

I-Tracks

Flexible, practice oriented training and certification

EXIN, the worldwide Examination Institute for Information Science, has developed the I-Tracks program to offer flexible, practice oriented certification for IT professionals. By using learning materials, track descriptions, exam requirements and examinations, I-Tracks offers IT professionals, and those who want to become IT professionals, the opportunity to develop their skills following a learning track according to their individual needs and capabilities.

Each track within the I-Track program makes use of experience, the work environment, already acquired skills and the ambition of the participant. Each I-Track is based on the recognition of skills that are relevant for the profession within a field of interest or recognizable role or function. EXIN's independent assessment of these skills is the basis for the recognition of the I-Track certificates by the IT industry.

Some of the premises of the I-Tracks program are:

- **IT Service Life Cycle oriented**
All tracks are based on the IT Service life cycle and are aimed at improving the contribution of IT to the business.
- **Process oriented**
The requirements defined for each of the professional certificates in the I-Tracks program are based on the processes required to fulfil the role of the certified professional.
- **Core roles**
The skills required for an I-Tracks certificate are based on distinguishable roles that are essential in the life cycle of the IT Services. In practice, these core roles (and the associated core tasks) occur in various functions (and under different names).
- **Learning in practice**
The quality requirements for the individual work processes for ICT determine the skills necessary for I-Tracks certificates. In this way, learning and working in the individual learning routes are well coordinated with each other.

Life cycle of IT services

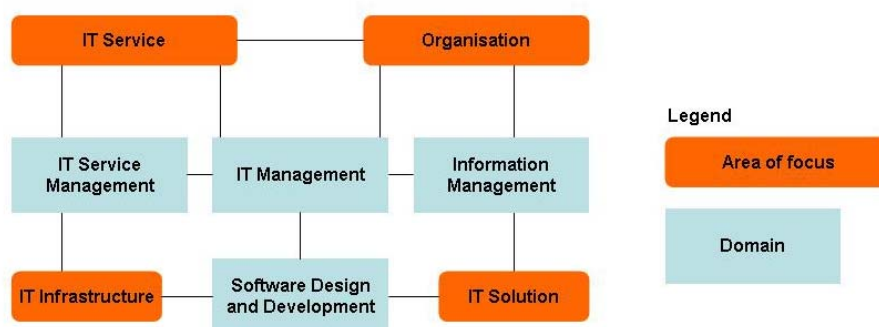


Figure 1: Overview of the life cycle of IT services with the domains and areas of focus and their mutual relationships.

Domains and areas of focus

- **Information Management:** in this domain, the functional requirements defined by the organization for the IT services are determined. This includes designing an information architecture and the functional management of applications.
- **Software Design and Development:** this domain focuses on the design and development (construction) of the software components used in the IT infrastructure to realize the IT services.
- **IT Service Management:** in this domain, the components of the IT infrastructure are used to provide the services agreed upon with the organization. This also includes maintaining the IT infrastructure and the processes required for the IT services.
- **IT Management:** the activities in this domain are associated with the management of the IT organization - for example, program management, project management and procurement management.

Four learning routes

In I-Tracks, there are four types of learning routes in which these competencies can be developed:

- **Start Track**
A learning route for non-IT professionals who want to know whether IT is of interest for them.
- **Short Tracks**
A theme-oriented learning route for IT professionals who want to acquire specialist knowledge on a particular subject in one of the areas of focus in a relatively short time.
- **Career Tracks**
A function-oriented learning route for IT professionals who want to develop the skill for a particular recognizable role or function in one of the IT areas of focus.
- **Academy Tracks**
A full IT learning route for IT professionals who want to be able to implement different roles and functions on Higher Vocational Education/University level. Academy Tracks generally tackles subjects from several areas of focus and the participants are expected to be able to link different areas of focus with each other.

Development of tracks

EXIN is developing the learning routes for I-Tracks in cooperation with the employers of IT professionals, trainers and experts. The work environment, learning environment and testing environment are being harmonized with each other as closely as possible (figure 2). The learning objectives in the learning environment, the testing requirements as well as the criteria for the successful execution of tasks in the work environment are being carefully geared to each other. Where possible, the work environment, or realistic situations derived from the work environment, are being used in the learning environment and testing environment.

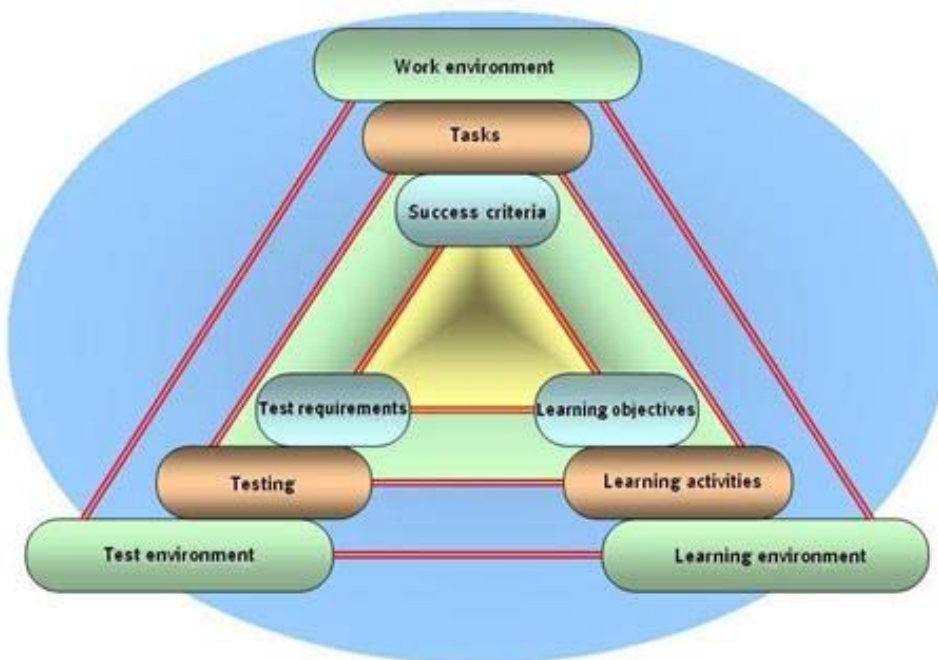


Figure 2: The relationships between the work environment, learning environment and testing environment

A track description clarifies the relationship between:

- the roles and tasks in the IT field that is the subject of the track (work environment)
- the learning activities that the participant needs to obtain the required skills (learning environment)
- the way these skills are assessed (by examinations, practical assignments or by work related projects).

EXIN and partners

EXIN develops every track on the basis of skill requirements that apply to a role or field in practice. On this basis, it is checked whether a learning route can be outlined with existing or new modules. Practical assignments are designed in order to develop practical skills and behavioral competencies. Work placement or work related projects can also be part of the track.

Trainers

The track developed by EXIN and its partners can use a trainer or an individual participant to compile a training course or study program. Skills acquired earlier (as can be seen from certificates, diplomas or work experience) can mean that the individual program differs from the track as defined in the track description. For such alternative programs, at EXIN an appeal can be made to the intake requirements for I-Tracks.

Most tracks have a sizeable practical component (assignments, work related projects, work placement, etc.). It is the coach's task to supervise such activities. The coach can be, but does not have to be, a trainer.

Participants

All the participants in I-Tracks maintain a personal portfolio of their results and their experiences with the learning activities. At the end of the track, it can be determined on the basis of the portfolio whether the participants have satisfied the requirements for the track certificate.