Cybersecurity Training & Certification for IT Staff

By Sam Horowitz, Chief Information Security Officer

UCSB is taking active steps to improve cybersecurity across the campus. Staff responsible for our technical infrastructure need to know the current threats and demonstrate that they can secure a network, harden systems, and deter hackers. In an effort to promote best practices in IT security across campus, the Office of the CIO now provides limited scholarships for training courses leading to Security+ certification for select UCSB IT staff. For qualified candidates, Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) training may also be available in the future.

What is Security+ Certification?

CompTIA Security+ is a globally recognized credential to validate foundational, vendor-neutral IT security knowledge and skills. As a benchmark for best practices in IT security, this certification covers the essential principles for network security and risk management, making it an important stepping stone in an IT security career. Security+ is developed and maintained by leading IT experts. Content for the exams stems from a combination of industry-wide survey feedback and contributions from a team of subject matter experts.

Who should get certified?

Network and system administrators are prime candidates because a significant portion of the training and certification relates to these areas. IT staff engaged in other security-related activities, such as the administration of access controls, should also consider applying.

What are the steps to certification?

The CompTIA Security+ exam is offered at testing centers throughout the country. Most training classes arrange for testing immediately after the class. The classes are intended to review, not teach cybersecurity skills from scratch. Without adequate background and experience, the training may be inadequate to assure certification.

When and where are the classes?

The Office of the CIO is evaluating training programs from several vendors. Classes are located outside the Santa Barbara area. UCSB employees have attended training in Washington DC, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Other locations may be available depending on the final selection of a training company.

Why get certified?

Certification provides a recognizable method to demonstrate competence in information security. Maintaining the certification requires the completion of continuing professional education.

I’m interested. Who should I contact?

Your IT director or department business officer must nominate you for Security+ training in order to be considered for a scholarship. A limited number of scholarships are available. Candidates will be chosen based on their background skills, the need for security expertise in their department, and the availability of other certified individuals to provide assistance. The campus Chief Information Security Officer will determine scholarship recipients. Please contact ETS Human Resources Analyst Maria Coombs (x2262) for more information.