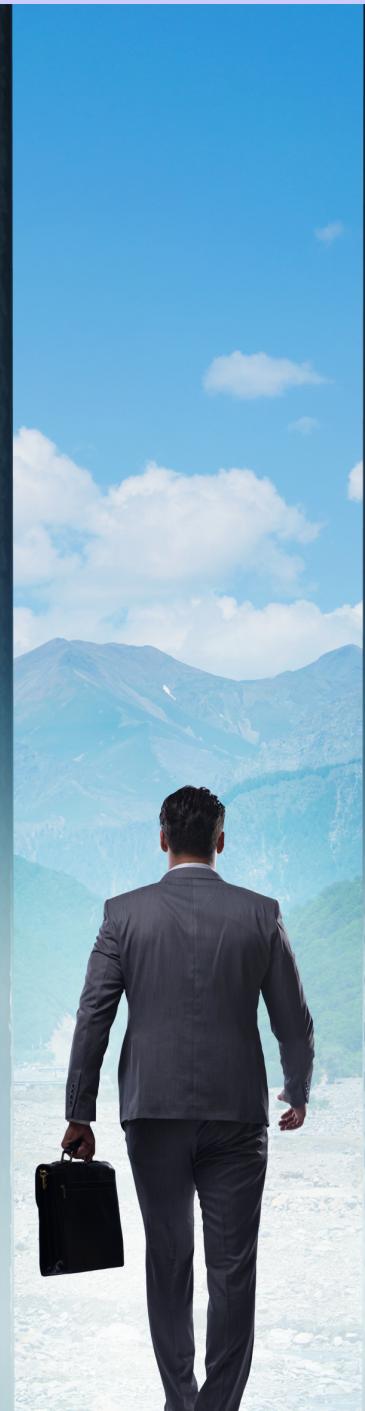
1 Understand the Cyber Security Industry and the Step Jobs on Offer

I am asked most days for advice on how someone could start a career in cyber security. As might be expected, many people don't understand the cyber security industry and have misconceptions on what might be involved if they start a career in cyber security.

Often people believe that cyber security is all about technology and hacking. This is somewhat true, but cyber security is much more than that. It is a discipline of managing risk, which might happen to have technology as a solution. Which means roles in security can vary massively from highly technical to C-level executive management, from auditing to computer forensics.

The first step I recommend you to do is to get an idea of the sort of jobs that exists in the security industry. Take a look at the job boards in your local job market. Read the job specs and understand what the different jobs involve and what skills and qualifications they are asking for.

Have a look and see what roles you are interested in and what roles you might ultimately move towards in the middle and the end of your career. Get an understanding of what responsibilities each job type has and their level of seniority. From junior security analyst through to Chief Information Security Officers (CISO).



If you are in the U.S. take a look at job boards such as Dice, Craigslist, Glassdoor, LinkedIn and others. In the UK try JobServe, CyberSecurityJobsite, CWJobs and others.

Take a look at the jobs on offer and information available on security recruiter websites. Here is a list of the top cyber security recruiters:

<http://www.csoonline.com/article/3013033/it-careers/security-recruiter-directory.html>

Barclays Simpson produces an annual market report, which will help you to understand the different roles in the industry. Check that out:

<https://www.barclaysimpson.com/>

[Barclay Simpson Market Report 2019 Cyber Security Digital.pdf](#)

If you are looking at US you can check Cybersecurity Supply/Demand Heat Map by CyberSeek, giving a snapshot of demand and supply data for cybersecurity jobs.

<https://www.stationx.net/cybersecurity-jobs-heatmap>

CyberSeek also has a very good interactive career map showing key jobs , common transition opportunities and detailed information about credentials and skillsets.

<https://www.stationx.net/cybersecurity-career-pathway>

2 Get Educated

Step

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the typical entry-level education for a cyber security job is a Bachelor's degree.

But if you don't have a degree - don't write off a career in cyber security. With a huge shortage of qualified cyber security talent, companies and government agencies are aggressively trying to fill their openings. If you are lacking a college education you can get a leg-up through cyber training, so you can nab a job.



I recommend you become a [VIP member of the StationX cyber security school](#). You will get unlimited access to all the training material you need to fully educate yourself and become a highly paid cyber security professional. The first course you should take AND fully understand is [The Complete Cyber Security course Volumes 1-4!](#)

3 Get Certified and Qualified

Step

If possible and you have the time, get yourself a degree in a security relevant subject (like computer science/IT etc.). Your dissertation should be both security related and cover a topic which is of high demand within the industry. This will get you straight into a job, as you'll be a proven expert in a marketable security niche through your dissertation.

It is not absolutely necessary to get a degree given the huge demand, but it will get you into graduate security jobs and help you to move into management later.

Security is not considered an entry-level job. People commonly come from systems administration, software engineering or networking. But if you can demonstrate knowledge and skills you can jump straight into security.

Certificates increase your job opportunities, demonstrate-able knowledge and skills.

When you are checking out the local job market for what roles might interest you the most make a careful note of the certificates that are generally required for the roles that you're interested in. What certificates you should aim to get will depend on the type of roles that interests you. So, for example, the certificates for penetration testers are different to that of an auditor. Learn the knowledge that is required to pass these exams and pursue the certificates when you have enough experience.

Foundation Level certificates to consider.



You don't need to have these certificates but you should at least understand the content.

Many certificates require you to have experience before you can even pass them, which means you simply can't get them at the start of a career.

CISSP is the closest the security industry has to standard in certification. CISSP should be the first certificate you should aim for once you start your career. When you are doing your CISSP, I recommend you to do your CISA shortly after as there is a lot of shared content so it is easy to do both exams close together. Followed by the CISM. Then onto other specialization listed below.

Advanced General Security CISSP - Certified Information Systems Security Professional ISO 27001 lead implementer	Security Auditing ISO 27001 lead auditor CISA - Certified Information Systems Auditor PCI QSA qualifications
Penetration Testing CEH - Certified Ethical Hacker (Intermediate level) OSCP - Offensive Security Certified Professional (Advanced level) CREST for UK penetration testing Crest CRT, Crest CCT, CHECK, Tigerscheme - Check Team Member, Tigerscheme - Check Team Leader GPEN - GIAC Certified Penetration Tester GWAPT - GIAC Web Application Penetration Tester	Security Management / CISO CISM - Certified Information Security Manager MBA/Masters Degree in security
	Enterprise Security Architecture / CISO SABSA - Sherwood Applied Business Security Architecture (Highly recommended)
	Network Security Cisco Security - CCNA Security (Entry level) CCNP Security (Intermediate), CCIE Security (Expert)

4 Gain Practical Experience

Step

It's easy to gain practical experience if you go about it the right way. The first thing you must do is to set up a lab. It has never been easier and cheaper to set up a lab than it is today.

Here are your options in order of least expensive to most expensive for setting up your lab.

- 1 VirtualBox or VMware or similar on a laptop or desktop.
- 2 VirtualBox or VMware or XCP-ng or similar on a local server.
- 3 VPS or cloud server hosted online using services such as AWS, Turnkey Linux, Linode, Digital Ocean and others.
- 4 A dedicated server with XenServer or VMware or similar running on it.

If you want to learn how to setup a lab and virtual server I recommend [The Complete Cyber Security course Volumes 1-4](#). Use the content from this course and other courses in [StationX cyber security school](#) to gain your practical experience.

In your existing job (if you have one) you want to ask to take on any security tasks you can, to gain experience and to have something to put on your resume. Anything at all is better than nothing, even simply changing people passwords is worth doing to gain the experience!

Attend local hackerspaces and other security community groups.

[Offer to do free work for businesses and charities.](https://wiki.hackerspaces.org>List of Hackerspaces</p></div><div data-bbox=)

5 Demonstrate your Abilities

Step

To secure your first job you MUST be able to demonstrate your abilities. To do this, I recommend you to create a public profile. Try doing security research, respond to Call for Papers (CFP), bug bounties, answer questions on Q&A boards, write security tools, posts and papers. Contribute to open source projects and network with the developers.

Get a blog, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media accounts and fully document all of your work. Chat to experts over social media. Comment on the latest security news. Attend security conferences like DEFCON, Black Hat, DerbyCon, ShmooCon, InfoSec and so on. Network with the attendants.

Place everything that you do on your private resume that you send to job adverts.

Your public and private resumes demonstrate your ability, enthusiasm and passion which will get you hired very quickly!

