Best solutions architect certifications in 2026

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Short answer: for cloud solutions architects, the provider tracks are the most requested: AWS Solutions Architect (Associate, then Professional), Microsoft's Azure Solutions Architect Expert, and Google Cloud's Professional Cloud Architect. For enterprise architecture, TOGAF from The Open Group is the established framework certification. For architecture judgement that is not tied to a provider, IICTP's CAP and CTP test design trade-offs, failure and cost through scenarios.

TL;DR The short version

- For cloud solutions architects the provider tracks are most requested: AWS Solutions Architect, Azure Solutions Architect Expert and Google's Professional Cloud Architect.
- TOGAF from The Open Group is the established certification for enterprise architecture.
- Architecture exams should test trade-offs and hard-to-undo decisions; IICTP's CAP and CTP test that judgement through scenarios, independent of any provider.

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Three kinds of architect

- **Solutions architect:** designs one system or product. Provider certifications fit best.
- **Enterprise architect:** aligns systems, data and business capabilities across an organisation. TOGAF fits best.
- **Software or technical architect:** sets boundaries, standards and long-term technical decisions across teams. See tech lead vs engineering manager vs architect.

What architecture exams should test

- Trade-offs, not definitions: monolith vs microservices, serverless vs containers.
- Decisions that are expensive to undo.
- Designing for failure: circuit breakers, idempotency.
- Cost and lock-in: multi-cloud patterns.

Where IICTP fits

IICTP's CAP needs 36 months of experience and tests cloud architecture judgement in 120 scenario questions over 150 minutes. The CTP gives Architecture & Systems Design the largest share of its exam, 30%. Neither replaces a provider certification where an employer asks for one; they test the reasoning across providers.

Related answers

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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: Cloud Architecture Practitioner. Explore the exam facts and syllabus.

Sources and further reading

1. AWS. AWS Certification. aws.amazon.com/certification.
2. Microsoft. Microsoft Credentials. learn.microsoft.com/credentials.
3. Google Cloud. Google Cloud certification. cloud.google.com/learn/certification.
4. The Open Group. TOGAF certification. opengroup.org.
5. IICTP. Exam facts, eligibility and blueprints. iictp.org/certifications/exam-facts.

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