

No. 157

CERTIFICATION GUIDE

Microsoft Security Certifications Study Guide

SC-900, SC-200, SC-300, SC-401, SC-500 and SC-100 in plain language

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SECTRAININGNOW SERIES · NO. 157

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this guide

What this guide covers, who it is for, and how to use it.

Microsoft's security certifications follow job roles: fundamentals for everyone, associate exams for analysts, identity administrators, information security administrators and cloud security engineers, and an expert exam for architects. They test Microsoft Entra, Defender, Sentinel, Purview, Defender for Cloud and Security Copilot.

This guide covers **SC-900, SC-200, SC-300, SC-401, SC-500 and SC-100** in one place, including the 2026 changes: SC-500 replacing AZ-500, and updated exams in July 2026.

What this guide is, and is not

- An independent study companion written in its own words.
- **Not** official Microsoft material; it does not reproduce exam questions or the study guide text.
- Use each exam's official study guide on Microsoft Learn as your checklist; Microsoft updates them often.

Who this guide is for

- **Beginners** starting with SC-900.
- **SOC analysts, identity admins and cloud engineers** choosing an associate exam.
- **Architects** heading for SC-100.

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How the guide is organized

- **Part I — The certifications** (Chapters 1–7): the map, roles, changes, format, renewal, paths and a plan.
- **Part II — Fundamentals, operations and identity** (Chapters 8–20): SC-900, SC-200 and SC-300.
- **Part III — Data, cloud, AI and architecture** (Chapters 21–32): SC-401, SC-500 and SC-100.
- **Part IV — Exam success** (Chapters 33–39): practice questions, exam day and next steps.
- **Reference**: checklists, glossary and further reading.

Callouts

TIP
Practical study and exam advice.

IN PRACTICE
How a concept looks in a real Microsoft environment.

WATCH OUT
Common traps and misunderstandings.

KEY IDEA
The one thing to remember from a section.

A note on screens

Screens are **illustrations**, not real Microsoft portals or exam screens.

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PART I

The certifications

These chapters map the Microsoft security certifications and how to prepare.

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CHAPTER 1

The certification map

The family at a glance.



Figure 1.1 Microsoft security certification levels

Microsoft also offers SC-730, a business-focused cybersecurity credential for non-technical staff, which this guide does not cover in depth.

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CHAPTER 2

Exams and job roles

Exams and roles.

Exam	Role	Main products
SC-900	fundamentals	concepts across all
SC-200	security operations analyst	Defender XDR, Sentinel
SC-300	identity and access admin	Entra ID
SC-401	information security admin	Purview
SC-500	cloud and AI security engineer	Defender for Cloud, Azure
SC-100	cybersecurity architect	all, by design

Figure 2.1 The exams and the roles they fit

KEY IDEA

Pick the exam that matches the work you do or want to do.

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CHAPTER 3

Recent changes

What changed recently.



Figure 3.1 Recent changes

Replacements

- **SC-401** replaced SC-400 for information protection.
- **SC-500**, Cloud and AI Security Engineer Associate, replaced AZ-500, which retired on August 31, 2026.

WATCH OUT

Older roadmaps still mention SC-400 and AZ-500; study the current exams.

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CHAPTER 4

Exam format

Exam basics.

Item	Typical role-based exam
Time	about 100-120 minutes
Passing score	700 out of 1000
Question types	multiple choice, drag-and-drop, case studies
Validity	associate and expert: renew yearly
Renewal	free online assessment on Microsoft Learn

Figure 4.1 Microsoft exam basics

Some exams include case studies and, at times, labs. Check each exam's page for current details and price in your country.

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