Microsoft Certifications for Developers

Hannah Gavisk

Microsoft Certified Professional

- Pass one qualifying MCP exam (many options!)
- MCP-qualifying exams include all of the exams required for these certifications:
  - MCSA – Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate
  - MCSE – Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert
  - MCSD – Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer
  - Microsoft Specialist
- MTA & MOS exams do not qualify for MCP certification

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/microsoft-certified-professional.aspx

MCSD
Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer

Windows Store Apps	Web Applications	SharePoint Applications
Azure Solutions Architect	Application Lifecycle Management	Universal Windows Platform

MCSD Exams by Track

MCSD Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer						
Windows Store Apps Using HTML5	**Windows Store Apps Using C#**	**Web Applications**	**SharePoint Applications**	**Azure Solutions Architect**	**Application Lifecycle Management**	**Universal Windows Platform**
Programming in HTML5 with JavaScript and CSS3

Essentials of Developing Windows Store Apps Using HTML5 and JavaScript

Advanced Windows Store App Development Using HTML5 and JavaScript | Programming in C#

Essentials of Developing Windows Store Apps Using C#

Advanced Windows Store App Development Using C# | Programming in HTML5 with JavaScript and CSS3

Developing ASP.NET MVC Web Applications

Developing Microsoft Azure and Web Services | Programming in HTML5 with JavaScript and CSS3

Developing ASP.NET MVC Web Applications

Developing SharePoint Server 2013 Core Solutions

Developing SharePoint Server 2013 Advanced Solutions | Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions

Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions

Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions | Administering Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server

Software Testing with Visual Studio

Delivering Continuous Value with Visual Studio Application Lifecycle Management | Programming in C#

Universal Windows Platform – App Architecture and UX/UI

Universal Windows Platform – App Data, Services, and Coding Patterns |

Pricing Details

- Most exams are $150
  - As of April 25, 2016, Microsoft announced that exam prices would be changing after June 30th.
  - When purchasing exam, check voucher expiration
- Be prepared to buy a practice exam
  - Transcender $140 for download & 90-day web access
  - Measure Up $119 for download
  - Check how long you will have access to the practice exam
- Recertification exam is required every 2 years for the 4-letter certifications

Is it worth it?

…it depends.

Just like a college degree, a certification's **actual value** and it's **perceived value** depend on the situation, and on who you ask.
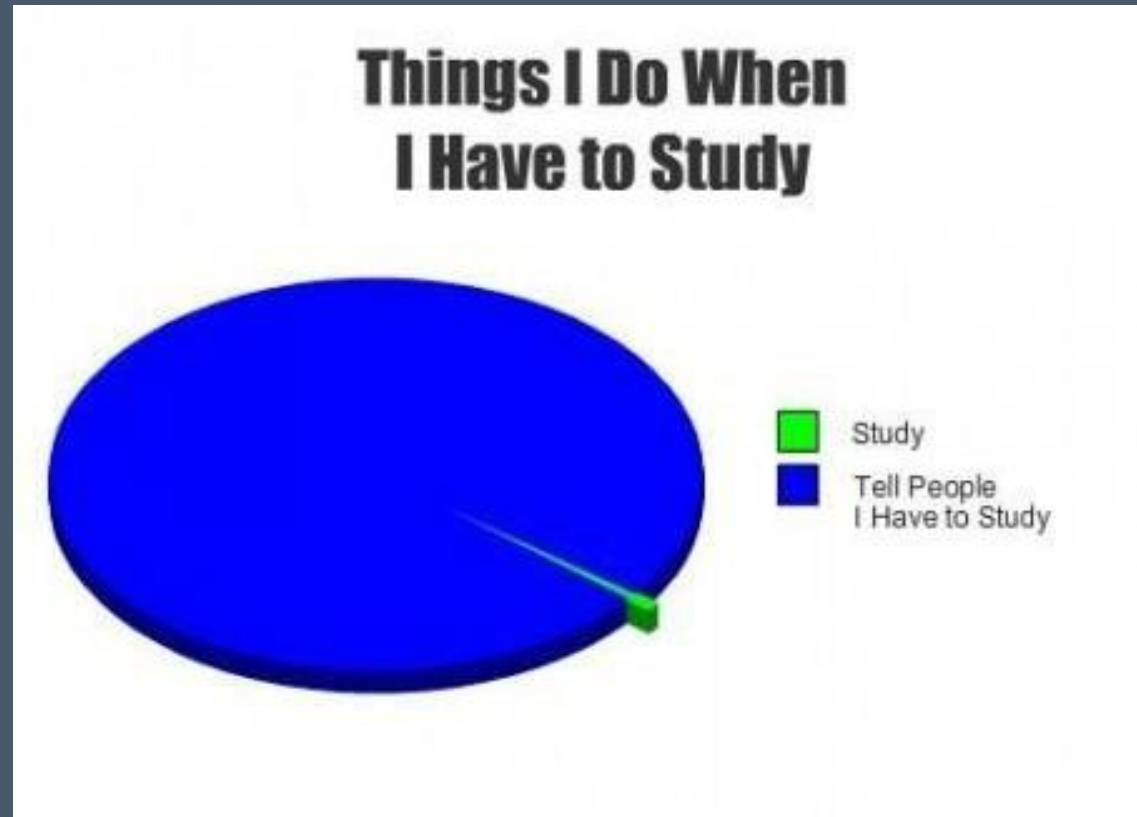
Benefits to your Career

Benefits to your Career

- Shows commitment to growth & learning
- Value is easily translated & transferable
  - Non-technical clients & hiring managers can interpret skill level
- Early career benefits
  - Prove your competencies even with limited examples of experience
- Mid/Late career benefits
  - Prove your competencies in current technology

Employer Benefits
Microsoft Partner Network

- Competency Partners
  - https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/membership/competencies

- Competency Benefits & Requirements
  - https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/membership/application-development-competency

Study Strategy

Study Strategy

- Identify what you need to know
  - Prioritize - put the most energy into studying topics that will be on the exam
- Use a variety of study materials
  - Some materials will cover info left out by others
- Get hands-on experience – build stuff!
  - Use code examples from exam study guides, MSDN, or Pluralsight
- Study with others
  - Motivation & encouragement
  - Explain concepts to each other
  - Can share practice projects
- Make time to study
  - Block off time to study
  - Arrange to be away from distractions
  - Identify up-front how much time you plan to spend studying

Study Materials

- Practice exam
- Study guide/book
- Pluralsight
- Microsoft Virtual Academy

"All learning materials related to exams, including Microsoft training and Microsoft Press resources, are developed independently of exam content, because the exams are intended to assess competence when using the technology, not the effectiveness of training materials or learning. " –*Microsoft Exam FAQ*

Practice Exam

Providers include Transcender, MeasureUp and others

The Good

- Tailored to imitate actual exam content & difficulty
  - Identify what you need to know
  - Gauge readiness, identify trouble areas
- SUPER HELPFUL – Transcender practice exams provide reference links on each question & act as additional study resource

The Bad

- Practice exam format might not closely match actual exam
  - Interface on practice exam may be more outdated
  - Actual exam may have more up-to-date UI, such as drag/drop interactive questions

Practice Exam
Transcender Question Examples

https://www.transcender.com/

Study Guides from Microsoft Press

Microsoft Press Exam Ref books
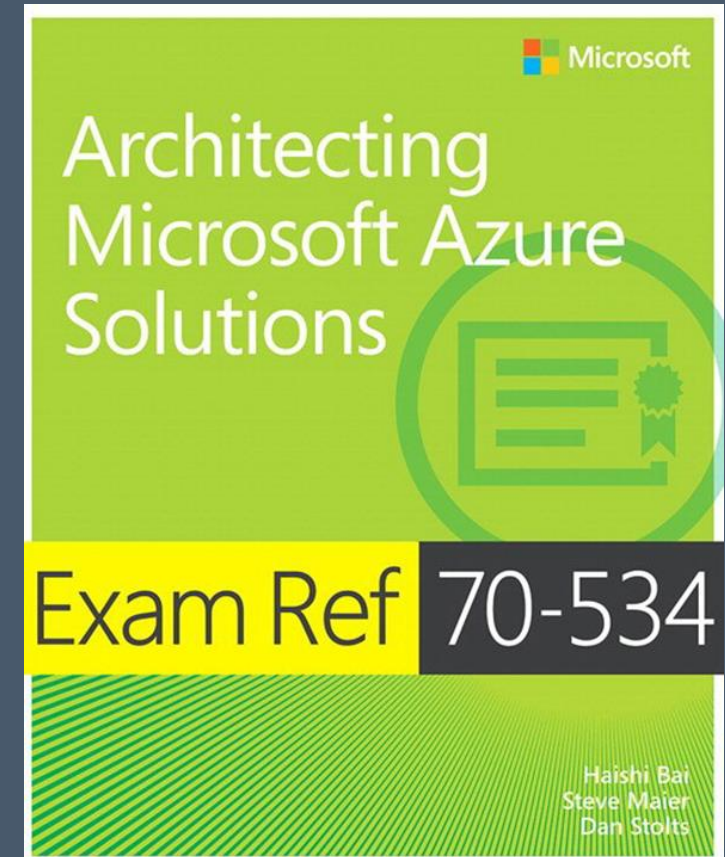- Available in print & electronic formats

The Good
- Specifically covers topics that will be on exam
- Code examples are formatted similar to practice & actual exam
- Use examples to build hands-on practice projects

The Bad
- Dry, boring material
- Code examples can be strange
- Content is NOT arranged in an instructive way. Not suitable for learning for the first time.

https://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/9780735676
824/samplepages/9780735676824.pdf

Pluralsight

Learning Paths
- Pluralsight offers "Learning Paths" for most exams

The Good
- Best way to get up to speed if you are NOT very familiar with the subject matter
- Can download the code for some videos to follow along

The Bad
- Usually 50+ hours of video
- Videos are usually NOT created with the exam in mind
  - Learning path consists of pre-existing videos that relate to the exam topics
  - More info than necessary
  - Examples may not match test format

How to use Pluralsight for studying
- Identify specific topics you need to study
- Don't watch the entire video – just the module you need

https://www.pluralsight.com/blog/software-development/asp-net-mvc-microsoft-exam-70-486

Other Resources

- Microsoft Virtual Academy https://mva.microsoft.com/
- Certification Community https://borntolearn.mslearn.net/certification/

PROTIP:

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For optimal studying motivation, schedule your exam!

Exam Day

- Be early – like really early
- Know where to park
- Know which building & room number
- The proctor has earplugs if you need them
- Manage your time during the test

http://springfield.otc.edu/maps-and-directions/

Exam Details

- What score do I need to pass?
  - https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/certification-exam-policies.aspx#faqscoring-11
  - "All MCSA, MCSE, and MSCD exams are scaled such that the passing score is 700."
  - "The number of items that you have to answer correctly varies depending on the difficulty of the questions delivered when you take the exam"
- Question types: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/certification-exams.aspx#types
  - Multiple choice
  - Matching
  - Short answer
  - Case Studies
- Number of questions varies, but 40-60 is typical
- Time limit ranges from 45-150 minutes, depending on exam

Special Programs through Microsoft

- Re-taking an exam
  - Second Shot promotion usually runs July – January
  - Current promotion is Booster Pack
    - https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/offers.aspx
- Student pricing
  - https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/certification-exam-policies.aspx#policies-2
  - Student discount is typically 15% - 20% off

Questions?