



Microsoft Software and Systems Academy – Asia-Pacific (MSSA-APAC) FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated 02/01/22

Introduction

MSSA-APAC offers US service members and veterans across the Asia-Pacific region an opportunity to learn alongside transitioning or former serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Considering applying? Due to the different organizational structures, characteristics, and department and/or place of duty requirements between the US Armed Forces and the ADF, admissions documentation required of applicants will be different across each service. MSSA-APAC has standardized eligibility prerequisites wherever possible yet must adhere to service specific policy and process as regards military documentation required. MSSA-APAC is not intended to be easier to apply for from one service vs. another.

Find your answers

“I am applying as a...”

- [Transitioning service member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces](#)
- [Transitioning service member or former serving/already separated member of the Australian Defence Force \(ADF\)](#)

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

MSSA-APAC participants elect to specialize in either Cloud Application Development (CAD) or Server & Cloud Administration (SCA). Upon completion of MSSA-APAC, participants will have a pathway towards Microsoft certifications and direct hiring opportunities with Microsoft (or one of its 1000+ hiring partners).

Being successful and confident in your career transition takes more than just technical know-how. In addition to technical curriculum, Microsoft partners with participants in career planning, professional skills-building (including resume writing and interview techniques), and job search strategies. MSSA-APAC also provides participants opportunities to engage with professional and technical mentors working at Microsoft.

Training locations and hours

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Monday-Friday
0800-1700 JST
(Japan Standard Time)

LOCATION:

Virtual (Instructor led)

DATES:

6 June – 6 October 2022

How do I apply?

To access the application, type "aka.ms/MSSAapplication-apac" into any browser during the application window.

Applications will be accepted between **1-15 March 2022 (1700 JST)**.

Please review the **Virtual Brief** by typing "aka.ms/MSSAbrief" into your browser or email MSSA-asiapacific@microsoft.com with general questions.

- * MSSA is a Department of Defense approved SkillBridge program.
- * MSSA-APAC is NOT an expatriate program. MSSA-APAC is designed to facilitate instruction in a more favorable time zone for US service members serving in the Asia-Pacific region, with the opportunity to extend this offering to our partners and allies within the Australian Defence Force (ADF).
- * The ADF and service branches do not endorse any company, sponsor or their products or services.

United States Armed Forces

Eligibility requirements for US Armed Forces across the Asia-Pacific region interested in applying to MSSA-APAC are the same as they are for our US service members applying to MSSA (Core). Please refer to the complete MSSA FAQ for service members of the US Armed Forces on our website or by typing "[aka.ms/MSSA-FAQ](https://military.microsoft.com/programs/microsoft-software-systems-academy/)" into any browser address bar. (<https://military.microsoft.com/programs/microsoft-software-systems-academy/>)

Offering specific: MSSA-APAC unique information (such as cohort start and end dates, instructional time zone, and more) can be found on the [General Information](#) page of this document as well as the [General Program Information](#) section, below.

Important: for information on the MSSA-APAC admissions process and timeline, please refer to "[The Application Process](#)" section of this document. The admissions timeline for MSSA-APAC does not follow the MSSA (Core) 20-week format.

Australian Defence Force (ADF)

Use the links, below, to jump between sections.

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"Still have questions?"

Email MSSA-asiapacific@microsoft.com

Find your answers

1. Is MSSA-APAC a full-time program?

Yes. MSSA-APAC is a full-time program facilitated between the hours of 0800-1700, Monday through Friday, Japan Standard Time (JST). Participants do not need to physically reside in the offering time zone to participate but must be able to commit to the time zone for the cohort duration. Self-guided and part-time offerings are not supported. Participants are required to attend class virtually, be attentive, and be available for open discussion, collaboration, and lab work. Some sessions may run later depending on class projects and assignments.

2. How is this program different than MSSA (Core)?

MSSA-APAC is based on the MSSA (Core) program model. MSSA-APAC offers US service members and veterans across the Asia-Pacific region an opportunity to learn alongside transitioning or former serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Our intention is to skill participants and place them into IT industry roles with Microsoft or any of our 1,000+ hiring partners while promoting joint services engagement, understanding, and goodwill.

MSSA-APAC is not an expatriate program. Job search and placement support will be focused within Australia (including Microsoft Australia) for transitioning/former serving ADF participants, and within the United States for US transitioning service members and veterans (including Microsoft USA).

3. What are the program prerequisites and eligibility requirements?

In addition to the graphic on the following page, please see pertinent information based on your current military status (transitioning or former serving/already separated).

- Transitioning
Interim Certificate of Service - The following information may be useful during this process. <https://www.defence.gov.au/members-families/Master/documents/Transition/ADF-member-transition-guide.pdf>. From Page 37: Interim Certificate of Service – ‘Your ADF transition coach can provide you with an interim Certificate of Service. This can be used as evidence of service for a number of purposes...' including MSSA-APAC.
- Former Serving/Already Separated
Employment Separation Certificate - If you require an Employment Separation Certificate, please request one either from the ADF Transition Centre or by emailing

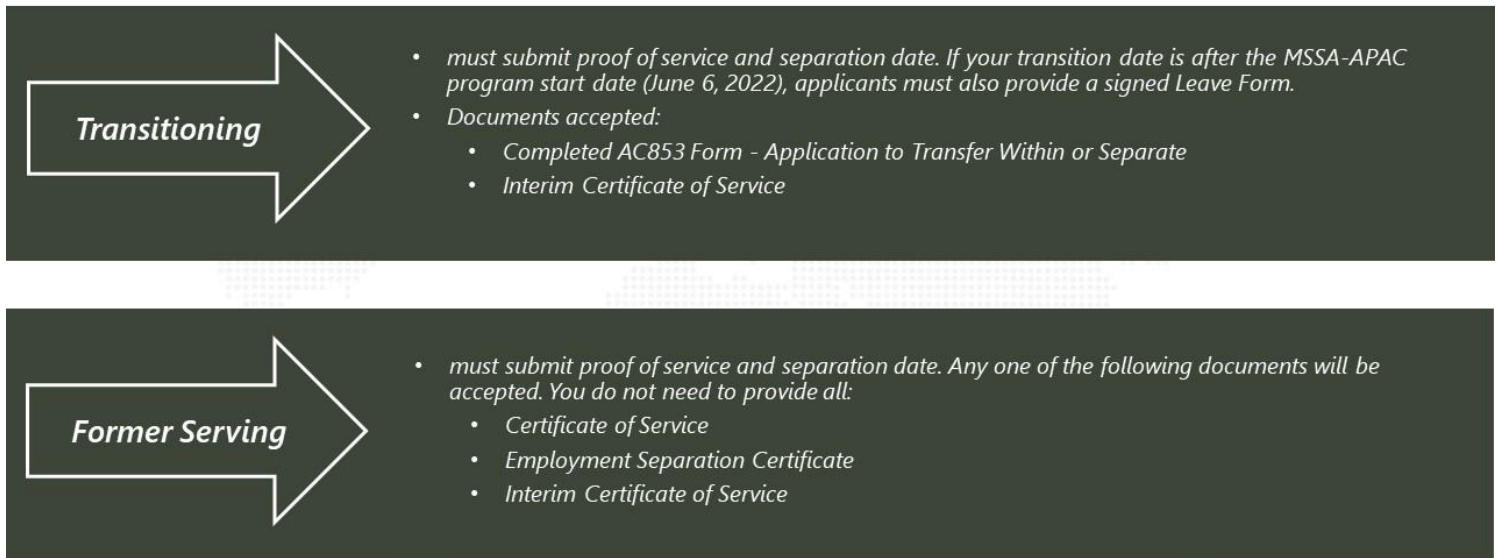
a request to: DS-CNNSW.PAC-7@defence.gov.au

Interim Certificate of Service - The following information may be useful during this process. <https://www.defence.gov.au/members-families/Master/documents/Transition/ADF-member-transition-guide.pdf>.

For a larger view of the below graphic, refer to the [final pages](#) of this FAQ.

(ADF) Program prerequisites and eligibility

All Applicants: a current, valid [Pearson Vue IT Specialist certification](#) aligned to their chosen learning path. [See additional details in FAQ.](#)



4. **Is MSSA-APAC paid and/or an internship?**

MSSA-APAC is not a paid training program, nor is it an internship.

5. **What is the cost of MSSA-APAC?**

Program costs are covered by Microsoft. There is no cost to the service member. For those accepted into the program, eBooks for the topics covered are provided no cost to the participant. Additional supplemental study materials may be purchased as an out-of-pocket cost, but they are not required by the program.

6. **Does Microsoft cover housing and any other living expenses?**

No. Microsoft does not provide housing or cover costs related to housing and other living expenses while participants are enrolled in the program.

7. **Will instruction be taught in the English language?**

Yes. All MSSA-APAC instruction will be facilitated in the English language, only.

- 8. Can I work/go to school full-time and do the program?**
MSSA-APAC is a full-time commitment over 17-weeks. It is highly advised that participants do not work or attend school full time during the cohort cycle (0800-1700, Monday-Friday, Japan Standard Time (JST)).
- 9. Are evening, self-guided/paced, or part-time cohorts offered?**
No. Self-guided, self-paced, evening, and part-time offerings are not supported.
- 10. I am currently working in IT. Will MSSA-APAC provide supplemental training for my job?**
MSSA-APAC is a training and employment program and is not appropriate to be used as supplemental on-the-job training.
- 11. What level of technical education or experience is needed for MSSA-APAC?**
MSSA-APAC is an entry-level technical training program. Previous technical education or professional experience is not required for admissions consideration.
- 12. What should I expect to learn while in the program? Who is this program right for?**
MSSA-APAC's learning paths are designed to instill a foundational level of knowledge in IT. MSSA-APAC is best suited to individuals looking to transition into the IT field from another profession, those with little knowledge but much passion about IT, and those coming back into the IT field after a long period of absence. MSSA-APAC is suitable for entry-level applicants as well as those with prior exposure to IT.
- 13. (Former Serving/Already Separated) To qualify, is there a time limitation to when I transitioned out of the service? Is there an age restriction to qualify for MSSA-APAC?**
No. There is no age restriction or limitation on how long an individual has been out of the service to qualify for MSSA-APAC.
- 14. I am fully disabled; will I qualify for MSSA-APAC?**
Qualifications for disabled transitioning service members and former serving/already separated members will be the same as the qualifications previously mentioned above. MSSA-APAC evaluates candidates equally based on the required documentation submitted and via an interview process. Reasonable accommodations and modifications can be made within the program's means. Accepted applicants are encouraged to start accommodation requests prior to the cohort start date.
- 15. Do spouses, relatives, and military dependents qualify for MSSA-APAC?**
No. Military spouses, relatives, and dependents do not qualify for MSSA-APAC.

16. What is CAD? What is SCA?

CAD stands for "Cloud Application Development". SCA stands for "Server & Cloud Administration". Information on the MSSA technical learning paths can be found at (https://miledu.microsoft.com/static/student_resource_documents/Learning_Path_Overview.pdf).

17. What specific topics are covered in each learning path?

Below are the general syllabi for our offered learning paths.

Cloud Application Development (CAD)

- Programming in C#
- Transact-SQL
- HTML5/CSS3/JavaScript programming
- ASP.NET Core MVC application development
- Azure development

Server & Cloud Administration (SCA)

- PowerShell Scripting
- Networking
- Identity and Active Directory
- Windows Server/Windows Server Hybrid administration
- Azure Administration

18. What careers do these learning paths lead to?

MSSA-APAC graduates may be hired into a variety of IT roles including software developer, service engineer, support engineer, IT/helpdesk, program manager, and more. We encourage you to explore the Microsoft Careers page to learn about various professions available to job seekers in tech (<https://careers.microsoft.com/professionals/us/en/l-sydney>).

19. Which learning path should I choose?

Career needs and personal interests are unique to every individual. We recommend that you research the topics and career potential for each learning path before deciding between CAD or SCA. Some aspects to consider are personal interests, job availability, experience required, location, salary, promotion potential, and job flexibility.

20. What is the Pearson Vue ITS exam?

The Pearson VUE Information Technology Specialist (ITS) certification is an entry-level credential that validates fundamental technology skills and knowledge among students and job seekers who are pursuing a career in technology. All applicants must provide a current, valid Pearson Vue IT Specialist certification aligned to their chosen learning path.

21. How do I know which ITS exam to take?

Each MSSA-APAC technical learning path requires a specific ITS exam or certification.

Below are the approved corresponding certifications:

- Server & Cloud Administration – Pearson VUE ITS-[Networking](#)
- Cloud Application Development – Pearson VUE ITS-[Software Development](#)

22. Will MSSA-APAC accept any other certification or degree in lieu of the ITS certification?

To keep equity amongst our candidates, it is required that each candidate take the corresponding ITS exam to their desired learning path (or) currently hold one of the certifications on the approved list, below, in correspondence with their desired technical learning path. Microsoft and MSSA-APAC do not issue exam vouchers for the below certifications.

For SCA, alternative certifications accepted:

- CompTIA Net+ or CompTIA Sec+
- MTA 98-366: Networking Fundamentals

For CAD, alternative certification accepted:

- MTA 98-361: Software Development Fundamentals

The Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) is retiring as a certification exam but will still be honored as an approved alternate certification to meet the MSSA prerequisite (as defined by learning path) if already held. Microsoft Military Affairs no longer issues vouchers for this certification exam, nor are vouchers still publicly available for purchase.

23. Currently, I do not hold any IT certifications. Can I still apply?

Yes. MSSA-APAC will provide eligible applicants who have applied and who are engaged with an Application Manager with training material to help you prepare for your Pearson Vue ITS exam.

24. Will MSSA-APAC be providing an ITS voucher?

Yes. Eligible applicants who have applied to MSSA-APAC and are engaged with an Application Manager will receive one (1) Pearson VUE ITS exam voucher and one (1) ITS exam training key for exam preparation. Eligible applicants are those who do not already hold an alternate certification accepted as part of the program prerequisites.

25. Will MSSA-APAC be providing a CompTIA or MTA voucher?

No. Microsoft and MSSA-APAC do not issue exam vouchers for these certifications.

26. How do I schedule my ITS exam? Can I take it before the application process starts?

Eligible applicants who have already applied to MSSA-APAC and are engaged with an Application Manager will receive exam scheduling instructions along with your ITS voucher

and training materials. If a prospective applicant wants to prepare and schedule their IT Specialist exam before the MSSA-APAC Application window opens, they can go to the Pearson Vue website to purchase the ITS learning courseware and purchase and schedule their ITS exam.

(US Armed Forces specific) US service members and veterans may be eligible for Pearson Vue ITS exam voucher through VA or Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL) programs. For more information, visit (<https://home.pearsonvue.com/Military/Test-takers.aspx>).

27. What happens if I fail or miss my ITS exam? Can I get another voucher?

The ITS voucher is limited to one (1) per person through MSSA-APAC and Microsoft Military Affairs. Expired, lost, or stolen exam vouchers will not be replaced. Applicants may choose to purchase a second voucher at their own expense.

28. Where can I find ITS study resources? How long should I be studying/prepping?

Prospective applicants may go to the Pearson Vue website to purchase the ITS learning courseware. If you choose not to purchase ITS learning courseware, you can view the exam objectives by going to the following links and search for training resources online:

- Server & Cloud Administration – Pearson Vue ITS-[Networking](#)
- Cloud Application Development – Pearson Vue ITS-[Software Development](#)

Everyone's individual learning pace and style is different. There is no set study timeframe that works for everyone. On average, plan for 30-50 hours of preparation to successfully pass the exam. Actual hours depend on your current knowledge with the technology and your personal pace to learn and retain new material. Begin studying as soon as possible and learn the material to best of your own abilities. Please note, the resources alone do not guarantee a passing score, and it is highly recommended that you find additional study aids that work best for your learning style.

29. How far in advance can I apply (the "Application Window")? Where do I apply?

The application form for MSSA-APAC will be live **March 1-March 15, 2022**. This is known as the "Application Window". The application window will remain open for these 2 weeks, only. All applications forms must be received within those 2 weeks. Early or late submissions outside of this window are not accepted.

During the Application Window, applicants may reach the application form by typing in "aka.ms/MSSAapplication-apac" into any browser address bar.

During the application window, the MSSA-APAC application form is the only element

required for submission. Additional required documentation will be requested for upload via a secure file share location in the weeks that follow the end of the application window. Please do not send additional and sensitive documentation via email or via a personal file share platform (OneDrive, Google Docs, etc.). Please only submit additional documentation via the secure file share location as directed by an Application Manager after the application window has closed.

30. How long does the application/admissions process take?

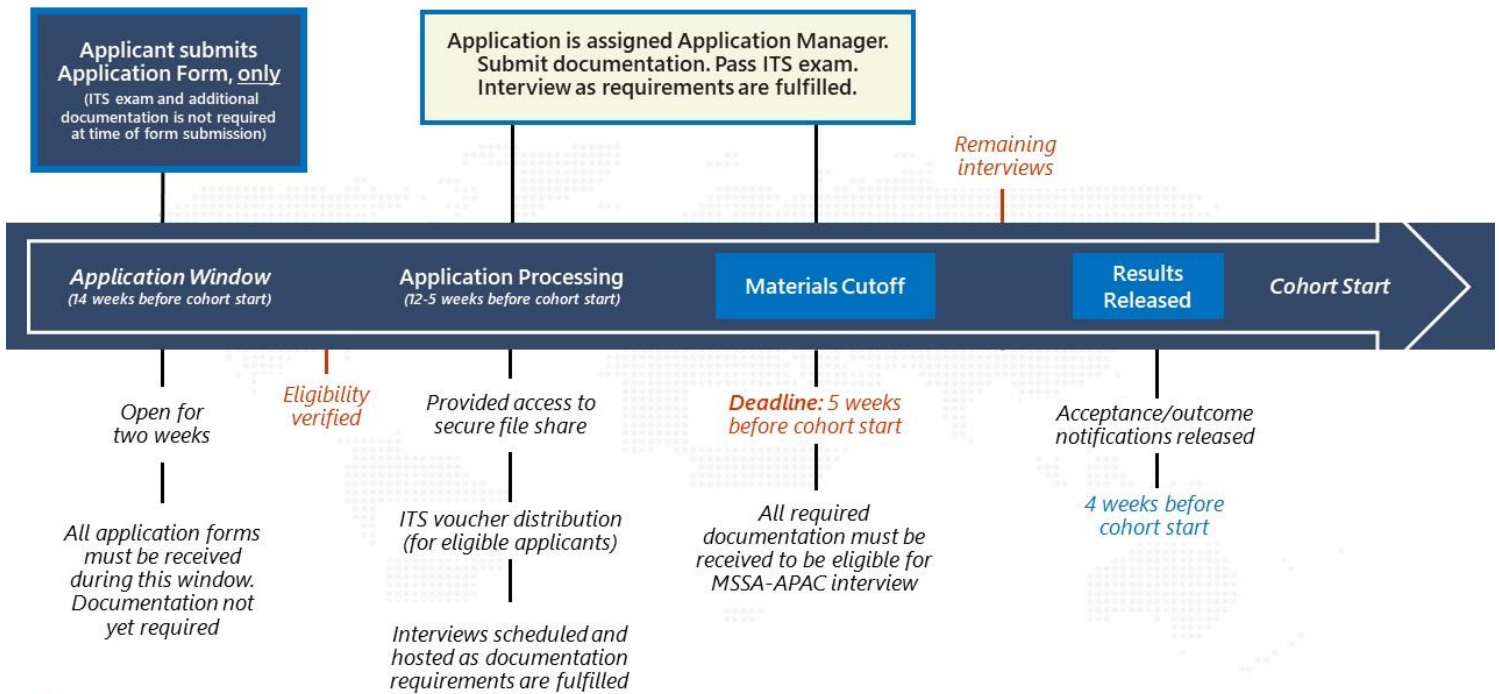
The admissions process, from start to finish, spans roughly 14 weeks. This involves the following milestones, also visualized in the graphic, below.

- 14 weeks before cohort start – *Application window opens*
- 12 weeks before cohort start – *Application window closes*
- 12-5 weeks before cohort start – *Applications are reviewed/interviews hosted*
- 5 weeks before cohort start – *Documentation deadline (“Materials Cutoff”)*
- 5-4 weeks before cohort start – *Remaining interviews hosted*
- 4 weeks before cohort start – *Acceptance/outcome notifications released*
- 0 weeks before cohort start – *Program orientation for accepted enrollees*
- **Cohort start – June 6, 2022**

For a larger view of the below graphic, refer to the [final pages](#) of this FAQ.

The Admissions Process (MSSA-APAC)

**All admissions timelines are an approximation and may be subject to adjustments as needed.*



31. **May I apply to more than one technical learning path for the same cycle?**
No. Applicants may not apply to multiple technical learning paths within the same admissions cycle. Applicants must elect their chosen pathway at the time of submitting their application form.
32. **Where do I submit my required documentation? Can I send it via email?**
Additional required documentation will be requested for upload via a secure file share location in the weeks that follow the end of the application window. Please do not send additional and sensitive documentation via email or via a personal file share platform (OneDrive, Google Docs, etc.). Please only submit additional documentation via the secure file share location as directed by an Application Manager after the application window has closed.
33. **How long do I have to submit all my prerequisite documentation (“Materials Cutoff”)?**
All documentation, including relevant military records and Pearson Vue ITS certification, must be received no later than **Friday, April 29, 2022**. This is known as the “Materials Cutoff” deadline. If all required documentation is not received by this date, the application will be closed, and the applicant will not be eligible to interview.

The documentation deadline cannot be extended. We strongly encourage applicants to upload documentation as they have it available, not to wait to upload everything at once. Documentation received too close to Materials Cutoff may not have enough time for processing, especially if further applicant action is required. Applications will not be assigned an Application Manager until at least 1 upload has been provided.

34. **What do I do once I have all my documentation submitted?**
After all additional documentation has been validated, the next step is the MSSA-APAC interview. Interviews will be scheduled as applicants fulfill their documentation requirement. Your Application Manager will confirm your eligibility and readiness to progress to interview and schedule with you directly.
35. **What should I expect from the MSSA-APAC interview?**
The interview is an opportunity for MSSA-APAC team members to get to know you. It is not a technical interview, nor do interviewees need to prepare to answer technical questions. Questions are geared to determine if you are the right candidate for the program and to learn about your interests and passions (including for IT). The interview is also your chance to see if the program is a good fit for you, so feel free to ask questions during it, as well.

36. **Are interviews conducted virtually or in person?**

Interviews are 100% virtual, hosted on Microsoft Teams.

37. **Can you guarantee my spot in a specific cohort?**

No. An application does not guarantee acceptance into MSSA-APAC. Your application will be considered equally amongst the pool of applicants.

- End -

(ADF) Program prerequisites and eligibility

All Applicants: a current, valid [Pearson Vue IT Specialist certification](#) aligned to their chosen learning path. [See additional details in FAQ.](#)

Transitioning

- *must submit proof of service and separation date. If your transition date is after the MSSA-APAC program start date (June 6, 2022), applicants must also provide a signed Leave Form.*
- *Documents accepted:*
 - *Completed AC853 Form - Application to Transfer Within or Separate*
 - *Interim Certificate of Service*

Former Serving

- *must submit proof of service and separation date. Any one of the following documents will be accepted. You do not need to provide all:*
 - *Certificate of Service*
 - *Employment Separation Certificate*
 - *Interim Certificate of Service*

The Admissions Process (MSSA-APAC)

**All admissions timelines are an approximation and may be subject to adjustments as needed.*

