

Express Specialization – SMB Track



Highlights

Cisco is launching a new Small and Midsize Business (SMB) track in the Express Specialization, enabling partners serving smaller customers requiring a broad range of cross-architecture solutions, including collaboration, data center, networking and security.

(October 24, 2018)

Competency Program Simplification

As part of ongoing efforts to simplify [Channel Partner Programs](#), Cisco is continuing to evolve the competency portfolio with goals of:

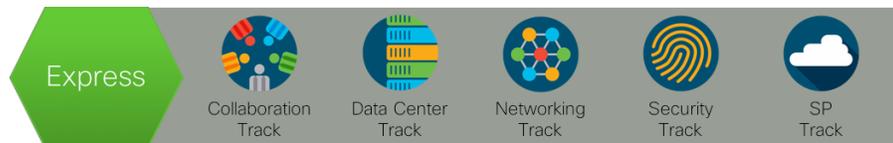
- Enhancing partners experience through greater coherence and simplicity in the competencies framework
- Making it easier for customers and Cisco to differentiate between partners, based on industry expertise

Cisco began simplifying the portfolio in late FY17, [with the announcement](#) of a single, consolidated [Express Specialization](#) with six tracks (see Figure 1). This announcement coincided with the retiring of the following Express-level specializations as of November 15, 2017:

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------|
| • Collaboration | • Security | • SMB |
| • Foundation | • Service Provider | • Video |
| • Networking | • Unified Compute | |

Partners holding one of these specializations were migrated to the associated track in the new Express Specialization and will be renewed to December 31, 2018 (details below). Migration to the new Express Specialization also enabled partners to automatically become a [Select Certified partner](#), simplifying program requirements. A detailed timeline of the Express Specialization simplification history can be found [here](#).

Figure 1: Consolidated Express Specialization with Associated Tracks



Announcing the New Express SMB Track

Most partners who held the previous Express SMB Specialization were migrated to the new Networking track. This made sense at the time, as it most closely aligned with the retired Express SMB Specialization requirements and training. SMB customers, however, often have broader needs than just networking. They require partners who can help enable them with a variety of cross-architecture solutions to meet their business needs. As a result, as of **October 2018**, Cisco is introducing a new SMB track within the Express Specialization (see Figure 2), enabling partners to serve smaller customers that require a broad set of expertise, spanning:

- Networking (both on-prem and cloud-based)
- Collaboration
- Data Center
- Security
- Service Provider

Figure 2: Consolidated Express Specialization with New SMB Track Option



In addition, to help ensure partners have continuous coverage, with time to choose among the Express Specialization tracks and meet renewal requirements, Cisco will continue to auto-renew the Express Specialization, as below:

- Partners with anniversary dates **prior to 31st December 2018** will be automatically renewed for an additional year, giving them time to either achieve the new SMB track or finalize the existing track of their choice.
 - For example, if your current renewal date is 1st October 2018, you will be automatically renewed through 1st October 2019. This renewal will be processed by Cisco automatically – no partner action is required.
- Partners with anniversary dates **after 31st December 2018** will need to [complete the current requirements](#) for at least one Express Specialization track by their anniversary date. Otherwise, they will lose their Express Specialization and [Select Certification](#).

As a valued partner, you now have a broader set of Express Specialization choices to meet your needs (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Choosing the Right Express Specialization Track

Customers require expertise with a specific technology	Customers have 0-199 employees and require broad expertise across architectures	Customers are primarily service providers
 Collaboration Track  Data Center Track  Networking Track  Security Track	 SMB Track	 SP Track