Course Overview

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Hello everyone. My name is Vlad Catrinescu, and welcome to my course, Introduction to the Microsoft 365 Fundamentals, or simply known as the MS-900 exam. I'm a Microsoft MVP and independent consultant from Montreal, Canada. Over 90% of the Fortune 500 companies use at least one Microsoft Cloud Service. And with hundreds of millions of users daily, Microsoft 365 is one of the most popular productivity clouds in the world. This is why it's important for any IT or business professional to understand Microsoft 365 and the services and benefits it provides to organizations around the world. In this course, Introduction to the Microsoft 365 Fundamentals Exam, we will introduce the MS-900 Microsoft certification exam. Some of the major topics that we will cover include the audience for the MS-900 certification exam, the courses and material available to prepare, as well as some tips and tricks to ace the exam. By the end of this course, you will have a better knowledge of the MS-900 Microsoft certification exam, and you will be ready to start learning for it. I hope you'll join me on this journey to learn how to get Microsoft-certified with the Introduction to the Microsoft 365 Fundamental Exam course at Pluralsight.

The MS-900 Exam and How to Prepare for It

Module Introduction

Hello and welcome to this Introduction to the Microsoft 365 Fundamentals Exam course. My name is Vlad Catrinescu, and I'll be your instructor for this course. I'm a Microsoft MVP from Montreal, Canada, and you can find me on Twitter @vladcatrinescu or follow my blog at VladTalksTech.com. In this course, we will do an introduction to the MS-900 exam and how to prepare for it. We will first talk about the benefits of getting Microsoft 365-certified and why you should consider getting the MS-900 certification. We will then do an overview of the MS-900 certification exam, what you will be evaluated on, as well as learn about the skills measured document. Finally, we will take a look at the

Pluralsight learning materials for this exam. By the end of this course, you will know what's needed to start studying for the MS-900 Microsoft certification exam.

Benefits of Getting Microsoft 365 Certified

Let's start by learning what are the benefits of getting Microsoft 365-certified? And more particular, why the MS-900 exam? Let's start by talking, why do we even want to get a Microsoft certification? Microsoft certification can help give you a professional advantage by providing globally recognized and industry endorsed evidence of mastering skills in a digital and cloud business. According to multiple studies, 91% of certified IT professionals say that certification gives them more professional credibility. 94% of decision-makers agree that certified employees provide added value, and 52% of certified IT professionals say that their expertise is more sought after within the organization. And let's be honest. Certifications can also help you in the financial aspect of your career. 28% of technical professionals said that getting certified lead to salary or wage increases with most of them seeing that increase in under 3 months after getting certified. 21% of technical professionals reported job promotions after getting certified. Personally, I really found that getting certified has helped me land better positions and getting paid more throughout my career. So, I'm really a big fan of certifications. Now lets talk Microsoft 365 specific. To show you the impact of Microsoft 365, I took three statistics from Microsoft directly from their earning calls to show you really how popular Microsoft 365 is across the world. First, there are currently over 345 million paid Office 365 commercial subscribers across the world, and that number keeps growing. In fact, over 90% of the Fortune 500 companies have purchased Microsoft 365 for their organization. And applications such as Microsoft Teams alone are used by over 270 million users each month. And there is a reason why there are so many people using it. Microsoft 365 is one of the leading productivity clouds in the world, and different products from Microsoft 365 are considered Gartner leaders year after year in their magic quadrants, SharePoint, for example, for content services and Microsoft Teams for unified communications. Those are just two examples which show that Microsoft has both the vision and the

ability to execute in more multiple categories with Microsoft 365. Now that we've talked about why Microsoft 365 is one of the top productivity clouds in the world, let's start talking certifications. There are multiple Microsoft 365 certifications available to us. If we take a high-level view by level, we have one fundamentals level certification, five associate level certifications, two expert level certifications, and last, but not least, two specialty level certifications. So, as you can see, the Microsoft 365 certification portfolio is quite extensive. So let's dive deeper a bit. The first certification is our Fundamentals exam, which is exam MS-900, the star of this course, which covers the whole Microsoft 365 stack at a fundamental level and gives you the Microsoft 365 Certified: Fundamentals certification. This certification is recommended, however, only optional before you move to the associate level associate certifications. Our first associate certification is the Modern Desktop Administrator Associate, which you can get by passing the MD-100 and MD-101 certification exams. Next up, we have the MS-203 exam, which can give us the Messaging Administrator Associate, a certification that's really focused on Exchange Online and messaging inside an organization. We then have a Microsoft 365 Security Administrator Associate certification, which can be achieved by passing exam MS-500. And, as the name says, really focuses on security solutions for Microsoft 365. Our next certification is a very popular one, exam MS-700, which gives us the Teams Administrator Associate, a certification focusing on managing Microsoft Teams inside an organization. Our last associate certification is exam MS-600, which is for developers building solutions on top of Microsoft 365, and it gives us the Microsoft 365 Certified Teams Application Developer certification. Okay, we are done with the associate level exams. Now let's talk expert level. One of the things with expert level is that they have prerequisites. So you cannot go directly to expert. Our first expert level certification is the Microsoft 365 Certified Enterprise Administrator Expert. And for this certification, you first need to have any of the administrator level associate certifications, which does not include the Developer Associate of course. Afterwards, you need to pass two exams, the MS-100 and MS-101, in order to achieve that expert level certification. There is a second available expert level certification, the Teams Voice Engineer Expert, which requires you to be a Teams Admin Associate before, as well as pass exam MS-720 in order to get it. We still have

two more certifications to go, and those are the specialty level certifications that really focus on, well, more specialized scenarios or roles. In the Microsoft 365 portfolio, we first have exam number MS 220, which gives you the Exchange Online Support Engineer Specialty certification and then exam number MS-740, which gives you the Teams Support Engineer Specialty certification. Those certifications do not have any prerequisites. Now that we have done really an overall view of the Microsoft 365 certifications, you can really see where the MS-900 fits in. It's the foundation of the Microsoft 365 certification portfolio that will really test you on the fundamentals of Microsoft 365 and be your first step towards showing off your Microsoft 365 skills.

MS-900 Exam Overview

Now that we've talked about the Microsoft 365 certifications and where the MS-900 exam fits in that portfolio, let's dive deeper into the MS-900 certification exam. Let's actually start by talking about the audience for this exam. This exam is designed for candidates looking to demonstrate foundational level knowledge of Software as a Service solutions to facilitate productivity on site, at home, or a combination of both. Candidates may have knowledge of cloud-based solutions or may be new to Microsoft 365. As we have said previously, candidates can use this exam to prepare for other Microsoft certifications, but it is not a prerequisite for any of the related certifications. More concretely, the MS-900 exam will measure your ability to describe cloud concepts, describe core Microsoft 365 services and concepts, describe security, compliance, privacy, and trust in Microsoft 365, and finally, describe Microsoft 365 pricing and support. So as you can see, it really covers the foundations of all Microsoft 365. If we die deeper into the details, the MS-900 exam costs $99 at the time of recording this course. However, the price might vary depending on your region. Furthermore, I highly encourage you to check with your manager or HR rep as organizations will often reimburse the cost for learning and certifications. And let's be honest. The worst that they can say is no, so it's worth a try. Also, something that is nice is that fundamental certifications do not expire. For example, associate and expert level Microsoft certifications expire after 1 year. But as this is a fundamentals

level exam, it doesn't expire at all, so that is nice. Lastly, if you're a student, you can get college credit for passing Microsoft exams and earning Microsoft certifications. This works really mostly in the United States, not internationally, and I have never done the process myself. However, if you think this applies to you, check out the link in the slides for more information. As a quick reminder, you can download the slides from the Exercise files tab of this course. This way, you can quickly copy/paste the links. If we take a look at the technicalities, you'll have 45 minutes to do the exam. But Microsoft says to plan for 60 minutes as the 60 minutes includes your check-in, feedback, survey questions, and things like that. But the actual exam duration is 45 minutes. The exam will have between 40 and 60 questions per Microsoft guidelines. They never actually give out the exact number questions as it might depend even for different test takers for the same exam. Now you might ask, but wait Vlad. Isn't this basically almost saying like I only have 1 minute to answer each question? Well, the answer is yes. For fundamental exams, you'll have somewhere between a minute and a minute and a half for each question if we look at it from a purely mathematical perspective. However, you should expect short questions, and we will talk about the types of questions a bit more in detail throughout this course. But remember, for fundamental exams, I like to describe those questions as fairly straightforward questions where if you know the answer, you should be able to answer it in no time. I do, however, understand that taking an exam is stressful, and adding a time constraint adds even more stress. So my advice is that Microsoft actually offers a nice feature, allowing you to mark questions for review later. So if you read a question and you're not sure about the answer, just mark it for review later. This way you quickly answer all of the questions that you know that you got the answer for. And at the end, you can use the time left to spend more time thinking at the questions you're not 100% sure about. If we take a look at the skills measured, it's really split up into the four categories that I have mentioned earlier. First, describe cloud concepts, which counts for 10 to 15% of the exam. We then have a big one, describe core Microsoft 365 services and concepts, which counts for 50 to 55% of the exam. Our third skill measured is describe security, compliance, privacy, and trust in Microsoft 365, which counts for 15 to 20% of the exam. And last, but not least, we have describe Microsoft 365 pricing and support, which counts for

10 to 15% of the exam. As you can see, the core Microsoft 365 services and concepts is really about half of the exam. But I really want to dive deeper into something important. There is one key word that is repeated throughout every objective, and that is the verb describe. Verbs are very important in Microsoft certifications. So what does the verb describe mean? As we're talking about a fundamentals level exam, the verb describe tells us that you do not need to know how to to configure, manage, or implement features. What you need to know is what the features are and what business problems they solve? Really, the goal of this exam is for you to be able to know what productivity and cloud computing challenges can be solved by what Microsoft 365 solution. So if you talk with someone and they say we have this business need for a workload, you need to know like, hey, this Microsoft 365 service can help you with that. This is why I find that the MS-900 is an amazing exam for anyone working in the Microsoft ecosystem. Whether you're an IT pro, dev, project manager, business stakeholder, or even work in sales for a Microsoft consulting company, knowing what solutions Microsoft offers can allow you to propose the right solution at the right time. If you wonder where I took all of those details from, it's from a very important document called the skills measured document, which used to be a dedicated document. But now Microsoft is slowly migrating to offering study guides for each exam, and the skills measured might be part of that study guide. You should always review the exam skills outline as it provides you with the full list of tools and objectives that you need for the exam. This document is really your checklist of things to study for the exam, and you should check it out before you study for the exam and after you're done. Now, let's talk a bit about the question types. Microsoft will not specifically say which types of questions you will get on a specific exam, but they do share the types of questions for all exams. There are 10 types of questions that you can expect on any Microsoft exam. They are called active screen, best answer, build list, case studies, drag and drop, hot area, multiple choice, repeated choices, short answer, and labs. Now, given the time constraints, you can really rule out some of them for the MS-900 exam, such as case studies and labs as those in theory should not show up on fundamentals exam. But again, Microsoft can never confirm the types of questions you can expect, so better be prepared. If you have taken a Microsoft certification exam before, you're probably

familiar with the different types of questions. But if not, you should check out this page by Microsoft, which talks about each question type and even shows you videos on what to expect in the actual exam interface. Something else that Microsoft recently released is the exam sandbox, a web demo site where you can actually see the exam interface and all the types of questions before the exam. So when exam day comes, you are ready to focus on the questions. You can register for the exam on the Microsoft Learn site. You have a link here in the slides, or you can just search for MS-900 on your favorite search engine. Remember, you can either do the exam at an authorized testing center, or you can do it at home as well. I have really done my last few certifications at home, and the experience is really good. When you register, you will see that there are two exam providers for the MS-900 exam, Pearson VUE, as well as Certiport, which is for students or instructors. Certiport is actually a Pearson VUE business, but it's still shown as two different options on the site. Now, something that I would like to tell you is that even if you're a student, unless you have a very specific reason to go use Certiport, such as a class requirement, I would personally go with Pearson VUE. The reason is that most other exams, actually all associate and higher-level exams such as specialty and expert, are only provided by Pearson VUE. This way, if you decide to pursue your certification journey further, you will already have the experience with this certification provider, and it will be one less thing to worry about rather than switching providers for your associate level exams or higher.

Demo: Checking out the Skills Measured and the Exam Sandbox

Now that we talked about it, let's head over to the lab and check out the Skills measured document, as well as the exam sandbox. I am now in the lab environment. Let me open up the browser here were I'm on the MS-900 exam page. You can get to it using the link from the slides or just search for MS-900 in your favorite search engine. At the top of the page, you will see the description of the exam, as well as the audience. This is all things that we have looked at in the slides. Something that is important for you to look at, however, in the blue box you will see the last time the exam was updated. Also, before Microsoft updates the exam, they will usually give a 4-6 weeks notice. So you

might see in the blue box here this exam will be updated and let's say November 30th, 2022. This tells you like, hey, maybe in a month the exam will get updated. I can go and check what am I evaluated on today and what will I be evaluated on if I take my exam after that date? If you haven't started studying, you can give yourself the goal to focus on the new exam objectives after that date, but maybe you're almost done studying, so now you know, okay, I'm almost done studying for the current exam objectives, let me schedule my exam before this date. And then we have the green box. Here the first thing that is important for us is the MS-900 study guide. At the beginning of the document we will have a lot of general information around certifications. This is useful to look at, especially if this is your first exam, but what is really interesting for us is the Skills measured. Let me zoom in a tiny bit more, this way we can see better. So we can see that the four sections for the Skills measured are, Describe cloud concepts; Describe core Microsoft 365 services and concept; Describe security, compliance, privacy, and trust in Microsoft 365; and Describe Microsoft 365 pricing and support. Those are the same categories we saw in the slides. But what is amazing is that you then have a breakdown. So, in the Describe cloud concepts, I have a subcategory, Describe the different types of cloud services available. And in here I need to be able to describe Microsoft software as a service, infrastructure as a service, and platform as a service offerings; describe the cloud-based productivity solutions for organizations and individuals; describe differences between Office 365, Microsoft 365, and Windows 365. And for each one of the high-level functional groups, we really have in detail what exactly we need to know. I really like to almost print out this page and then highlight the things that I'm confident that I can do. And at the end, when this is all highlighted, I know I'm ready to take the exam. And I really encourage you to take a look at all of this before starting to study for the exam, as well as after. When you're done studying, make sure that you know everything, and if not, retake a look at some of the learning material about the specific topics you're not sure about or go try it out in your own lab. So this is very important, the Skills measured document. Now let me go back to the exam page, and the second bullet here is the free sample questions. Microsoft gives 23 sample questions. This way you can practice for the exam. So that is quite cool. You have the questions, and if you scroll down towards the bottom, you also have the

answers as well, so you can see if you had it right. Lastly, let me go back and let's check out the exam sandbox. This is super important. If you have never done an exam before, this will give you a very good idea on what to expect on test day. Let me select the Exam Sandbox here, it will open up in a new tab, and this is really what exam day looks like. The first thing you start with is the Microsoft Certification Exam Agreement. You have to accept it. Then you get information about the exam. Here you will have your exam name, the number of minutes that you have, how many questions you will actually have. Right now you see it says 10 questions and 480 minutes. Let's click on Next. You get more details about the exam. Let's click on Next. And then when you're ready to start the exam you click on Next again. This might seem like a lot of Nexts, but again, this is exactly how the exam experience will go like. So, if you practice it in this sandbox, you will get used to it. The 10 questions that you get are actually going to be the types of questions you can expect on all Microsoft exams. Let me zoom in a tiny bit here and you can see this question type is known as a multiple choice, select one. The question is, what is your favorite sound? Let me select a river here. Let's click on Next. Then I have a multiple choice, multiple select. Here it says, okay, which two fruits make a great snack? This tells me again as a test taker I need to select two options. And in Microsoft exams, usually for those it will say, hey, select two, select three. I can also practice the Review later functionality, for example, if I want to. So I can say, hey, I'm not sure about this, let me review later, and move on to the next one. We then have a Drag and Drop here. So I can say, okay, the furniture location, the lamp will be inside the office, the sofa will be inside the home, and so on. So, really you get to practice all the different types of questions. The Build List Reorder where you just drag and drop things in order, for example, here. Then we have an Active Screen where we get to say, okay, you have to click over here, select Vista, check this box, and that's it. So really, make sure you go check out this demo sandbox, especially if you have never done a certification exam before. This way, you can practice how the user interface looks, and you won't have to stress about that part in the exam. This is it for this quick demo in which we have looked at the Skills measured document for exam MS-900, as well as checked out the exam sandbox. Now let's head back to the slides and talk about the learning materials that you can use for the MS-900 exam.

MS-900 Learning Materials

Now that we have done an exam overview, let's learn about what are some of the learning materials available for this exam. The best way to study for the exam is by using the Pluralsight certification path. The MS-900 path includes four courses, this one that you're listening to right now and three courses that cover the content. If we take a look at the courses inside of the path, the first one is this course right here. And then we have the Microsoft 365 Cloud Concepts course, which covers the describe cloud concepts and describe Microsoft 365 pricing and support exam objective. Next up, we have a course called Microsoft 365 Services and Concepts, which focuses on the describe core Microsoft 365 services and concepts exam objective. And last, but not least, is the Microsoft 365 Security, Compliance, and Identity Concepts course, covering the describe security, compliance, privacy, and trust in Microsoft 365 and Microsoft 365 objective of the MS-900 exam. Now, let's also talk about practicing before the exam. First of all, if you have a premium Pluralsight subscription, you have access to the practice exams provided by CyberVista directly on the Pluralsight platform. Microsoft also provides a number of free sample questions that you can practice with, and you can find those on the exam page as a PDF document that you can do download for free. The four video courses of this path will really cover all of the knowledge you need in order to pass the exam. However, there is no better way to reinforce your learning than to practice and replicate the scenarios and solutions in your own lab. Microsoft actually enables you to practice for free with the Microsoft 365 Developer program. It gives you a renewable 90-day Microsoft 365 E5 tenant that you can test things with, and you can even preprovision some sample users and data. You can sign up for free at the link in the slides. And remember, you can download the slides from the Exercise files tab of this course. Now I know that developer might be a bit scary in the name for a fundamentals exam, but this will just give you a tenant with provisioned data so you can play around with all the Microsoft 365 services. You don't need to be a developer to use it. On this, I want to wish you a happy learning journey for the MS-900 exam. Personally speaking, it was a really fun exam to take. And by studying for it, you really be better understand how each Microsoft 365 service is designed to

help productivity and how they all work together. Whether you're an information worker, IT pro, or dev, this exam will improve your Microsoft 365 skills and showcase them to everyone. Thank you for listening to this introduction to the MS-900 exam and happy learning.