

Understanding and Assessing Professional Credentials and Training

There is a wide variety of data protection credentials in the marketplace, with differing requirements and features. These credentials may also be subject to varying levels of third-party oversight and validation (accreditation). Understanding these differences will help organizations and individuals choose the right credential for the task at hand.

This chart, based on a survey of the global marketplace*, provides a quick reference to the different types of credentials and their component parts.

▼ REQUIREMENT	TRAINING CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE	CERTIFICATE PROGRAM	PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION	DEGREE	LICENSE	Factors to consider when assessing an organization offering credentials:
TRAINING	YES	YES	SOMETIMES	YES	SOMETIMES	• Does the training simply teach you how to take the test?
ASSESSMENT: An exam with a set score for passing or failing	NO	YES	YES	YES	SOMETIMES	• Does the exam assess experience and competence, or merely retention of knowledge?
ACCREDITATION: An assessment by a third party of the quality and integrity of the credential (i.e., ISO 17024)	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	YES	YES	• Does the credential have independent accreditation from a third party?
CONTINUING EDUCATION: An ongoing education requirement, after the initial training and assessment	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	• Does the credential require ongoing education?
JOB TASK ANALYSIS: A study of the skills and knowledge used by actual practitioners of the credentialed field	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	• Is the credential based on real-world job requirements or simply a test of knowledge?

*Sources:

International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium
Institute for Credentialing Excellence
U.S. Federal Trade Commission
U.S. Department of Labor
EU Commission's Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

WHAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ARE IMPORTANT?

- Is the credentialing body for profit or not-for-profit?
- Is the credential local, regional, or global in scope? How broadly is it recognized and understood?
- Does the credentialing body offer continuing education for the credential?
- Does the credentialing body offer connection to a broader professional community?

WHY IS ACCREDITATION IMPORTANT?

An independent accreditation of a credential provides a high degree of assurance as to the substance and integrity of a certification program.

WHAT IS A "JOB TASK ANALYSIS" (JTA)?

A formal process to determine what professionals in a particular field do, under what conditions, and with what levels of knowledge and skill. A "JTA" is a requirement for accreditation under ISO 17024.