
SAS Certification: Is It For You?



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INTRODUCTION

The SAS Certified Professional Program was introduced at SUGI in 1999. Since its inception many programmers have become SAS certified, some take a formal training class to prepare, others just take the exams, in addition there are numerous professionals who are SAS savvy but not SAS certified! To date there are over 5000 certified professionals in over 40 countries. This poster will provide an overview of SAS certification with focus on the programming tracks, and will include the current training options available through SAS institute as well as other vendors. The benefits and limitations of certification as well as ideas for future training will also be explored.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CERTIFICATION TRACK	EXAMS REQUIRED
Base Programmer	SAS Base Programming
Advanced Programmer	SAS Base Programming SAS Advanced Programming
SAS Certified Web AF Developer: Server side	SAS Advanced Programming SAS Web/AF Server-side Application Development
SAS Certified Warehouse Development Specialist	SAS Advanced Programming SAS Warehouse Technology SAS Warehouse Development Specialist Concepts
SAS Certified Warehouse Architect	SAS Warehouse Technology SAS Warehouse Architect Concepts

TRAINING from SAS Inst.

1. Certification test questions available on the SAS website
2. Practice exam: Available for Base & Advanced courses
3. Prep Guide Book: For Base Programming exam
4. Instructor Led SAS Training Classes
5. Live Web Classes - to prepare for certification
6. E-Learning Courses for Base and Advanced exams:
 - E-learning is a series of interactive exercises
 - Fun and practical online educational tool!
 - Short SAS tests to reinforce learning
 - Includes full practice exam at the end
 - Self paced course / no instructor
 - Available for 180 days after registration

□ <http://support.sas.com/certify/>

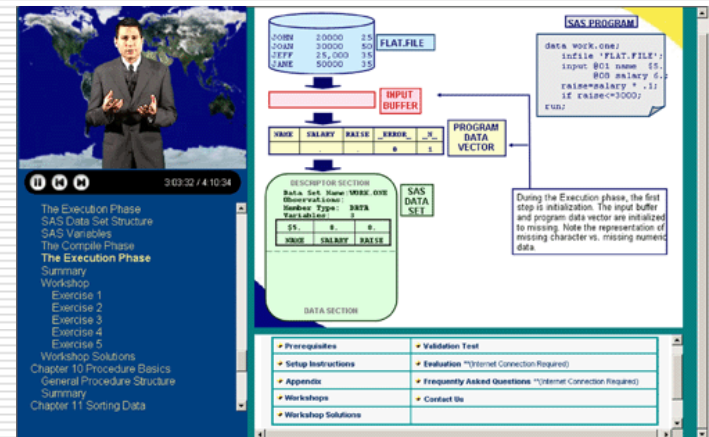


TRAINING from DESTINY

In addition to SAS Institute courses and on the job training there are also other options available to prepare for certification. If you prefer to receive training from an instructor but cannot attend a SAS class, or if you need something a little more engaging and animated, you may want to look into the Destiny Virtual Learning training software. These courses allow you to:

- See & hear an instructor -->
- Perform hands on workshops
- Review live software demonstrations
- And you can contact an instructor!

This training can be accessed thro the web or on a CD and also includes course books and real world discussions.



<http://www.Vdestiny.com/certification.html>

THE EXAM

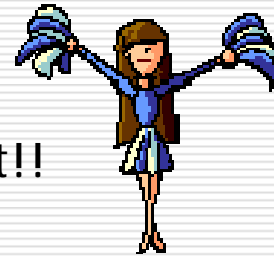
All exams are multiple choice and approximately 2 hours Long. The exams are administered by Thomson Prometric and can be booked using the following procedures...

- You can go to www.prometric.com
- Or call (888) 895-5819



Once You Pass...

- The results are immediate!!
- You receive a welcome pack in the post!!
- Includes SAS Certificate of completion
- SAS Certified Professional logo



WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

As an experienced programmer already established in industry, you may be wondering, why would I want to get certified, what's in it for me? this is what I asked myself when I first decided to take the exam! To answer this question I decided to develop a short SAS Survey which I sent to various SAS users so that I could find out what other people were thinking. This survey was conducted via email in December 2004 (please see paper for full details of the survey & results).

I obtained feedback via email from the following users:

- SAS Consultants
- SAS Managers
- Permanent Employees

Feedback was also obtained thro' SAS-L distribution list. A brief summary of results from SAS users and managers follows on the next two slides.

Please note: As this was a short survey conducted over a limited time I can only provide a flavor of current thoughts and opinions within the SAS User community. In addition the majority of feedback was from users in the Pharmaceutical/Biotech industry and from SAS-L users, there were also a few people from academia.

Feedback from SAS Users

Certification demonstrates SAS competency across broad range of topics	"Certification adds little value, work experience is more important"
Some were curious about the program but nervous about taking more exams	Can learn new skills and concepts through the certification training
Some graduates were able to secure a permanent job after completing one or more of the certifications	"This is not mandatory job requirement, so why do I need to do this?"
Others indicated.. "I'm interested but don't know much about the program"	Programming exams should include a statistics track and some graphics

Feedback from Managers

GENERAL FEEDBACK	FEEDBACK ON NEW HIRES
Most managers were open to supporting employees interested in pursuing certification	"Certification adds value but experience is more important"
An employee with certification could bring new or different perspectives to their work	"Ability to meet deadlines, team work, attitude, communication skills, etc also important"
Some did not know much about the program or exams required	"Technical interview, is more specific to the job and provides more relevant information"
Some were either strongly against certification, could see no reason for it, or impartial	"In certification you are not presented with a business problem and asked to solve it"

Future Training Ideas?

- Statistics track / SAS GRAPH
 - This could be a useful addition to the program as currently the Advanced certification track does not include anything on SAS graph or complex stats – would be useful in Biotech industry.

 - Specialized Training?
 - Industry specific certification tracks such as the online course “Essentials of Programming in the Pharmaceutical Industry” could help new graduates obtain a job in a specific industry.

 - How about a diploma in SAS?
 - This may be of value to those who don't have a computer science or statistics qualification and would address the need for a practical 'on-the-job' training component, which is currently not measured in certification and is widely regarded by SAS Institute and users as necessary part of the training.
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CONCLUSION

- This was an independent and fairly short review of SAS certification by just one user (me) with some feedback from others. I hope you are now better informed about the benefits and limitations of certification, a few of the possible training options available and whether this is the right educational tool for your career development.

 - Due to limited time and resource I could only produce a brief summary of broad based results based on a small sample size of 30 users. I did not obtain feedback from anyone who took the 3 specialized certification tracks. In addition I did not have time to explore all the different training options available to prepare for the exams.

 - I enjoyed writing this paper and gathering feedback from other users on this topic however a larger survey across a wider audience with more questions would probably produce a more robust set of results. Perhaps this is something SAS Institute (or you!) could investigate for a future conference....?

 - **For further questions please Email: Sarbjit@gene.com**
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USEFUL READING...

Below are some of the papers I found useful whilst researching this topic:

- ❑ Ruth Talbot (SAS Views 2004) The SAS Certified Professional Program: What's in it for me?
- ❑ Linda A, Althouse, PhD, Marc Vaglio-Laurin Paper 245-28: An Overview of SAS Certification and the Test Development Process (SUGI 2003)
- ❑ Paul C Winters and Michael E Tomb (NESUG 2004) SAS Certification: What you need to know about how we did it!

I would also like to thank my manager Pete Yribar and colleague Lauren Haworth for their support and all the users, managers and consultants who provided feedback to the survey (please read my paper for full details on the survey).

And for more information on courses please go to...

<http://support.sas.com/certify>

<http://www.Vdestiny.com/certification.html>
