

CCNA 1 Plan for Academy Student Success (PASS)

CCNA 1 v3.0 Instructional Update # 2004-1

Recently, the Cisco Networking Academy Program has received many expressions of concern regarding the difficulty level of the CCNA 1 v3.0 curriculum and assessments for some student populations. This Instructional Update has been issued to provide guidance on the flexibility that Academy instructors now have to ensure that student populations with diverse learning needs can successfully achieve core CCNA 1 v3.0 course objectives.

Each target indicator (TI), or enabling objective, is the basic unit of the curriculum, and is typically one text frame with graphics and several media content items in the form of text, graphics, or animations. To provide more flexibility for instructors who teach CCNA 1 v3.0, we have classified all TIs and labs as either core or optional. Core TIs and labs should be taught to prepare students to successfully design, build, and maintain networks, to do well in subsequent classes, and to pass the CCNA Certification Exam. In the next few months, the online Final Exam and the module exams will be revised and all TIs that are designated as optional will no longer be assessed. These changes will give instructors the freedom to omit or condense TIs and labs to save time or reduce the level of difficulty. Details about these changes are explained in the following sections.

Part 1: Core and Optional TIs and Labs

LO Number	Title	Core TIs	Optional TIs	Core Labs	Optional Labs
1.1	Connecting to the Internet	All	None	1.1.6, 1.1.7, and 1.1.9	1.1.2 and 1.1.8
1.2	Network Math	All	None	None	1.2.5, 1.2.6, and 1.2.8
2.1	Networking Terminology	All	None	None	None
2.2	Bandwidth	All	None	None	None
2.3	Network Models	All	None	2.3.6 and 2.3.7	None
3.1	Copper Media	All	None	3.1.5 and 3.1.9a – 3.1.9e	3.1.1, 3.1.2, and 3.1.3
3.2	Optical Media	3.2.1 and 3.2.6	3.2.2 – 3.2.5 and 3.2.7 – 3.2.10	None	3.2.8
3.3	Wireless Media	3.3.1 and 3.3.2	3.3.3 – 3.3.7	None	None
4.1	Background: Frequency-based Cable Testing	4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.6	4.1.3 – 4.1.5 and 4.1.7	None	None

LO Number	Title	Core TIs	Optional TIs	Core Labs	Optional Labs
4.2	Signals and Noise	4.2.1 – 4.2.5	4.2.6 – 4.2.9	4.2.9a	4.2.9b – 4.2.9d
5.1	Cabling the LAN	All	None	5.1.4, 5.1.12, 5.1.13a, and 5.1.13b	5.1.7 and 5.1.10
5.2	Cabling the WAN	5.2.1 – 5.2.3 and 5.2.7	5.2.4 – 5.2.6	5.2.3a – 5.2.3c, 5.2.7a, and 5.2.7b	None
6.1	Ethernet Fundamentals	6.1.2, 6.1.3, and 6.1.7	None	None	None
6.2	Ethernet Operation	6.2.1, 6.2.2, and 6.2.10	6.2.3 – 6.2.8	None	None
7.1	10-Mbps and 100-Mbps Ethernet	7.1.1 and 7.1.4 – 7.1.7	7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.1.8, and all TIs that refer to encoding	7.1.10a and 7.1.10b	None
7.2	Gigabit and 10-Gigabit Ethernet	7.2.1, 7.2.2, and 7.2.7	7.2.4 – 7.2.6	None	None
8.1	Ethernet Switching	All	None	None	None
8.2	Collision and Broadcast Domains	All	None	None	None
9.1	Introduction to TCP/IP	All	None	None	None
9.2	Internet Addresses	All	None	None	9.2.4
9.3	Obtaining an IP Address	9.3.1, 9.3.2, 9.3.6, and 9.3.7	9.3.3 and 9.3.4	9.3.7	9.3.5
10.1	Routed Protocols	All	None	None	None
10.2	IP Routing Protocols	All	None	None	10.2.0
10.3	Subnetting	All	None	None	10.3.5a – 10.3.5d
11.1	TCP/IP Transport Layer	All	None	11.1.5	None

LO Number	Title	Core TIs	Optional TIs	Core Labs	Optional Labs
11.2	TCP/IP Application Layer	All	None	11.2.4	None
Case Study	Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project	Required, with timing and format to be determined by the Local Academy. Instructors that teach in a high school classroom, or other learning environment suitable for a hands-on approach, a cabling project is recommended after completing Modules 5, 6, or 7.			

Part 2: FAQs

1. What will the Networking Academy do about the issues that have been raised regarding CCNA 1 v3.0?

The Cisco Networking Academy Program team wants to ensure the best possible student outcomes. Concerns regarding reading level difficulties, course pacing, errors in the curriculum and exams, and new exam formats have been and will be addressed in the following ways:

- Ongoing corrections to exams and the curriculum
- Removal of overly detailed exam items
- Partial credit scoring of CCNA 1 v3.0 module exams and Final Exam
- Distribution of an outline of the core topics in the curriculum
- Release of Instructional Updates that give instructors ways to simplify the curriculum and assessments

2. What is an Instructional Update?

The Networking Academy program will periodically release Instructional Updates. These updates will address problems or highlight opportunities to conform the teaching of Academy courses to the needs of instructors and students. Feedback from the Academy community suggests that the curriculum and assessment in CCNA 1 v3.0 are too difficult for some student populations. The basic commitment of the Networking Academy program is to ensure the success of students. Instructional Updates will be issued to give instructors the ability to help their students to succeed. Curriculum, assessment, and instruction must form an integrated whole, therefore, all three areas will be considered together.

3. What are the instructional guidelines and how will they affect how instructors manage their classes?

Instructors are allowed to combine curricular materials, lab exercises, and assessments to fit the particular needs of their Local Academy. Instructors should also consider the unique mixture of class periods, student-to-equipment ratios, student needs, and other factors that characterize their local teaching situations. The curriculum and assessments should be used as resources to prepare students for the rest of the program. Students that complete CCNA 1 v3.0 should have a mastery of the basic ideas of the OSI model, TCP/IP protocols, subnets, cable-making, building small model LANs and WANs, and as much network vocabulary and symbolism as possible. A lack of mastery of other CCNA 1 v3.0 topics will not interfere with the future success of students. Instructors are encouraged to use the

CCNA 1 v3.0 Instructor Guide to direct their instructional practices. The Instructor Guide is available from the View Official Course Materials page for a created CCNA 1 class.

4. What are the curriculum guidelines? Has the curriculum rule “add anything, subtract nothing” been modified?

This Instructional Update is meant to help instructors focus on core TIs and labs. Use this update and the extensive CCNA 1 v3.0 Instructor Guide to assist in this process. Optional TIs do not have to be taught and they will no longer be tested on the CCNA 1 v3.0 Final Exam. Module exam updates will be completed with the release of version 3.1 of the curriculum. Optional TIs can be used to supplement the course or to answer issues raised by students who desire additional information on various areas of networking. Out of 212 TIs, 38 have been designated as optional. This 20 percent decrease directly addresses some community concerns such as difficulty, pacing, reading level, and a lack of time for hands-on labs. While all 212 TIs contain valuable information, the relative importance of the TIs allows us to designate core TIs as more important than optional TIs.

5. What are the assessment guidelines? Can instructors omit module exams?

Online assessments should be used at the discretion of each instructor. A steady progression of challenging assessment is both good instructional practice and good preparation for the CCNA Certification Exam. Module exams are considered optional, but they can prepare students for the required online Final Exam. The CCNA 1 v3.0 online Final Exam no longer contains questions related to the optional TIs. Module exams will be completed with the release of version 3.1 of the curriculum. If instructors are teaching prior to the removal of the questions, they can adjust the grades of the students for questions related to any TIs that they have not taught. They can also instruct students to omit particular module exams. Assessment errors are corrected as they are reported.

Partial scoring using a weighted model has been implemented on the module exams and Final Exam. Two scores will be displayed in the Gradebook, the binary score and the new partial score using the weighted model. An instructor can use either score. This combination can lead to higher test scores for the students while not compromising the essential information in CCNA 1 v3.0. The online Final Exam and the Skills-based Assessment are still required since they are important components of the course.

6. Is CCNA 1 v3.0 less hands-on than CCNA 1 v2.1.4?

CCNA 1 v3.0 does not have fewer hands-on activities than CCNA 1 v2.1.4. However, without clarification it may seem that it does. There are five broad categories of hands-on labs as follows:

- Cable-making and testing of straight-through, crossover, and rollover cables
- Construction of small model LANs and WANs using PCs, hubs, switches, and routers
- Structured cabling related labs such as punch-downs and testing cable runs
- Investigation of the OSI Model and TCP/IP protocols in protocol analysis related labs
- The CCNA 1 Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project, excellent as extra lab work for students and as review for the Certification Exam

7. What about the Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project?

The Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project are required. However, timing and format are determined by the Local Academy. The case study can be an excellent activity for the course. Cabling projects are strongly recommended, especially for high school or novice students. These projects are best positioned after Modules 5, 6, or 7 have been completed. For students in a higher education environment, instructors may want to emphasize design.

8. What lab equipment should instructors have for CCNA 1 v3.0?

Lab requirements for CCNA 1 v3.0 are as follows:

- All tools, materials, and test equipment needed for cable-making and completing the Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project, since students will cable and configure switched and routed networks
- Ethernet and serial cables, PCs, hubs, and the standard Academy bundle with three switches and six routers
- Some form of protocol analysis software such as Fluke Protocol Inspector or Protocol Expert

9. What instructional resources should instructors have and where can they be obtained?

Instructors should download Packet Tracer 3.0, and the forthcoming IOS-capable Packet Tracer 3.1, and distribute it to all of their students. This free, powerful simulation environment can be used to teach many of the concepts in CCNA 1 - 4, v3.0. Instructors should also have the most recent CCNA 1 v3.0 Instructor Guide. Hands-on practice in the lab is crucial. This is especially true for those trying to learn a skill, such as cable-making. Make sure that students have access to all of the free tools. To obtain these materials and other materials currently in development, go to [Alpha Preview](#) and to the Tools section on the Academy Connection website.

10. How do instructors report errors or get help?

There is a [Help link](#) at the top right of each page in the Academy Connection where support and bug reporting features are available.

11. Where do instructors go to discuss topics like this Instructional Update?

New CCNA communities and discussion boards have been created to provide a forum in which instructors can discuss Academy-related issues. New instructional information and materials will also be posted at this site on a frequent basis. All instructors are encouraged to participate. The Communicate section is located at the bottom of the Academy Connection homepage. Click on any of the discussion thread topics to join in.

12. How would this Instructional Update be used in a learning environment?

A group of ninth grade students are now starting a CCNA 1 v3.0 class. From class discussions and individual feedback, the instructor has determined that the overall experience level of the class is novice. The instructor of this CCNA 1 v3.0 class will use the flexibility indicated in the CCNA 1 v3.0 PASS document and focus on engaging this large class of 24 students. The instructor plans to quickly cover core TIs in Modules 1 and 2 to give students a preliminary networking vocabulary, and omit optional TIs in Module 3. The students will begin to get hands-on practice with the cable-making labs in Module 3 and the LAN and WAN building labs in Module 5. The instructor plans to teach the course using one standard bundle of equipment, which includes six routers and three switches. The instructor decides to use the following strategy:

- Combine the 15 core labs wherever possible, for greater instructional efficiency.
- Administer several module exams as informal in-class practice and modify the weighting of those exams in the Gradebook.
- Allow the students as much time as possible for hands-on practice in the lab

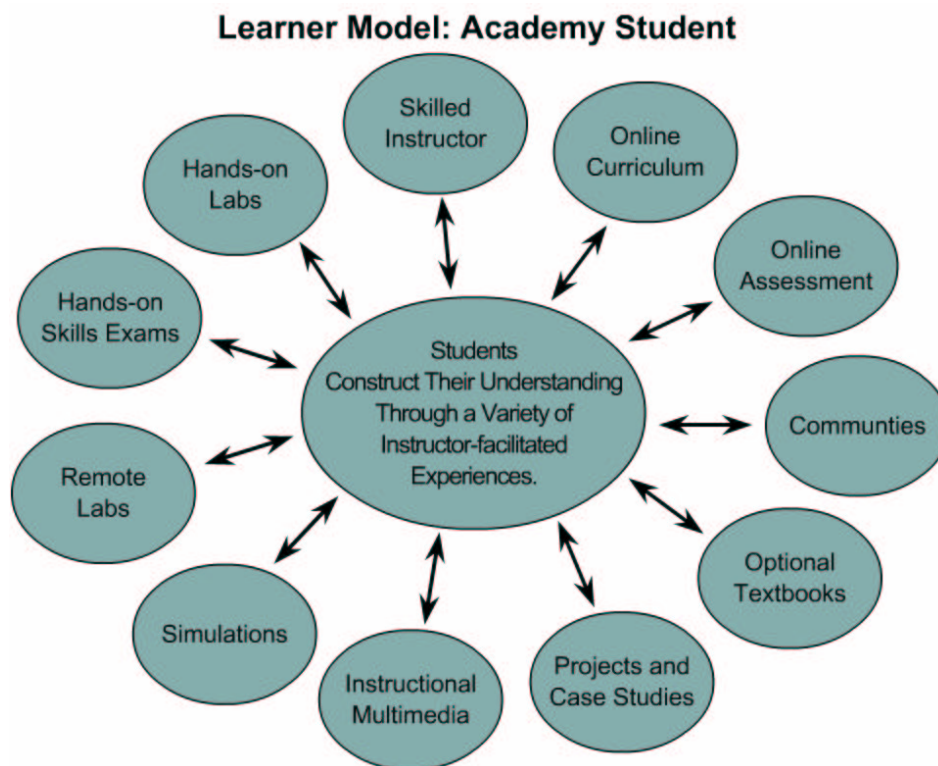
- Strongly emphasize the following four things:
 - Network vocabulary and terminology
 - Cable-making and testing and LAN and WAN cabling
 - Conversion of decimal, binary, and hexadecimal numbers
 - Subnetting

Later, the instructor plans to go back to any core and optional TIs that were quickly covered. The instructor will then use any module exams that are considered appropriate. In-class activities are designed and added to the class Gradebook on Academy Connection. The instructor has also modified the scoring of module exams so they align better with the needs of the students. The instructor also decides to use the weighted score instead of the binary score in the Gradebook. Because so many different tools were used throughout the course, the students' final course grades are based on module exams, informal quizzes, and other activities that have been completed.

Part 3: CCNA 1 v3.0 Instructional Guidelines

Student-centered, instructor-facilitated

The Cisco Networking Academy Program is based on instructor facilitation. The Learner Model: Academy Student diagram emphasizes the central role of students. Instructors utilize activities that are built from a variety of resources to help their students achieve the desired comprehension of networking. The CCNA curriculum has not been designed as stand-alone e-learning, 100 percent distance-learning, or programmed instruction to be followed literally step-by-step regardless of the learner.



One curriculum does not accommodate all students

The Cisco Networking Academy Program is used by hundreds of thousands of students in almost 150 countries. Students vary from teenagers to mature adults, at different levels of education. One curriculum cannot be perfect for all students, so the Networking Academy program team continually strives to build a program that gives instructors the flexibility to meet a variety of learning needs. Local instructors utilize the learning goals of the program and the resources described in the learner model to make the program work for their students. Instructors are given the following reference points, which relate to the mission of the Cisco Networking Academy Program, to plan their instruction:

- To educate future networking professionals
- To train students to meet the requirements of the CCNA Certification Exams
- To develop students' hands-on skills, which are essential for success in the networking industry and further education

Differentiation based on class requirements is encouraged. Struggling students should be given remediation and high-achieving students should be given further challenges. The instructor should decide how much time to spend on various topics. Some topics can be emphasized and other topics can be de-emphasized or omitted for different students. Only the local instructor can decide how to balance the need to do hands-on labs with the realities of the local student-to-equipment ratio and time schedule. Use of the Instructor Guide and online communities may facilitate preparation of lesson plans and presentations. Instructors are strongly encouraged to develop in-house labs and exercises.

Hands-on, skills-based

The core of the CCNA 1 v3.0 experience is a sequence of hands-on labs. Each lab has been designated as either core or optional. Core labs are fundamental to the CCNA Academy student experience, certification test requirements, job success, and cognitive and affective development. In CCNA 1 v3.0, students must learn to make and test cables, interconnect PCs, hubs, switches, and routers to establish Layer 1 connectivity across a network. Students should also participate in some locally-determined form of the Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project.

The Cisco Networking Academy Program teaching and learning community

Cisco Networking Academy Program instructors are members of a global community of educators. More than 10,000 individuals are actively teaching the CCNA and CCNP courses. Instructors are encouraged to take advantage of this community through their Regional Academy (RA), their Cisco Academy Training Center (CATC), the Cisco Academy Connection, and through other forums. It is the commitment of Worldwide Education (WWE) to improve the curriculum, assessment, and instructional resources. Feedback can be submitted through the Academy Connection by clicking on the Help link on the site. Please continue to check the Academy Connection for regular releases of instructional materials.

Part 4: CCNA 1 version 3.0 Curriculum Guidelines

Course objectives

The CCNA certification indicates knowledge of networking for the small office, home office (SOHO) market. The certification also indicates the ability to work in small businesses or organizations with networks that have fewer than 100 nodes. An individual with the CCNA designation should be able to perform the following tasks:

- Install and configure Cisco switches and routers in multiprotocol internetworks using LAN and WAN interfaces

- Provide Level 1 troubleshooting services
- Improve network performance and security
- Perform entry-level tasks in the planning, design, installation, operation, and troubleshooting of Ethernet and TCP/IP networks

The CCNA 1 v3.0 course is an important step toward achieving CCNA certification. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to perform tasks related to the following:

- Networking mathematics, terminology, and models
- Copper, optical, and wireless networking media
- LAN and WAN cabling and testing
- Ethernet operation and 10, 100, and 1000-Gigabit versions of Ethernet
- Ethernet switching
- IP addressing and subnetting
- IP, TCP, UDP, and application layer protocols

Instructors may decide to omit a given TI or assessment. However, they should consider the impact of their instructional decisions on the ability of students to achieve these broad learning objectives. Core and optional TIs and labs have been designated after careful consideration of these impacts.

Part 5: CCNA Assessment Guidelines

Background and context

The Networking Academy program assessment tools help students, instructors, and administrators understand the personal and individual strengths and weaknesses as they progress through the curriculum. Cisco Systems, Inc. and WWE do not specify the exact instructional actions and uses for assessment activities. Instead, Cisco offers suggestions and sets standards for minimum acceptable course delivery in the Quality Assurance Program documents.

Assessment is the process used to describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals based on the collection of data. Assessment can consist of informal activities such as class discussions, one-on-one discussions, and unobtrusive observations of students in the classroom or at work. There are also more formal or standardized assessments. These can include sets of tasks or questions combined into a test, an organized performance, or other activities that are staged to gather information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities of students.

Assessments have various uses and purposes as follows:

- Some assessments are designed to give detailed feedback about the particular strengths and weaknesses of a student. These activities are called formative assessments because they help form the learning process.
- Summative assessments are designed to summarize the knowledge or skills of a student. Summative assessments usually cover a broader range of information than formative assessments, and give a less detailed report. An end-of-course exam, or Final Exam, is usually created with this type of summative goal.
- In the Cisco Networking Academy Program, all assessments are created to improve learning.

Formative assessments assist students and instructors directly with detailed information and a tight connection to the curriculum. Summative assessments are also related to the curriculum. However,

they provide a more global view of learning, which may help students, instructors, and administrators obtain improved learning with this broad information.

The assessment tools provided in the Networking Academy program are designed to be as flexible and appropriate as possible. Cisco believes that the most flexible and appropriate assessment tool is the instructor. Therefore, instructors are encouraged to become highly skilled in the curriculum. Instructors should use the assessment tools provided in the manner that best improves learning and matches the administrative goals of their school. Instructors should supplement these tools with any activities that they deem necessary.

Multiple sources of information are needed

The Networking Academy program recognizes that the appropriate use of online exams may vary for different instructors and institutions. Instructors should always follow locally provided guidelines, when available, with regards to exam use. The Networking Academy program assessment team also has recommended guidelines about how exams should be used.

Online assessments should be considered as one of several sources of information that should be used to make decisions or assign grades. A single test should never be used to determine a course grade. Instructors should consider other sources of information, including performance on the Skills-based Assessment and other indicators of classroom performance when they assign grades to students.

The online assessments are designed to primarily provide information about the knowledge a student has regarding networking concepts and procedures. It is essential for hands-on assessments, such as cabling and router configuration, to be used in the classroom, to appropriately assess the total set of knowledge, skills, and abilities of a student.

Which assessments are required?

Student grades and course graduation requirements should be obtained from multiple sources in addition to the online assessments. Such activities may include class participation or presentations, and competencies in skills-based assessments and case studies. The exact configuration and grading decision will be determined by the policies of the Local Academy and instructor. Each Local Academy should establish course evaluation criteria, which will be provided to students at the beginning of the course. Currently the Networking Academy program requires students to complete, at a minimum, the following tasks for CCNA 1 v3.0:

- Complete the online Final Exam
- Complete the online Course Feedback Form
- Complete the Skills-based Assessment
- Complete the Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project

The scores from the Final Exam and Course Feedback Form will be automatically entered into the Gradebook when completed. The scores from the Skills-based Assessment and Structured Cabling Case Study and Installation Project must be manually entered into the Gradebook by the instructor.

Not all assessments within a course will be required to complete the course. Some assessments are optional to provide local instructors with greater flexibility within the classroom and allow them to teach and create evaluation tasks as they see fit. It is important to note that most content areas from the course are likely to be found on required assessments such as the Final Exam.

Certification Exam and CCNA online assessments

The Academy curriculum is an excellent resource for learning the skills and knowledge that are tested on the CCNA Certification Exam. The types of tasks that students must complete on the Certification Exam are similar to the types of activities that well-trained Academy students can complete. However,

good performance on the online module exams and the Final Exam may not necessarily guarantee success on the Certification Exam. Most students consider the Certification Exam to be more challenging. This exam measures the ability of students to combine the knowledge gained from all CCNA courses, while module exams or quizzes generally cover small pieces of information. The Certification Exam also requires students to apply networking skills in real networking situations. The skills-based assessments, case studies, hands-on activities, and lab performance are as important as the online module exams and final exams. Students who memorize test questions and answers out of context, and students with no experience or limited experience solving real network problems on real network equipment will be at a disadvantage when they take the Certification Exam.