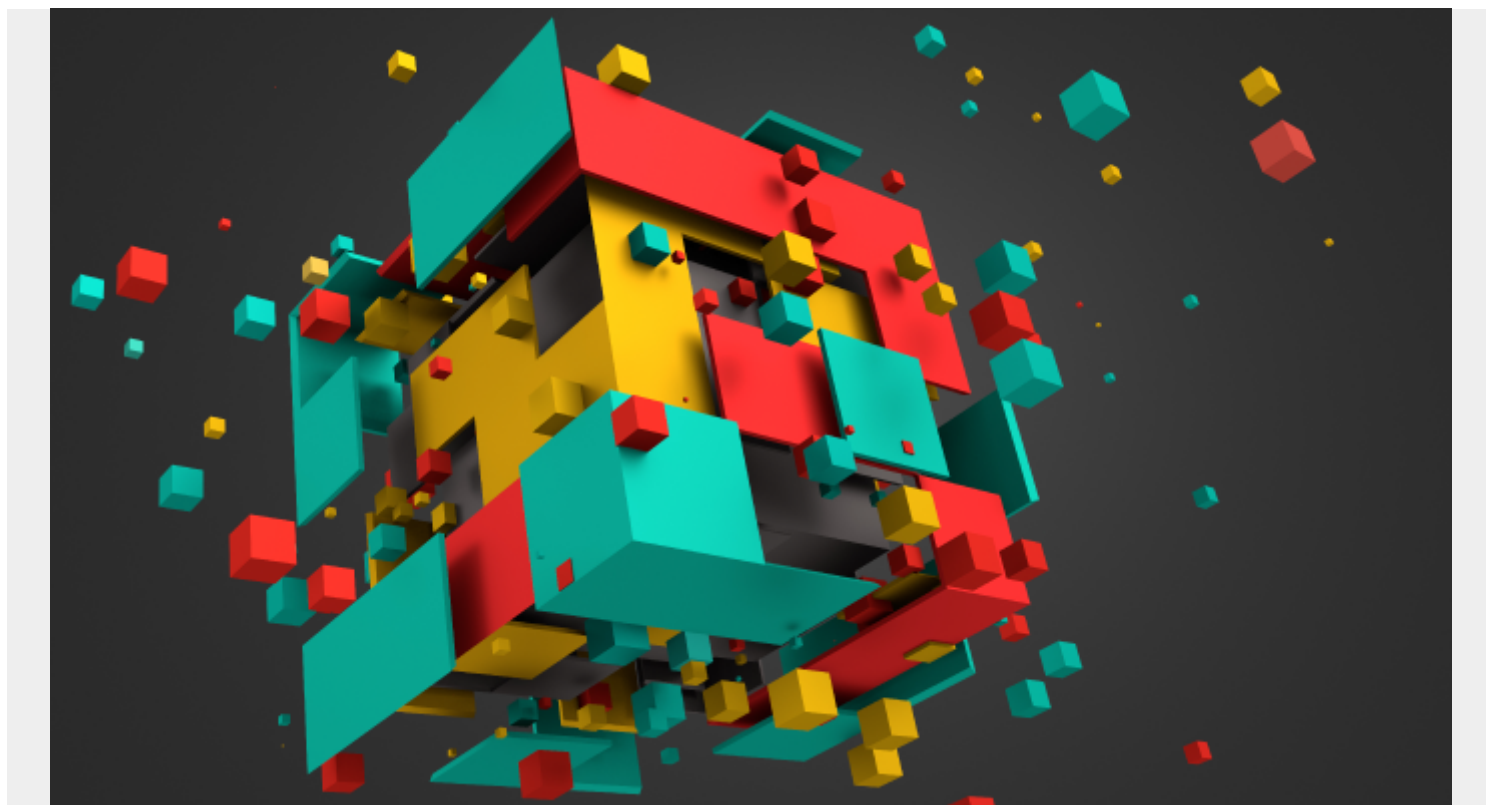
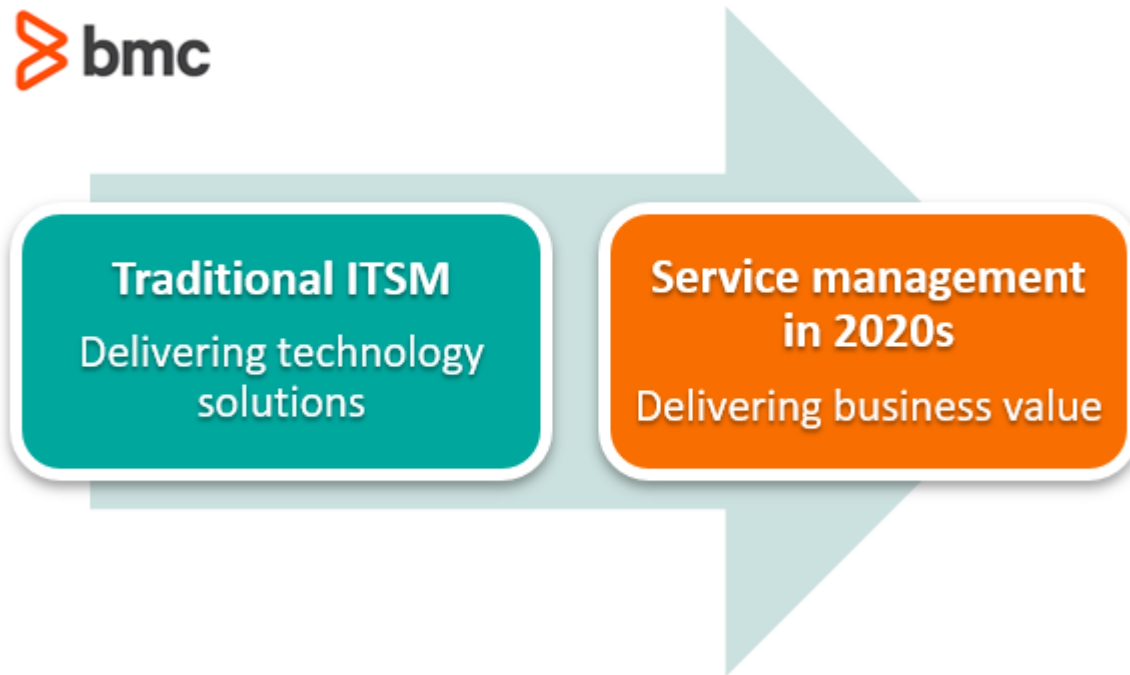


ITSM CERTIFICATIONS FOR 2021: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



If you are involved in any position in the technology sector, you are familiar with [ITSM](#). Short for IT Service Management, ITSM is the entirety of all IT-related activities within an organization. ITSM is highly customer focused, and includes the planning, designing, delivering, operating, and controlling of IT processes or operations.

Of course, ITSM has changed in recent years. ITSM expert [Kirstie Magowan details](#) how IT and business are converging. This means that IT's role shifts from providing technology solutions to delivering business value.



Given its popularity and relevance, obtaining training in ITSM is no longer just beneficial—it's almost a necessity. Luckily, there are a wide variety of ITSM certifications available, whether you are new to the scene entirely or are looking to enhance your current skill set. We'll take a look at certifications from:

- [ITIL®](#)
- [CompTIA](#)
- [HDI](#)
- [KCS Academy](#)
- [COBIT](#)

ITIL® Certifications

One of the most common cross-platform certifications for ITSM is the [ITIL Certification](#). Recognized as vendor neutral, ITIL certifications provide a modular approach to the [ITIL framework](#) itself, made up of a series of qualifications that are focused on different aspects of ITIL best practice to various degrees of depth and detail.

This tiered structure offers flexibility for candidates relating to their specific focus of discipline as well as key areas of interest. There are four certification levels within the ITIL 4 scheme:

- Foundation
- ITIL 4 Managing Professional
- ITIL 4 Strategic Leader
- Master

Let's look at each one.

ITIL Foundation

The [ITIL 4 Foundation certification](#) is designed as an introduction to ITIL 4, enabling candidates to look at ITSM through an end-to-end operating model for the creation, delivery and continual improvement of tech-enabled products and services.

This certification can help those who require a basic understanding of the ITIL framework, those who want to use ITIL to enhance ITSM, or those whose organization has recently adopted ITIL and would like a general understanding of it.

Certification components:

- [The guiding principles of ITIL 4](#)
- [The four dimensions of Service Management](#)
- Key concepts from [Lean, Agile, and DevOps](#), and why these are important to deliver business value
- How ITIL practices described in ITIL 4 will maintain the value and importance provided by the current processes

ITIL 4 Managing Professional

The [ITIL 4 Managing Professional certification](#) (ITIL MP) is a stream of four modules:

- ITIL 4 Specialist Create, Deliver and Support
- ITIL 4 Specialist Drive Stakeholder Value
- ITIL 4 Specialist High Velocity IT
- ITIL 4 Strategist Direct Plan and Improve

This certification provides practical and technical knowledge about how to run successful IT-enabled services, teams, and workflows. It covers the core service management activities and focuses on all types of engagement interaction between [a service provider](#) and their [customers, users](#), suppliers, and partners.

Certification components:

- How to deliver [innovative](#) yet reliable tech-enabled services to customers in a competitive market
- Learn to support IT-enabled products and services while also covering supporting practices, methods, and tools
- Tools to increase stakeholder satisfaction
- Gain an introduction to practices such as Agile and Lean, and technical practices and technologies such as Cloud, Automation, and Automatic Testing
- Practical skills necessary to create a 'learning and improving' IT organization

ITIL 4 Strategic Leader

The [ITIL4 Strategic Leader certification](#) (ITIL SL) is a stream of two modules:

- ITIL 4 Strategist Direct Plan and Improve
- ITIL 4 Leader Digital and IT Strategy

This certification demonstrates that the candidate has a clear understanding of how IT influences and directs business strategy. It provides methods for current and aspiring IT leaders to build and implement digital ideas that can face new technological challenges and competition while driving success.

Certification components:

- Practical and strategic elements of managing teams of all levels along with methods of planning and delivering continual improvement
- Alignment of digital business strategy with IT strategy
- How disruption from new technologies is impacting organizations in every industry
- How to respond to new innovations

ITIL Master Certificate: IT Service Management

The [ITIL Master certification](#) validates the candidate's ability to apply the principles, methods, and techniques from ITIL in the workplace.

To achieve the ITIL Master certification, the candidate must be able to explain and justify how they have personally selected and applied a range of knowledge, principles, methods, and techniques from the ITIL Framework and supporting management techniques to achieve desired business outcomes in one or more practical assignments.

CompTIA Certifications

[CompTIA](#) is one of the top tech associations in the world, serving as both an action leader and a thought leader for IT and tech companies. [CompTIA certifications](#) are recognized world-wide, setting industry standards and encouraging continuing education for life.

CompTIA A+

The [CompTIA A+ certification](#) is an industry standard for new professionals interested in starting a career in IT. This certification verifies that the candidate is able to support today's core technologies such as security, cloud, [data management](#), and more.

Certification components:

- Identifying, using, and connecting hardware components and devices
- Explain [types of networks and connections](#) including TCP/IP, WIFI and SOHO
- Troubleshoot PC and mobile device issues including application security support
- Install and support Windows OS including command line and client support.
- Understand Mac OS, Linux, and mobile OS
- Troubleshoot device and network issues
- Identify and protect against security vulnerabilities for devices and their network connections
- Install and configure laptops and other mobile devices
- Follow best practices for safety, environmental impacts, communication, and professionalism

CompTIA Network+

The [CompTIA Network+ certification](#) is for individuals looking to develop a career in IT infrastructure involving troubleshooting, configuring, and managing networks. The certification ensures that the candidate is able to use devices to create resilient networks and can implement security, standards, and protocols on them.

Certification components:

- Use best practices to manage the network, determine policies, and ensure overall business

continuity

- Determine and explain the appropriate cabling, device, and storage technologies
- Explain the purpose of a variety of networking concepts and implement them appropriately
- Summarize physical security and common attacks while securing the wired and wireless network
- Explain the network troubleshooting methodology and appropriate tools to support connectivity and performance

HDI Certifications

[HDI](#) utilizes partnerships to educate thousands of organizations on how to improve [customer service and service management performance](#). Each [HDI Certification](#) reflects the level of knowledge required for specific roles, from careers just starting out in the industry to more advanced positions requiring multiple promotions.

HDI Customer Service Representative

The [HDI Customer Service Representative certification](#) verifies that the IT professional is knowledgeable in the skills required to provide exceptional customer service and support, whether in a call center or a support center. This certificate ensures that the candidate understands how to not only anticipate a customer's needs but also how to meet them while exceeding their expectations.

Certification components:

- Learn critical thinking skills to resolve incidents quickly and consistently
- Develop active listening skills and effective communication strategies
- Understand how to identify and defuse challenging customer behavior
- Develop an awareness of the core processes and best practices used in service and support

HDI Support Center Analyst

The [HDI Support Center Analyst certification](#) validates that the candidate knows how to provide the highest quality of customer care with every service interaction. This certification focuses on support center strategies for effective customer service, emphasizing problem-solving and trouble-shooting skills, contact handling procedures, incident management, communication skills, and an introduction to the service management process.

Certification components:

- The process of incident management, from detection and recording to closure
- Critical thinking skills to resolve incidents quickly and consistently
- The value of service management processes and the role they play in providing quality support
- An awareness of the core help desk processes and best practices
- Proven techniques for improving customer interactions
- Effective support center strategies for managing difficult customers

HDI Desktop Advanced Support Technician

The [HDI Desktop Advanced Support Technician certification](#) validates that the IT professional possesses the required best practice knowledge and skills to provide quality technical support and guidance to stakeholders. This certification focuses on the integral role and value of a desktop advanced support technician throughout all areas of the organization.

Certification components:

- Understand how the business is supported and how to partner with stakeholders across the organization to drive performance and efficiencies
- Learn how to use effective business relationship management skills to communicate effectively and enhance the customer experience
- Understand the differences between troubleshooting and problem solving and acquire tried and true approaches for [resolving root problems](#)
- Develop active listening skills and effective communication strategies, along with effective strategies for managing challenging behaviors and situations

HDI Support Center Team Lead

The [HDI Support Center Team Lead certification](#) ensures that the candidate has the necessary leadership skills to provide operational support to the organization and the coaching skills necessary to promote staff development. This certification is designed to help support professionals develop fundamental management and leadership skills.

Certification components:

- The importance of service level agreements and operational level agreements
- The ITIL processes of incident, problem, change, release, asset, and configuration management
- An overview of security management and knowledge management
- Strategies for managing conflict
- The essentials of people management: hiring, scheduling, evaluating, and retaining employees
- An eight-step method for effective coaching
- Proven team-building and motivational techniques
- Essential performance metrics and key performance indicators

HDI Support Center Manager

The [HDI Support Center Manager certification](#) validates that the candidate has the required knowledge and skills to successfully manage both the tactical and operational components of a support organization. This certification focuses on how managers can satisfy operational demands and build a support center that aligns with the organization, adds value to the business, and delivers on its commitments.

Certification components:

- Learn the characteristics of an effective support center manager
- Understand how to create service level agreements, operational level agreements, and standard operating procedures in support of a service catalog

- Learn the steps involved in performing a cost-benefit analysis and calculating total cost of ownership and return on investment
- Understand the difference between and the importance of strategic, tactical, and operational planning
- Establish tactics for screening, hiring, training, and managing high-performance teams

HDI Desktop Support Manager

The [HDI Desktop Support Manager](#) certification ensures that the IT professional has the skills needed to responsibly execute the operational and tactical plans of desktop support, while satisfying customer and business needs. This certification is appropriate for both new and experienced desktop support managers.

Certification components:

- How to create and deliver on service level agreements and operating level agreements
- How to align desktop support services with business strategy, objectives, and processes
- The importance of the relationships among IT service management processes
- Tactics for screening, hiring, training, and leading [high-performance teams](#)
- How to create an internal marketing culture to promote your desktop support services
- The metrics and key performance indicators essential to desktop support performance reporting

HDI Support Center Director

The [HDI Support Center Director](#) certification verifies that the support professional has the knowledge and skills needed to lead the service and support organization while increasing business value. This certification focuses on the development and execution of strategic plans that will take the organization to the next level.

Certification components:

- Assessment strategies for the support center
- How to quantify the support center's value and maximize ROI
- Understand the twelve-step process and decision matrix for selecting technologies and vendors
- How to align support strategies with business goals and objectives
- Strategies for workforce management, coaching, team building, and succession planning
- Selecting the right leading and lagging indicators

HDI Problem Management Professional

The [HDI Problem Management Professional certification](#) is intended for those who wish to gain a working knowledge of industry best practices related to problem management. This certification focuses on skills needed to plan and implement [reactive and proactive problem management](#).

Certification components:

- Best practice frameworks and standards for ITSM
- The problem management activity flow

- The importance of detection, prioritization, and categorization
- Methods for investigation and diagnosis
- The roles and responsibilities of the problem management professional
- The interdependencies between incident and problem management
- The relationships between knowledge management, known errors, and workarounds
- Proven methodologies for conducting root cause analysis
- The differences between reactive and proactive problem management
- Critical success factors and key performance indicators for problem management

KCS Academy

The [KCS Academy](#) is the only authorized certifying body for KCS[®], the [Knowledge-Centered Service methodology](#), and its related resources.

KCS Fundamentals

The [KCS v6 Fundamentals certification](#) validates that the IT professional has an awareness of knowledge management best practices and concepts of KCS. This certification ensures a consistent understanding of the KCS methodology for everyone in the organization.

Certification components:

- [Knowledge management best practices](#)
- KCS concepts and methodology
- The value and benefits of adopting KCS

KCS Practices

The [KCS v6 Practices certification](#) validates that support center professionals possess the understanding of the Knowledge-Centered Service (KCS SM) methodology. This certification focuses on implementing the practical steps for capturing, structuring, and successfully reusing knowledge through the knowledge management process.

Certification components:

- How to efficiently reuse, improve, maintain and create quality, easy-to-find knowledge articles
- A process for monitoring the quality of knowledge
- Ways to motivate staff to use the knowledge management practices and to effectively assess individual and team contributions
- How to minimize or eliminate the need for a knowledge engineering function
- How to articulate the value of knowledge management practices for the organization

COBIT Foundation Certification

The [COBIT Foundation certification](#) validates the candidate's knowledge of [COBIT's five basic principles](#):

1. Meeting stakeholder needs
2. Covering the enterprise end-to-end

3. Applying a single integrated framework
4. Enabling a holistic approach
5. Separating governance from management

This certification ensures that the IT professional has extensive knowledge of and experience with enablers for governance and management of enterprise IT.

Certification components:

- Recognize the context, benefits, and key reasons COBIT is used as an information and technology governance framework
- Explain the key attributes of the [COBIT framework](#)
- Compare the COBIT principles for governance system framework
- Differentiate COBIT-based performance management using maturity and capability perspectives
- Discover how to design a tailored governance system using COBIT

ITSM certifications

No matter what field you decide to focus on, obtaining an ITSM certification provides valuable benefits not only for the individual, but for the organization as a whole. Continuing education will ensure that you stay on top of the current trends while adapting to the ever-evolving demands of IT service management.

Additional resources

For related reading, check out these articles:

- [Service Management Blog](#)
- [Entry-Level IT Certifications: A Primer](#)
- [COBIT vs ITIL: IT Governance Frameworks](#)
- [ITSM Trends of 2020](#)
- [How to Build an IT Service Catalog](#)