Assurance education encompasses training and certification programs that teach individuals how to determine the effectiveness of the cybersecurity practices and procedures of an information system, including those of their own and other organizations. This increases transparency and trust for customers, as well as shielding organizations from the many consequences of cyber attacks. The Certificate of Cloud Auditing Knowledge (CCAK) and STAR Lead Auditor Training are two assurance education offerings that are a part of the CSA Security, Trust, Assurance, and Risk (STAR) program, the largest cloud assurance program in the world.

What is CCAK?

CCAK is the first credential available for professionals to demonstrate their expertise in the principles of auditing cloud computing systems, both internally and externally. Developed by CSA and ISACA, this credential and its accompanying training program fill the need for vendor-neutral, technical credentials and training in cloud auditing.

Why is CCAK important?

Auditors understand compliance and high level risks well, but lack knowledge of the cloud and how to adapt their traditional audit techniques to this new domain. Cloud engineers and developers understand the technical details of the cloud well, but lack knowledge of security and compliance. CCAK establishes a standard of knowledge that bridges this gap. CCAK holders understand risk management considerations, the technical details of cloud attacks, and how to apply all of this knowledge to a cloud security audit.

Who is CCAK for?

CCAK is for any audit, IT, or security professional who wants to become a credible cloud auditor or understand how to apply a risk-based approach to the cloud. Just a few of these job roles include Cloud Security Third-Party Auditors, Internal Auditors, CISOs, Chief Privacy Officers, and Compliance Managers and their teams.
While there are no prerequisites for CCAK, it’s beneficial to first establish a baseline of cloud security knowledge by taking the CCSK training and exam.

**What topics does CCAK cover?**

- **Assessment:** Understand the difference between assessing cloud environments and traditional IT infrastructures.
- **Evaluation:** Use cloud security assessment methods to evaluate a cloud service.
- **Governance:** Learn how existing governance policies are affected by the cloud.
- **Compliance:** Understand the unique requirements of compliance in the cloud due to the shared responsibility between cloud providers and customers.
- **Internal Security:** Learn how to use a cloud-specific security controls framework.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** Architect in a way that allows constant monitoring of cloud assets.

**How does CCAK fit into the STAR program?**

The STAR program is a domain covered within CCAK, along with cloud governance, the Cloud Controls Matrix (CCM), and continuous assurance and compliance, which are all essential principles to STAR. Additionally, any certification body wishing to provide CSA STAR Certification audits will need to ensure their assessors hold a CCSK, CCAK, or STAR Lead Auditor certificate.

**What other assurance education is available through CSA?**

The **STAR Lead Auditor Training** is a self-paced course produced by CSA and the British Standards Institution (BSI) to help assessors, service providers, and consultants learn how to audit CSPs against the STAR Certification scheme. STAR Lead Auditor Training expands an auditors’ traditional skills into the field of cloud security auditing, while also teaching IT and security personnel how to implement cloud security controls in an audit-friendly way. STAR Lead Auditor Training qualifies assessors to provide CSA STAR Certification audits.

**Learn More**

On the CSA website, learn how to prepare for the CCAK exam and explore our various study materials. Once you’re ready, you can take the exam here. Learn more about STAR Lead Auditor Training and sign up here.