Certification Handbook

This Certification Handbook will serve as the first source of information and provides individuals with the information needed to understand and complete the certification process. The Handbook is considered required reading for all candidates. All individuals who desire to become certified must comply with the policies, procedures, and deadlines laid out in this Handbook.

Statement of Impartiality

Palo Alto Networks Education Services understands the importance of impartiality and the consideration of any potential conflicts of interest in carrying out its certification activities. Palo Alto Networks commits itself to impartiality in its certification activities. Decisions on certification programs shall be made in accordance with established policies and procedures. Policies and procedures affecting applicants, candidates, and certified persons are made public to convey information fairly and accurately about the certification program. Palo Alto Networks is committed to identifying and assessing risks in all related certification activities that may result in a conflict of interest or pose a threat to impartiality.

Palo Alto Networks applies the following principles to maintain impartiality:

- Objectivity
- Neutrality
- Fairness
- Equality

Scheduling a Palo Alto Networks Exam

How to Schedule Your Exam with Pearson

Sign in or create an account with Pearson.

Use your legal name as displayed on your government-issued ID, and use your business email address as your primary address. Without linking your business email address, your company is unable to track certifications required for partner status. If you need to change your business email address at any time, make the change in your Pearson profile.

Log in to your account, select an exam, select a Pearson test center location, then register for a day and time.

Exam appointments may be made in advance or on the day you wish to test, subject to availability. The exam time limit noted on Pearson web pages reflects the total appointment time, which includes reading and accepting the Palo Alto Networks Candidate Agreement and the actual exam time.

Pearson Test Centers

Pearson offers test centers globally to accommodate in-person testing. You must agree to follow Pearson's test center guidelines to sit for an exam in a Pearson test center. Please review the Pearson Candidate Rules Agreement.

Pearson Minor Requirements

Candidates under 18 years old

During check-in, a parent / guardian must present their own ID and give consent for the candidate to be recorded. Candidates must also present government-issued ID if they have one, or student ID if they do not have a government-issued ID.

Pearson Test Accommodations

How to Request Test Accommodations

Palo Alto Networks Credentialing Support handles requests for test accommodations.

Contact certification@paloaltonetworks.com, describe your need for test accommodations, and list the details of the exam you are planning to take (including name of exam and where you want to take it). Palo Alto Networks Credentialing Support will then work with Pearson to schedule your exam.

Additional information on test accommodations is located on the Pearson Test Accommodations page.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Accommodation

All exams are delivered worldwide in English. A 30-minute time extension is provided by default to candidates testing in non-English speaking countries.

Pearson Identification (ID) Requirements

The most current identification requirements and examples of acceptable forms of identification are located in the Pearson Global ID Policy.

*If candidates have questions about the ID they are required to bring to the testing center for admittance for an exam, please contact Pearson Customer Service. Any candidate exceptions to the ID policy must be pre-approved by the Pearson customer service center at least three business days before the scheduled exam appointment.

Pearson Exam Policies

Cancellation Policy

If you wish to cancel your exam, you must contact Pearson 48 hours prior to your exam appointment. Canceling an exam less than 48 hours before a scheduled appointment is subject to a same-day forfeiture of exam fees. Exam fees are due for no-shows.

Reschedule Policy

If you wish to reschedule your exam, you must contact Pearson 48 hours prior to your exam appointment. Rescheduling an exam less than 48 hours before a scheduled exam is subject to a same-day forfeiture of exam fees. Exam fees are due for no-shows.

Visit your exam program's homepage at Pearson and sign in. Select the exam you would like to reschedule or cancel from "Upcoming Appointments." You will receive an email confirming any changes to your appointment. Do not forget to click "Confirm Reschedule" on the final screen to ensure that your changes have been saved.

Exam Overview

How Are Exams Developed?

Palo Alto Networks follows industry standards and best practices to create and update all exams. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are involved in every step of the exam development process, which is overseen by Palo Alto Networks

testing professionals. Palo Alto Networks exams contain a variety of questions or item types that require you to use your knowledge, skills, or experience to select the best answer.

Pretest Questions

Palo Alto Networks is committed to offering exams that contain up-to-date and relevant content. We achieve this goal by reviewing current questions and developing new ones to reflect changes in the profession. All exams may include new questions that have not been used on previous versions of the exam. These items are known as "pretest" questions.

Palo Alto Networks includes pretest questions in its exams to gather valuable data about the new questions before they are included and scored in future tests. Pretest questions are not distinguished from other questions on the exam. Pretest questions are scattered throughout the exam, so you will answer them with the same care with which you would answer scored questions. Pretest questions are not included on your score report, nor are they included in determining the final exam score.

How Are Passing Scores Determined?

The passing scores for certification programs are established by the Certification Committee through a psychometrically valid standard setting process. During this process, a task force of SMEs discusses the minimum level of competence that is required to pass the examination and obtain the credential. After evaluating and analyzing the difficulty of each question, as well as the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that a minimally qualified candidate (MQC) possesses, a raw cut score (i.e., passing score) is set for that particular exam form. This then becomes the standard for that program. As new exam forms are created, equating is done to adjust the passing score as needed to account for any differences in form difficulty.

What Is a Scaled Score?

A scaled score is a representation of the total number of correct questions a candidate has answered (raw score) that has been converted into a consistent and standardized scale. Scaled scoring is a certification industry best practice for reporting high stakes exam scores, used to account for the potential differences in difficulty across numerous exam forms.

For ALL Palo Alto Networks Certification exams, the converted raw passing score is 860 on a scale of 300 to 1000.

Why Use Scaled Scoring?

Scaled scoring is used for fair and consistent decisions to be made on exam results, and scores should be comparable. This means that scores from different exam forms should indicate the same level of performance regardless of which exam form a candidate is presented. Scaled scoring will take into account any variability in difficulty between exam forms. Test developers adhere to strict test specifications when developing multiple exam forms to ensure the forms are similar in difficulty. For this reason, percent-correct scores do not always represent a fair comparison of different forms. For the same reason, raw scores cannot be used, as two candidates with the same raw score on different forms could demonstrate different levels of performance relative to the difficulty of the individual exam forms. A scaled score provides a standard range for candidates and allows direct and fair comparisons of results from one exam form to another.

Exam Day

Pearson Resources

Please review Pearson's Exam resources and FAQs before and on exam day.

After the Exam

Exam Scoring and Official Score Report

All items are computer-scored and verified before exam results are provided. All scoring procedures are tested and verified before they are implemented.

All certification exam results are considered provisional until the review process has been completed. Once an exam has cleared data forensics, exam results will be released, and candidates will be contacted via the email address provided at registration. If your exam results do not clear data forensics, you will also be contacted via the same email address.

The score report notifies candidates that, regardless of pass or fail results, an exam score may be revised at any time after testing if there is evidence of misconduct, scoring inaccuracies, or aberrant response patterns. To obtain official exam results, candidates and their employers must verify scores online.

The score report includes your Provisional Pass / Fail status. For candidates who were not successful, their score report will show the status of "Fail" and provide performance information on the various sections of the exam. If you do not pass the exam, use the details on the score report to identify areas requiring additional study and hands-on experience. Additionally, you may refer to the exam blueprint for a description of the content measured on the exam.

Exam and candidate information can be found in the Certification Management System.

Data Forensics

The Palo Alto Networks Security Team uses data forensics (i.e., statistical evidence to indicate improper activity during an exam) as a basis for enforcement and action. Palo Alto Networks certifications measure professional competency via statistically vetted, high-stakes examinations. Those candidates demonstrating proficiency by achieving a valid passing score are issued a Palo Alto Networks certification. Palo Alto Networks performs ongoing maintenance and statistical analysis, including data forensics. If the validity of an exam score is brought into question due to statistical anomalies identified during analysis, Palo Alto Networks may invalidate candidate scores and notify you of applicable invalidations and / or suspensions.

Rescoring

All items are computer-scored and verified before exam scores are provided. All scoring procedures are tested and verified before they are implemented. Therefore, further rescoring is not offered.

How to Claim Your Badge

Showcase your accomplishment by creating an account in Credly (or accessing your existing account) to claim your digital certification badge.

Once your badge is enabled, you can:

- Add it to your email signature
- Share it to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn

Exam Retake Policy

In the event that you fail your 1st attempt to pass any Palo Alto Networks certification exam, Palo Alto Networks requires:

- 15-day waiting period between the 1st failed attempt and the 2nd attempt
- 30-day waiting period between the 2nd failed attempt and the 3rd attempt
- 90-day waiting period between the 3rd failed attempt and any subsequent attempt thereafter

If you passed an exam and achieved a certification, you cannot take an exam for the same certification for 18 months (545 days) from the date you passed the exam.

Recertification Policy

Palo Alto Networks requires recertification through examination. Our certifications are valid for two years from the date you pass the exam. You must wait 18 months (545 days) from the date you passed an exam before you can take another exam for the same certification. In order to keep your credential in active status, you must recertify by retaking the exam prior to your expiration date.

Recertification Pathway

Attainment of a higher-level certification will automatically recertify your active lower-level certification(s) in the same track. The levels are as follows in order of highest to lowest:

- Architect
- Specialist (includes Analyst and Engineer)
- Professional
- Foundational (includes Apprentice and Practitioner)

For example, obtaining a Network Security Analyst certification will extend the expiration dates of your Network Security Professional, Cybersecurity Practitioner, and / or Cybersecurity Apprentice certifications by two years. The lower-level certifications must be active at the time the higher-level exam is taken and passed, and they must reside in the same track.

Exam Security Support

Palo Alto Networks takes the security of our certification exams seriously. One of our primary goals is to ensure the highest integrity of exam content and fairness for all candidates during the delivery of Palo Alto Networks certification exams. In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the Palo Alto Networks certification program, we have adopted procedures to report any behavior that could be considered as compromising the integrity or confidentiality of any Palo Alto Networks certification examination.

To report an incident anonymously, send an email to examsecurity@paloaltonetworks.com.

Please reach out to report any of the following activities:

- Cheating and / or suspicious behavior observed at a test site during the delivery of a Palo Alto Networks exam
- Use of unauthorized training materials by candidates taking Palo Alto Networks exams, whether acting alone or in collusion with others
- Candidates taking photos or making copies of Palo Alto Networks exam questions or exam materials
- Individuals posting Palo Alto Networks exam content on any public internet site or distributing printed copies at conferences or other public forums
- Misconduct by an authorized proctor or test center administrator (e.g., assisting candidates by providing answers or allowing candidates to engage in prohibited activities)
- Concerns about impartiality or objectivity in testing

In the event your feedback is found to be actionable, the Certification team will take appropriate measures.

Unauthorized Training Materials

Palo Alto Networks defines unauthorized training materials as a source—a website, PDF file, social media page, chat session, etc.—that contains certification exam content. The content included in unauthorized training materials is exactly the same or substantially similar to questions appearing on a Palo Alto Networks certification exam. All Palo Alto Networks exam content is considered the intellectual property of Palo Alto Networks, and as such, is protected by copyright laws. Additionally, Palo Alto Networks exam content is never released to the general public. Therefore, if exam content was fraudulently obtained, using such unauthorized materials to prepare for a Palo Alto Networks exam

constitutes cheating. Providers of such unauthorized materials are in violation of Palo Alto Networks' intellectual property rights, Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), and Candidate Agreements.

If you are ever unsure whether the training material you are using is authorized or unauthorized, please contact examsecurity@paloaltonetworks.com with your question or inquiry.

Consequences for Candidates Caught Using Unauthorized Training Materials

Despite a candidate's knowledge of whether content is considered authorized or unauthorized training material, if a candidate memorizes unauthorized content in order to pass an exam, and Palo Alto Networks discovers that this occurred, the candidate will be banned from taking Palo Alto Networks exams for at least 12 months and lose any relevant Palo Alto Networks certification(s). In addition, their test score(s) will be invalidated. As mentioned above, these actions will be taken even if the candidate did not have fraudulent intentions.

If you think you have discovered a site or provider that appears to be selling or distributing unauthorized training materials containing Palo Alto Networks exam content, please inform Palo Alto Networks by sending an email message to examsecurity@paloaltonetworks.com.

Confidentiality of Examination Materials

Examination Materials are the proprietary, confidential, and copyrighted materials of Palo Alto Networks. Any disclosure of the contents of any Palo Alto Networks certification examination is strictly prohibited. You agree to maintain the confidentiality of all Examination Materials, and you agree not to disclose, publish, reproduce, distribute, post, or remove from the examination room any portion of the Examination Materials. Violators of copyright law are subject to injunctions, civil liability, forfeiture of profits, punitive damages, and other legal sanctions. Palo Alto Networks will take appropriate legal action against you to protect Palo Alto Networks' rights if you breach the provisions of this Section or any applicable laws.

You will not participate in any cheating incident, breach of security, misconduct, or any other behavior that could be considered a compromise of the integrity or confidentiality of any Palo Alto Networks certification examination or any Palo Alto Networks certification. Such behaviors will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Disseminating actual Exam content by any means, including, but not limited to: web postings, formal or informal test preparation or discussion groups, chat rooms, reconstruction through memorization, study guides, or any other method
- Copying, publishing, selling, offering to sell, distributing in any way, or otherwise transferring, modifying, making derivative works of, reverse engineering, decompiling, disassembling, or translating any Exam or any part thereof
- Seeking and / or obtaining unauthorized access to Examination Materials, including use of "brain dump" material and / or any unauthorized publication of Exam questions with or without answers
- Using falsified or altered certificates, score reports, or other documents or electronic media to misrepresent certification status
- Providing falsified information, documentation, or statements as a means of a false identity, false address, or solicitation of someone to take a test on another's behalf
- Violating the Palo Alto Networks exam retake policy
- Altering or misrepresenting examination scores
- Allowing another person, or an organization in which you are not actively involved, to use your certification credentials to obtain employment or promotions
- Otherwise violating the terms of the Palo Alto Networks Candidate Agreement, Certification Exam Policies, or Certification Handbook

Palo Alto Networks Disciplinary Policy

If it is determined that you have violated the Palo Alto Networks Candidate Agreement, then Palo Alto Networks will send you a written notice of violations and applicable sanctions, which may include:

- Written notice of exam policies
- Invalidation of certification exam results without receiving a refund or any other form of compensation
- Required retake of the exam by redeeming a voucher provided by Palo Alto Networks. Palo Alto Networks will determine the criteria for retaking the exam, including how and where the exam may be administered and a deadline by which the retake must occur
- Restriction of exam delivery modality for future certification exam(s)
- Revocation of the certification related to the violation
- Revocation of any or all Palo Alto Networks certifications
- Prohibition from participating in the Palo Alto Networks certification program for a limited or indefinite period of time
- Being subject to any and all other appropriate action, including legal remedies, that Palo Alto Networks deems necessary or appropriate to enforce the terms of this Agreement
- Employees of Palo Alto Networks who disregard or fail to comply with this Candidate Agreement could be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including (immediate) dismissal, depending on its nature and seriousness of the conduct. The disciplinary process and sanction will be decided according to applicable law and company policies.

Appeals Policy

Notification of Violations of Policy and Possible Sanctions

If Palo Alto Networks determines that any candidate has violated the terms and agreements included in this policy, written notice of the violations and applicable sanctions will be sent to the candidate. The candidate will have an opportunity to provide information relevant to the evaluation of the allegation. It is the candidate's sole responsibility to ensure that Palo Alto Networks has their current contact information, including mailing address and email address.

After a candidate has received a written notice of violations and applicable sanctions from Palo Alto Networks, including by email, such candidate will have thirty (30) calendar days from delivery of said written notice to file a written request for appeal pursuant to Palo Alto Networks' Candidate Appeals Process. The candidate is required to file a written request for appeal with Palo Alto Networks, along with a statement describing the grounds for the appeal, a statement of why the appeal should be granted, and ALL supporting evidence, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the notice of violations and applicable sanctions from Palo Alto Networks. A candidate's appeal will not be considered after such thirty (30) calendar day period has expired.

If Palo Alto Networks determines that a written request for appeal is filed in a timely manner and upholds Palo Alto Networks' original decision, such appeal and the information submitted by the candidate will be submitted for binding arbitration to the Candidate Appeals Committee. Three (3) members of the Candidate Appeals Committee will be appointed to act as an arbitration panel for the appeal. This appeals process shall not address any failures to pass any Palo Alto Networks certification examination, nor include any challenges to individual examination questions, answers, or failing scores.

The arbitration panel will deliberate and decide on the appeal. The decision of the majority of the members of the arbitration panel present at the hearing for the appeal, at which a quorum is present, will be the decision of such panel. The decision of the arbitration panel is final and binding as to all matters related to the appeal.