

The New Cisco Certified Voice Professional Certification (Jun 08)

By Rick Gregory

Cisco's CCVP (Cisco Certified Voice Professional) certification is one of the hottest certifications in the industry, and with growth in IP telephony projected at double digit rates through 2012, it will only grow in popularity.



"The voice professional is clearly going to emerge as a dedicated job role as the demand for specialists in that technology grows over the next five years," said Christine Yoshida, Senior Manager of Learning@Cisco's Product Management Team. "It's a great career track for anyone in the networking industry."

Cisco recently updated the CCVP exams and the courses that support the certification track. "When we looked at the job roles, we realized that voice professionals were not just installing new gear every day. They are operating live systems, maintaining and troubleshooting real time networks," said Mary Ng, Unified Communications Portfolio Marketing Manager. "So all of the exams are more real world oriented and involve a large number of simulations that require multiple configurations."

Integration of more hands-on labs with extensive simulations is a significant part of the courseware upgrades. Students work on live networks at Cisco learning partner sites, performing configurations and other lab activities that mirror situations encountered on corporate networks. As students work through the lab exercises they receive feedback informing them if there are problems with the configuration. The student has to troubleshoot the system to determine where the problem is.

"The exams are designed to require relevant work experience and analytical thinking to pass and the courses provide a safe environment where students can learn before they go live on their network," said Ng. "You can't just memorize a lot of material and pass the exam. The exams are designed to test procedural knowledge and validate that a CCVP can install, troubleshoot and maintain an IP telephony network."

CCVP Certification Tracks

Getting to the CCVP can be confusing, though. The first requirement is the associate level CCNA certification. Then, five additional certification exams are required to attain the professional CCVP certification. There are two paths to the CCVP and the recent refresh affected both paths - in different ways.



The Cisco Unified Call Manager 4.1 is the path for the legacy Windows based platform. The Cisco Unified Communications Manager 6.0 is the path for IP voice professionals working with the newer Linux based platform. Each path requires five exams, but some of the exams are different.

"We chose to maintain the Call Manager path because we didn't want to simply leave our installed base," said Ng. We realize that smaller companies migrate slower than larger ones. But if customers want to take advantage of the enhanced features of the new platform, they will have to upgrade."



In the Unified Call Manager track, CVOICE has been upgraded from 5.0 to 6.0 and the exam has changed from 642-432 to 642-436. QoS is the next exam in the series and both the course and exam have been updated, although the exam retains its 642-642 designation. The GWGK course and exam, 642-653, remain the same in the call manager path as do the CIPT 1 4.1 and CIPT2 4.1 courses. CIPT 4.1 has a combo exam, 642-444, covering both courses.

Those following the Call Manager path have had the option of taking the CIPT1 5.0 / CIPT2 5.0 combo exam, 643-445, rather than the CIPT 4.1 exam. This option is being phased out and the grace period to qualify with the 5.0 exam will end on July 26, 2008.

The TUC 642-426 exam is the last exam in the Call Manager path. Both the course and the exam have been refreshed.

So the new path to the CCVP Unified Call Manager 4.1 is:

Course	Exam
CVOICE 6.0	Exam 642-436
QoS	Exam 642-642
CIPT1 4.1	Exam 642-644
CIPT2 4.1	Exam 642-644
TUC	Exam 642-426

The Cisco Unified Communications Manager path leads off with the new CVOICE 6.0 course and exam 642-436 followed by the refreshed QoS course and exam. However, it diverges from the Call Manager path by eliminating the GWGK exam. The information in the GWGK course and exam has been incorporated into the CIPT1 6.0 and CIPT2 6.0 courses which have separate exams. CIPT1 6.0 supports the 642-446 exam and CIPT2 6.0 supports the 642-456 exam.

The refreshed TUC course and exam complete the Unified Communications Manager track.

The new path to the CCVP Unified Communications Manager is:

Course	Exam
CVOICE 6.0	Exam 642-436
QoS	Exam 642-642
CIPT1 6.0	Exam 642-446
CIPT2 6.0	Exam 642-456
TUC	Exam 642-426

Each track requires five exams, but the material is organized differently and the exams are handled differently. There is a combo CIPT 4.1 exam and a separate GWGK exam in the Call

Manager path. There is no GWGK exam in the Communications Manager path, but there are two CIPT 6.0 exams.

So What's New?

The most significant new material covers the mobility features of the new Unified Communications platform. "This is the first refresh that includes converged mobile voice," said Ng. "The mobility features introduce a new level of productivity that our customers can provide in the workplace. The new course material covers these features, some of which are quite advanced," she said.

One example is Mobile Connect. If you have a call on your cell phone as you enter the building, you can hang up your cell phone, pick up the handset at your desk and continue your conversation. "Since it's server based your call is live until you push the off button," Ng said.



Cisco expects mobility features to be a key driver in migration to the Unified Call Manager 6.0 platform. "You still have the toll free call savings, which was the initial driver five or six years ago," Ng said, "but the increased productivity of converged mobile voice is going to drive the technology forward."

Other new or enhanced topics include operational tasks for managing single-site, centralized and multi-site network deployments, PSTN, VOIP, signaling protocols and the Cisco Unified Border Element (CUBE). Also covered are enhanced dial plans, SIP gateways, Call Admission Control (CAC) and connections via VOIP trunks.

Unified Communications is the Future

Research at Cisco showed that eighty percent of companies worldwide are conducting IP telephony trials and over 21,000 TDM phones are replaced with Cisco phones every business day. Seventy percent of Fortune 500 companies use Cisco Unified Communications solutions. VOIP is clearly going to be a high growth area in networking over the next five years and the CCVP certification offers IT professionals the opportunity to validate their ability to operate, troubleshoot and maintain IP telephony networks for prospective employers and customers.