

AWS Education Competency

Consulting Partner Validation Checklist

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Introduction

The goal of the AWS Competency Program is to recognize APN Partners who demonstrate technical proficiency and proven customer success in specialized solution areas. The Competency Partner Validation Checklist is intended for APN Partners who are interested in applying for AWS Competency. This checklist provides the criteria necessary to achieve the designation under the AWS Competency Program. APN Partners undergo an audit of their capabilities upon applying for the specific Competency. AWS leverages in-house expertise and a third-party firm to facilitate the audit. AWS reserves the right to make changes to this document at any time.

Expectations of Parties

It is expected that APN Partners will review this document in detail before submitting an application for the AWS Competency Program, even if all of the prerequisites are met. If items in this document are unclear and require further explanation, please contact your Partner Development Representative (PDR) or Partner Development Manager (PDM) as the first step. Your PDR/PDM will contact the Program Office if further assistance is required.

When ready to submit a program application, APN Partners should complete the Partner Self-Assessment column of the AWS Competency Program Validation Checklist set forth below in this document.

To submit your application:

1. Log in to the [APN Partner Central](https://partnercentral.awspartner.com/) (<https://partnercentral.awspartner.com/>), as Alliance Lead
2. Select "View My APN Account" from the left side of the page
3. Scroll to "Program Details" section
4. Select "Update" next to AWS Competency you wish to apply for
5. Fill out Program Application and Click "Submit"
6. Email completed Self-Assessment to competency-checklist@amazon.com

If you have any questions regarding the above instructions, please contact your APN Partner Development Representative/Manager.

AWS will review and aim to respond back with any questions within five (5) business days to initiate scheduling of your audit or to request additional information.

APN Partners should prepare for the audit by reading the Validation Checklist, completing a self-assessment using the checklist, and gathering and organizing objective evidence to share with the auditor on the day of the audit.

AWS recommends that APN Partners have individuals who are able to speak in-depth to the requirements during the audit. The best practice is for the APN Partner to make the following personnel available for the audit: one or more highly technical AWS certified engineers/architects, an operations manager who is responsible for the operations and support elements, and a business development executive to conduct the overview presentation.

AWS Education Competency Program Prerequisites

AWS Education Competency Partners provide solutions to, or have deep experience working with Educators to help them implement continuous integration and continuous delivery practices or helping them automate infrastructure provisioning and management with configuration management tools on AWS.

The following items will be validated by the AWS Competency Program Manager; missing or incomplete information must be addressed prior to scheduling of the validation review.

1.0 APN Program Requirements		Met Y/N
1.1 Program Guidelines	The APN Partner must read the Program Guidelines and Definitions before applying to the Education Competency Program. Click here for Program details	
1.2 Consulting Partner Tier	APN Partner must be an Advanced tier or above APN Consulting Partner before applying to the Education Competency Program.	
1.3 Program Membership	APN Partner must be a member of the Public Sector Partner Program (PSP).	
2.0 AWS Case Studies		Met Y/N
2.1 Education-Specific Case Studies	<p>APN Partner must have four (4) AWS Case Studies specific to completed Education projects; two (2) of these case studies must be publicly referenceable case studies.</p> <p>APN Partner must provide the following information for each reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of the customer Problem statement/definition What you proposed How AWS services were used as part of the solution Third party applications or solutions used Start and end dates of project (References must be for projects started within the past 18 months, and must be for projects that are in production*, rather than in pilot or proof of concept stage) Outcome(s)/results <p>This information will be requested as part of the Program Application process in APN Partner Central.</p> <p>Note: Case studies must be for projects that are in production, rather than in pilot or proof of concept stage. Projects that are still in development stage will not be accepted, except: if a project was in a pilot stage and the APN Partner can provide evidence that the customer ultimately rejected the project, ending its development, it will be considered.</p>	
2.2 Publicly Available Case Studies	<p>2.2.1 Two (2) of the four (4) AWS case studies <u>must be public</u>; evidence must be in the form of publicly available case studies, white papers, or blog posts.</p> <p>2.2.2 Public case studies must be easily discoverable on the APN Partner’s website, e.g., must be able to navigate to the case study from the APN Partner’s home page. APN Partner must provide link to these references.</p> <p>Note: For best practice on how to write an accepted Public Case Study See Here.</p> <p>2.2.3 Public case studies must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to the customer name, APN Partner Name, and AWS Problem statement/definition What you proposed How AWS services were used as part of the solution Outcome(s)/results <p>Note: Public case studies are used by AWS upon approval into the Competency to showcase the APN Partner’s demonstrated success in the practice area and provide customers with confidence that APN Partner has the experience and knowledge needed to develop and deliver solutions to meet their objectives.</p>	

3.0 AWS Education Practice and Focus		Met Y/N
3.1 Education Partner Practice	<p>AWS customers are looking for expertise in the development and delivery of Education solutions on AWS; an APN Partner’s internet presence specific to their AWS Education practice provides customers with confidence about the APN Partner’s Education capabilities and experience.</p> <p>APN Partner must have a landing page that describes their AWS Education practice, AWS solutions and Competency use cases, technology solutions, links to AWS case studies, and any other relevant information supporting the APN Partner’s expertise related to Education and highlighting the work on AWS.</p> <p>APN Partner must have a reference architecture for all Education use cases which is optimized for security, reliability, performance, cost optimization, and operational excellence in keeping with AWS best practices as outlined in the AWS Well Architected Framework.</p> <p><i>Note: For best practice on how to build an accepted APN Partner Practice Landing Page See Here.</i></p>	
4.0 APN Partner Self-Assessment		Met Y/N
4.1 AWS Competency Partner Program Validation Checklist Self-Assessment	<p>APN Partner must conduct a self-assessment of their compliance to the requirements of the AWS Education Consulting Partner Validation Checklist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ APN Partner must complete all sections of the checklist. ▪ Completed self-assessment must be emailed to competency-checklist@amazon.com, using the following convention for the email subject line: “[APN Partner Name], Education Competency Consulting Partner Completed Self-Assessment.” ▪ It is recommended that APN Partner has their Solutions Architect or Partner Development Manager (PDM) review the completed self-assessment before submitting to AWS. The purpose of this is to ensure the APN Partner’s AWS team is engaged and working to provide recommendations prior to the audit and to help ensure a positive audit experience. 	

AWS Education Consulting Partner Validation Checklist

In preparation for the validation process, APN Partner should become familiar with the items outlined in this checklist and prepare objective evidence, including but not limited to: prepared demonstration to show capabilities, process documentation, and/or actual customer examples. APN Partners are not limited to the four (4) references submitted as part of the prerequisite process but should be prepared to describe how the new references meets the minimum acceptable criteria for an AWS Education reference if being used during the validation. References that incorporate more than one applicable technology or solution may be submitted under multiple solution categories below.

The AWS Competency Program is guided by [AWS best practices](#) and [Well Architected Framework](#).

1.0 Education Practice Overview		Met Y/N
1.1 Customer Presentation	<p>APN Partner has a company overview presentation that sets the stage for customer conversations about their AWS Education capabilities and showcases APN Partner’s demonstration capabilities.</p> <p>Presentation contains information about the APN Partner’s AWS Education capabilities, including AWS-specific differentiators, e.g., what is unique about the APN Partner’s practice that can only be accomplished leveraging AWS.</p> <p>Overview presentations contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Company history ▪ Office locations ▪ Number of employees ▪ Customer profile, including number and size of customers, including industry ▪ Overview of Education Philosophy, Practices, and Tools <p>Evidence must be in the form of a presentation delivered by a business development executive at the beginning of the validation session and should be limited to 15 minutes.</p>	
1.2 Maintaining AWS Expertise	<p>APN Partner can describe how they stay current on AWS Services/tools.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of a verbal description on enablement materials leveraged by APN Partner to stay current on AWS services and features.</p>	
1.3 Education Solution Selling	<p>APN Partner can describe how Education opportunities are identified, how their sellers are trained to identify and sell those opportunities, and specific demand generation/lead generation efforts associated to their AWS Education practice.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of a verbal or written description how partners engage with customers, their internal sellers, and AWS sellers if applicable.</p>	
1.4 AWS Sales Engagement	<p>APN Partner can describe how and when they engage with AWS sellers and AWS Solutions Architects.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of a verbal or written description of how and when they engage AWS sellers or Solutions Architects on an opportunity or in the form of a demonstration of the AWS Opportunity Management tool with sales qualified opportunities submitted (sales qualified = budget, authority, need, timeline, and competition fields completed).</p>	
1.5 End of Project Customer Satisfaction Survey	<p>APN Partner asks customer to complete AWS Customer Satisfaction Survey at the end of the project. This is accomplished by searching for the APN Partner in the AWS Partner Solutions Finder and asking Customer to leverage the “Rate this Partner” feature.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of a demonstration to show where the “Rate this Partner” feature is located on the AWS Partner Solutions Finder and proof of implementation of this process.</p>	

2.0 Solution Design		Met Y/N	Notes
2.1 Solution Capabilities	APN Partner demonstrates that during customer engagements, a complete detailed design document is delivered such that customers and APN Partner are both assured that due diligence, capacity planning, architectural review, and long-term operational process have been assessed for the customer engagement.		
	APN Partner must provide detailed design documents for the four (4) submitted Customer References. Design documents contain the following components:		
	2.1.1 Documentation of customer requirements		
	2.1.2 Assessment of current infrastructure/application environment		
	2.1.3 Architectural details of the proposed design		

3.0 Security		Met Y/N	Notes
The security pillar focuses on protecting information and systems. Key topics include confidentiality and integrity of data, identifying and managing who can do what with privilege management, protecting systems, and establishing controls to detect security events.			
3.1 Identity and Access Management	APN Partner has a documented Access Management Strategy and leverages those practices as a key aspect to their Education solution for customers, including but not limited to: AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) users, federated roles, AWS Security Token Service (AWS STS) credentials, access keys, console passwords, and hardware or virtual multi-factor authentication (MFA) devices.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of a technology demonstration and process documentation that address the above requirements.		
3.2 Protection of Root Account Credentials	APN Partner does not administer AWS accounts by use of root account credentials and teaches this to customers.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of a technology demonstration and documentation describing this as a best practice.		
3.3 Least Privilege Principle	APN Partner has system that provides access to customer resources to its engineers based on the principle of least privilege and makes this a key component of customer security best practices. Customers have a process for defining and maintaining the appropriate level of access is in place. Access to critical or sensitive data (as defined by the customer) is further controlled by multi-factor or quorum authentication with access-based alerts.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of a demonstration of internal capabilities and processes for maintaining least privilege access policies.		
3.4 Multi-Factor Authentication	APN Partner ensures that multi-factor authentication is activated on all APN Partner and customer AWS root accounts and that this is taught to customers as part of the AWS Government methodologies.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be provided showing of the use of technology for regular auditing of accounts for MFA activation (e.g., using AWS Trusted Advisor) and must show policies and process for activation of MFA on new AWS root accounts.		
3.5 Communication of Security Best Practices	APN Partner ensures customers understand AWS security processes and technologies as outlined in https://aws.amazon.com/whitepapers/aws-security-best-practices/		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of onboarding and governance documents provided to customers that specifically cover customer security considerations in the APN Partner's environment.		
3.6 Protection of Customer Systems from Attacks	APN Partner has security policies and procedures to protect its customers' systems from attacks.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of security policies and procedures.		
3.7 SOC implementation and Incident Response Best Practices	APN Partner can advise on the design, implementation, and enablement of a SOC. APN Partner provides customers the ability to detect, respond, forensically investigate, and remediate/recover from incidents. APN Partner must have the ability to analyze AWS telemetry including AWS CloudTrail, Amazon GuardDuty Findings, AWS WAF Logs, AWS S3 Access Logs, Amazon VPC Flow Logs, as well as		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP

	OS and Application logs. APN Partner must have the ability to integrate these security workflows, alerts, and logs into a centralized SIEM and ticketing system.		
	Evidence must be provided in the form of standard IR playbooks and demonstration of automated response plan or best practice documentation.		
3.8 Application and Operating System Hardening	APN Partner can provide industry best practices for hardening and configuring applications and operating systems to industry standards or vendor best practices. As an example, this may be to CIS standards or mandating that an application is only using FIPS-certified software libraries.		Not eligible for waiver
	Evidence must be in the form of automated scripts and/or documentation that includes the processes and steps taken to achieve the hardening.		
3.9 Encryption at Rest and in-transit	APN Partner uses best practices to encrypt all sensitive information at-rest, and in-transit including personally identifiable information (PII). For example, at rest encryption using native AWS encryption capabilities, such as server-side encryption with AWS managed keys or AWS KMS. In-transit using secure protocols such as HTTPS, IPsec, and SFTP.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of documentation such as a design document. Documentation should include capabilities to monitor, alert, and remediate where applicable when there is configuration drift.		
3.10 Detective Controls	Activity is monitored appropriately, including by maintenance of logs for capturing performance and security event data, e.g., CloudWatch logs, events, GuardDuty, CloudTrail, VPC Flow Logs, ELB logs, S3 bucket logs, etc.		Not eligible for waiver
	Evidence must be in the form of an example of logs maintained, including demonstration that logs are retained per customer-agreed retention periods.		
3.11 Configuration Drift	APN Partner has processes and methodologies to conduct AWS resource inventory, configuration history, and configuration change notifications to enable security and governance. If AWS Config is not used, APN Partner can show documented processes and provide technical demonstration of how policies are managed, and the methods used to automate these functions.		Not eligible for waiver
	Evidence must be in the form of technology demonstration and process documentation provided to customer as part of their Education conversion.		

4.0 Reliability		Met Y/N	Notes
4.1 Service Availability	APN Partner has process to determine service availability needs for customers. See AWS Reliability Pillar whitepaper for specific considerations and guidance on how to calculate service availability with downstream dependencies.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of verbal description and/or process documentation.		
4.2 Application Availability	APN Partner designs applications according to customer needs, factoring in cost of building/maintaining that application to the desired availability levels.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of verbal description and/or APN partner documentation leveraged in design process.		
4.3 Monitoring Systems	APN Partner has introduced or modernized a monitoring system that supports software-defined infrastructure and is integrated with deployment and build mechanisms. Monitoring system should also introduce success criteria measurement.		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
	Evidence must be in the form of a customer implementation, such as design documentation for monitoring.		
4.4 Automation and Infrastructure as Code	APN Partner has demonstrated competency in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging infrastructure-as-code tools such as AWS CloudFormation to automate the deployment of AWS services Building and running continuous integration and continuous deployment pipelines in AWS. 		Not eligible for waiver
	Evidence must be in the form of a customer implementation, such as CloudFormation Templates, architecture diagram for CI/CD pipeline.		

5.0 Performance Efficiency

For this section, APN Partner must select two (2) of the four (4) submitted customer case studies and discuss performance efficiency considerations for both examples.

The performance efficiency pillar focuses on using IT and computing resources efficiently. Key topics include selecting the right resource types and sizes based on workload requirements, monitoring performance, and making informed decisions to maintain efficiency as business needs evolve.

Customer Case Studies for Performance Efficiency Considerations Selection		[Insert Case Study #1 Here]	[Insert Case Study #2 Here]
5.1 Compute	<p>APN Partner to describe considerations for how they select the right AWS compute options specifically outlining choice of instances, containers, services and functions.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided in the form of verbal description as it relates to two (2) of the four (4) submitted customer case studies.</p>		
5.2 Storage	<p>APN Partner to describe considerations for how they select the right AWS Storage options specifically outlining access method, pattern of access, throughput required, frequency of access, frequency of update, and availability and durability constraints.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided in the form of verbal description as it relates to two (2) of the four (4) submitted customer case studies.</p>		
5.3 Database	<p>APN Partner to describe considerations for how they select the right AWS database options specifically outlining requirements for availability, consistency, partition tolerance, latency, durability, scalability, and query capability.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided in the form of verbal description as it relates to two (2) of the four (4) submitted customer case studies.</p>		
5.4 Network	<p>APN Partner to describe considerations for how they select the right Network options specifically outlining latency, throughput requirements, and location.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided in the form of verbal description as it relates to two (2) of the four (4) submitted customer case studies.</p>		
Performance Monitoring and Review			
5.5 Performance Monitoring	<p>APN Partner introduced, setup and configured a solution to monitoring the environment with automated alerts and remediation [where applicable].</p> <p>Evidence must be provided in the form of design documents.</p>		

6.0 Operational Excellence

		Met Y/N	Notes
6.1 Deployment Checklist	<p>APN Partner uses consistent processes (e.g., checklists) to know when ready to go live with a workload.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of completed checklists.</p>		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
6.2 Runbooks/ Playbooks	<p>APN Partner uses runbooks that document routine activities and playbooks that guide the issue resolution process.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of runbooks/playbooks for relevant components of Education solutions.</p>		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
6.3 Automation through Scripting	<p>APN Partner leverages scripting and tagging to automate execution of runbooks if/where applicable.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of script library/demonstration.</p>		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
6.4 Configuration Management	<p>APN Partner has process to automatically collect software inventory, apply OS patches, create system images, and configure Windows and Linux operating systems. If EC2 Systems manager is not leveraged, Partner can show documented processes or provide technical demonstration for how configurations and infrastructure updates are managed, and the methods used to automate these functions.</p>		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP

Evidence must be in the form of technology demonstration or documentation provided to the customer.

7.0 Cost Optimization		Met Y/N	Notes
7.1 Service and Pricing Models	<p>APN Partner considers cost when selecting AWS services, including optimizing by using the most appropriate services and by selecting the appropriate pricing models to meet cost targets, including by the use of Reserved Instances and Spot Instances and by factoring costs into Region selections.</p> <p>Evidence must be in the form of a description of how Services and Price Models are selected for cost optimization.</p>		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP
7.2 Cost Management	<p>APN Partner has a methodology to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review metrics and provide recommendations to optimize cost. ▪ Set up AWS environment to support charge backs in a decentralized IT environment. ▪ Accept pre-payments or implement spending caps within a comprehensive billing system <p>Evidence must be in the form of a customer implementation using AWS native tools and/or 3rd party tools.</p>		Waived if APN Partner is approved AWS MSP

AWS Resources

Title	Description
How to Build a Practice Landing Page	Provides guidance how to build a Practice/solution page that will meet the prerequisites of the Program.
How to write a Public Case Study	Provides guidance how to build a Public Customer Case Study that will meet the prerequisites of the Program.
How to build an Architecture Diagram	Provides guidance how to build a architecture diagrams that will meet the prerequisites of the Program.
Partner Readiness Doc	Provides guidance and best practice examples of the Program perquisites.

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