



Q. What is a Master Specialization?

A. A Cisco® Master Specialization recognizes partners with the greatest capability in a given technology area or architecture (unified communications, 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 to validate a partners' technical and services capabilities.

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

Q. What is the Master Unified Communications Specialization?

A. The Master Unified Communications Specialization demonstrates in-depth unified communications technology skills. Your firm will also have to demonstrate customer success in selling, deploying, and providing services for more sophisticated, value-added Cisco Unified Communications solutions. Partners with a highly qualified unified communications practice can achieve a Master Unified Communications 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 Unified Communications Specialization?

A. The Master Unified Communications Specialization provides differentiation for partners by recognizing them as the go-to experts in the unified communications space. Additionally, there are financial benefits and go-to-market support to enhance your company profitability.

Q. How is the Master Unified Communications specialization different from other specializations?

A. The Master Unified Communications 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 Unified Communications 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 Unified Communications Specialization?

A. The Master Unified Communications 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 unified communications 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 Unified Communications Specialization web site at www.cisco.com/go/masteruc.

Q. How do I get details about the pre-requisite Unified Communications Architecture Specialization?

A. You will find full requirements and details for application at www.cisco.com/go/masteruc.

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 Unified Communications 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 Unified Communications Specialization will qualify as an "exit only" criterion. Future VIP periods have not yet been defined, but will be evaluated based upon the ongoing partner 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 partner company.

Q. I have having 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 Unified Communications?

A. To apply for a Master Unified Communications Specialization partners 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

Requirement	Evidence
Advanced Collaboration Architecture Specialization or Advanced Unified Communications Specialization	Partner must hold the Advanced Collaboration Architecture Specialization or the Advanced Unified Communications specialization. Check is done via an internal system validation through the Certification & Specialization Application (CSApp) web tool.
CCIE Voice or CCIE Collaboration	Assign individual in CSApp.
One Project Management Certification: PMI Project Management Professional (PMP) or OGC PRINCE2	The partner uploads the certificate into the Certification and Specialization Application.
Customer references: Documentation to validate five* sophisticated deployments based on specific qualifying Unified Communications criteria (see Master Security and Unified Communications Customer Reference Checklist).	Complete the customer reference document, which includes customer reference account deployment summaries, for the five* customer references. *Recertification applications require three customer references 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.

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.

Requirement	Preparation
Onsite Audit Capabilities Validation	All requirements for the onsite audit are found in the Cisco Channel Program Audit & Policies document. Please prepare accordingly.
Onsite Audit Demonstration	Be prepared to perform a demonstration as per the Master Unified Communications Demonstration Guidelines document.

