Best IT certifications for beginners and freshers in 2026

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Short answer: with no experience, start with a foundational certification that matches the direction you want. CompTIA A+ for IT support, CompTIA Network+ or Cisco CCNA for networking, CompTIA Security+ for security, a cloud provider's foundational or associate exam for cloud, and the Linux Foundation's KCNA for cloud-native. For software development, IICTP's ATP has no experience requirement and tests engineering fundamentals across the software lifecycle.

TL;DR The short version

- With no experience, start with one foundational certification that matches the direction you want.
- Examples are CompTIA A+ for support, Network+ or CCNA for networking, Security+ for security, a cloud foundational exam, KCNA for cloud-native, or IICTP's ATP for software.
- Pair it with a small project and avoid collecting unrelated certificates or paying for 'guaranteed placement' packages.

Read online, listen to it, or change the text size: https://blogs.iictp.org/best-it-certifications-for-beginners

Pick a direction first

- **IT support:** CompTIA A+, or Google's IT Support professional certificate on Coursera.
- **Networking:** CompTIA Network+, then Cisco CCNA.
- **Security:** CompTIA Security+ or ISC2's Certified in Cybersecurity.
- **Cloud:** a foundational exam from AWS, Microsoft or Google Cloud, then an associate exam.
- **Cloud-native:** KCNA from the Linux Foundation and CNCF.
- **Software development:** IICTP ATP, which needs a secondary diploma and 23 contact hours of technical coursework, but no work experience.

Avoid these traps

- Collecting several foundational certificates in unrelated areas. One, plus a project, says more.
- Paying for "guaranteed placement" packages. Read reviews from past students.
- Memorising dumps of leaked questions. It breaks exam rules, and interviews expose it quickly.

Pair it with proof

- A small project in the area of the certification: a home lab, a deployed app, a documented network.
- A short write-up of what you learned.

- For developers: a clean repository. See Git branching for beginners and what makes a good pull request.

After the first job

Once you have a year or two of experience, move to associate and specialist certifications in the area you actually work in. See the career path for technical practitioners.

Related answers

- Best IT certifications by role
- Are IT certifications worth it?
- Vendor-neutral certifications for software engineers

Before you book

Certification bodies rename, update and retire exams often. Check each issuer's own page for current versions, prerequisites and fees before you book.

> Related credential: Associate Technical Practitioner. Explore the exam facts and syllabus.

Sources and further reading

1. CompTIA. Certifications. comptia.org/certifications.
2. Cisco. CCNA. cisco.com.
3. ISC2. Certified in Cybersecurity. isc2.org.
4. AWS. AWS Certification. aws.amazon.com/certification.
5. Microsoft. Microsoft Credentials. learn.microsoft.com/credentials.
6. Google Cloud. Google Cloud certification. cloud.google.com/learn/certification.
7. Linux Foundation. Training and certification. training.linuxfoundation.org.
8. Google. Career Certificates. grow.google/certificates.
9. IICTP. Exam facts, eligibility and blueprints. iictp.org/certifications/exam-facts.

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