Q. What is a Master Specialization?
A. A Cisco® Master Specialization recognizes partners with the greatest capability in a given technology area or architecture (collaboration, security, data center). To achieve a master specialization, your company must first achieve the advanced specialization in that technology, then meet stringent requirements that demonstrate master-level capabilities, and establish a customer success track record in the following areas: Selling skills and personnel investments, training, a demonstration of your company’s capabilities, and customer references to prove you have a reputable practice.

As a Master Specialized partner, you must have effective IT service management processes across the Cisco lifecycle phases (prepare, plan, design, implement, operate, and optimize) following ITIL best practice guidelines. To protect the integrity and value of the master specialization, Cisco uses an onsite audit requirement. The audit validates you as a Master Specialized partner and your ability to speak to lines-of-business leads within an organization. The ability to articulate the business relevance of a technical solution positions you as the go-to partner for your customers business needs.

Master partners are preferred partners for that technology area because of their proven skills and established practice.

Q. What is the Master Collaboration Specialization?
A. The Master Collaboration Specialization demonstrates in-depth collaboration technology skills. Your firm will also have to demonstrate customer success in selling, deploying, and providing services for more sophisticated, value-added Cisco Collaboration solutions. Partners with a highly qualified collaboration practice can achieve a Master Collaboration Specialization, regardless of certification level. Recognition of this deep expertise results in a Cisco-recognized Master Specialization brand, as well as additional financial incentives such as VIP Rebates.

Q. Why should my company apply for the Master Collaboration Specialization?
A. The Master Collaboration Specialization provides differentiation by recognizing you as the go-to experts in the collaboration space. Additionally, there are financial benefits and go-to-market support to enhance your company profitability.
Q. How is the Master Collaboration specialization different from other specializations?
A. The Master Collaboration Specialization is the natural evolution of the current unified communications offerings in the specialization portfolio. It indicates the highest level of knowledge and expertise and is validated by a far more vigorous assessment of your company’s capabilities than the Collaboration designation. Partners that achieve the Master Specialization are recognized with benefits like ViP and TiP not available outside the specialization framework, in addition to membership into the exclusive group of Master Specialized Partners.

Q. What are the requirements for the Master Collaboration Specialization?
A. The Master Collaboration Specialization has a number of pre-requisites and requirements intended to verify the depth of knowledge and established practice of your company. These include evidence of technology eco-partner relationships and practices with collaboration industry leaders. In addition, you will need to have customer references and an onsite audit of internal processes that includes a demonstration of knowledge and capabilities. You can find exact details about which technology eco-partners and the certification levels that will be accepted on the Master Collaboration Specialization website at www.cisco.com/go/mastercollab.

Q. How do I get details about the pre-requisite Collaboration Architecture Specialization?
A. You will find full requirements and details for application at www.cisco.com/go/mastercollab.

Q. How do I provide evidence of third-party certifications, specializations, and relationships with my company or personnel?
A. As part of the CSApp application process, your company is asked to upload a copy (in formats such as Microsoft® Word, pdf, or other) of any relevant third-party certifications or specializations for individuals or the company, depending on the specific requirement.

Q. Where do I go to apply for the Master Collaboration Specialization?
A. You can find the online application in the Certification and Specialization Application tool (CSApp) at www.cisco.com/go/csapp.

Q. What are the entry and exit criteria for ViP eligibility?
A. Master Collaboration Specialization will qualify as an "exit only" criterion. Future ViP periods have not yet been defined, but will be evaluated based upon the ongoing application and audit scheduling process to determine if the "Exit Only" criteria will be extended.

Q. I am unable to access the Cisco Certification and Specialization Application (CSApp) tool. What should I do?
A. To get access to the CSApp tool, you must be a registered Cisco.com user and your name must be associated with your company.

Q. I have technical difficulties with CSApp and/or my application process, where do I get help?
A. For question regarding requirements or program details, please work with your Partner Account Manager (PAM). For technical problems with CSApp, please contact Cisco’s Partner Relationship Team (PRT) at www.cisco.com/go/PRT.

Q. How do my employees complete the required online courses and what courses apply to Master Collaboration?
A. To apply for a Master Collaboration Specialization you must have the Advanced Collaboration Architecture Specialization as a pre-requisite. You can find the courses on Cisco’s Partner Education Connection (PEC) website.
Q. What will my company need to have to pass the final audit?

A. First you will have to pass the pre-audit validation. The requirements for that, and for the audit, are in the chart below.

### Step 1: Pre-Audit Validation

These requirements will be validated remotely before the onsite audit is scheduled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Collaboration Architecture Specialization or Advanced Collaboration Specialization</td>
<td>You must hold the Advanced Collaboration Architecture Specialization or the Advanced Unified Communications specialization. Check is done via an internal system validation through the Certification &amp; Specialization Application (CSApp) web tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCIE Voice or CCIE Collaboration</td>
<td>Assign individual in CSApp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Project Management Certification:</td>
<td>You then upload the certificate into the Certification and Specialization Application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMI Project Management Professional (PMP) or OGC PRINCE2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer references: Documentation to validate five* sophisticated deployments based on specific qualifying Collaboration criteria (see <a href="#">Master Security and Master Collaboration Customer Reference Checklist</a>).</td>
<td>Complete the customer reference document, which includes customer reference account deployment summaries, for the five* customer references.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Recertification applications require three customer references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cisco Channel Systems Engineer (SE) reviews the Customer Reference document and validates deployments. The Cisco Channel SE must upload the customer reference checklist into CSApp. Review and validation of the customer reference checklist is indicated by the Channel SE upload.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Step 2: Onsite Audit

After your application has been validated by a Cisco Certification Program Manager, he or she will forward your application to the third-party auditing firm who will contact you to arrange an audit date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onsite Audit Capabilities Validation</td>
<td>All requirements for the onsite audit are found in the Cisco Channel Program Audit &amp; Policies document. Please prepare accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onsite Audit Demonstration</td>
<td>Be prepared to perform a demonstration as per the Master Collaboration Demonstration Guidelines document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>