



Cyber Ops Certification

Case Study Subject

Adaeze Udechukwu

Cisco Certifications

CCNA Cyber Ops

Cisco Cybersecurity Scholarship Success Sparks Hope for a New Career in the U.S.

Adaeze Udechukwu has always been intrigued by technology. Previous work with MTN Nigeria Communications Ltd continued to fuel that fascination. “It gave me a better understanding of security management on a large network,” she says. “The constant hustle and bustle of working in operations made me happy and fulfilled, most especially if my input aided in the resolution of a network issue. The teamwork lessons taught me that I will always be part of a bigger picture.”

After earning her bachelor’s degree in electrical and electronics engineering from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, Ada came to the United States to obtain her master’s degree in cybersecurity from the University of Maryland. “The more I realized that technology growth was a breeding ground for lots of security vulnerabilities,” she says, “the more I wanted to learn about the impacts of these vulnerabilities and how to be proactive against them.”

Early in her IT career, Ada began to realize that there was a process to managing technical infrastructure. “To be successful, all you need to do is understand the process and understand how the devices work,” she says. “I am happier when I am configuring a device or trying to resolve a technical issue. It has taught me to think outside the box on several occasions.”

Cisco offered its Global Cybersecurity Scholarship at the right time, and it meant a great deal to Ada. She admits to being a strong believer in self-development, so she jumped at the chance to polish her skills. In addition to the CCNA Cyber Ops certification that she earned through the scholarship program, Ada also has her CCNA Routing and Switching certification, plus other certifications. She is aiming in the future for her CCIE Security certification.

Living in Nigeria, Ada did not find easy access to her career plans. As she explains, “IT security professionals are not really valued in my country, and the cost of access to study materials like the Cyber Ops can be high. Right now, I would not be able to achieve optimal performance and growth in the cybersecurity field in my country.”

She says that this is the reason she came to the United States—to further her education and gain more knowledge in the field. And now she has lofty goals to help others. In particular, Ada hopes someday to transfer her knowledge and experience to the younger generation, and perhaps to start an IT consulting business.

Has her new certification helped? Definitely! Ada says, “I had most of my experience in network device/firewall management, so the Cyber Ops certification gave me plenty of knowledge and more insight about web and domain security. It also gave me a boost in Linux OS management.”

She also acquired new skills in security operations center (SOC) management, incident response, endpoint security, and analyzing security events. All these will enhance her ability to find a technical position in the United States, where she is living now.

To succeed in her cybersecurity scholarship coursework, Ada says that she dedicated at least a couple of hours each day to studying because she found the course content to be vast and detailed. She recommends that anyone planning to enroll in the scholarship or pursue the CCNA Cyber Ops curriculum should have some basic background in IT. If that is lacking, then they should be prepared to work hard. “But there is a satisfying reward at the end,” she affirms.