



Cisco Cybersecurity Scholarship Fills Many Needs for Security Engineer in Bangladesh on Her Path to Success

According to Cisco Cybersecurity Scholarship recipient Afifa Abbas, her home country of Bangladesh is a developing nation where cybersecurity is still a luxury. As she explains, “In our country, the concept that cybersecurity professionals will have highly paid salaries is not established yet.”

When she began her career in security, Afifa fast discovered that the available training and certifications were far too expensive for her, and qualified trainers were scarce anyway. To complicate matters, her job as an Information Security and Governance Lead Engineer is stressful and time-consuming, leaving her little time for studies.

But Cisco’s scholarship program—with its ability to earn CCNA Cyber Ops certification at the end—solved all those issues. “The self-paced nature of this course made it trouble-free for me to complete,” Afifa says. “I was inspired to apply because I considered that I would have access to highly developed labs, I would get to know the latest defense technologies, and I would get to interact with highly skilled mentors. Anybody who wants to pursue a career in cybersecurity should grab the opportunity!”

Around the time she received the scholarship award, Afifa was assigned to lead her company’s security operations and incident response efforts. She was grateful that her studies had provided the necessary knowledge for her to perform well in that role.

Her employer, Banglalink Digital Communications Limited, has a staff of about 1300, and they serve 40 million users. Although her job is demanding, Afifa enjoys it because it keeps her focused on what she loves best—preventing attacks, detecting and mitigating threats, and maintaining the information security hardware. Despite needing to work many nights and weekends, she emphasizes that she loves her work and doesn’t regret her choice.

She has also brought an advantage to her employer because they previously did not have any employees certified via a cybersecurity program like Cisco’s with up-to-date knowledge about network defense technologies. In a very short time, Afifa believes, her company will experience better performance from her in its upcoming security projects because of her newfound knowledge.



Cyber Ops Certification

Case Study Subject

Afifa Abbas; Dhaka, Bangladesh

Cisco Certifications

CCNA Cyber Ops

“To become certified, someone must have basic knowledge about networking, IP subnetting, cryptography, and similar insights,” she says. “The program topics were a bit advanced, so this knowledge will help. Candidates also should know Kali Linux basics because the labs are designed around it. I would also recommend that students should continually review the material while taking the course so they can pass the tests.”

The scholarship itself has brought Afifa new respect from her colleagues and even from her family. In fact, she was given an Honorable Mention in the Aspiring Woman Leader Category for the Inspiring Women Award 2017 by the Bangladesh Brand Forum. She believes that her scholarship helped.

“This is a fantastic initiative by Cisco, and I can’t thank them enough for this,” Afifa exclaims. “Most importantly, I am grateful that Cisco is addressing the cybersecurity talent shortage. The objective behind this is truly remarkable. I did not immediately become an expert through the program, but it has paved the way for me to become an expert.”

Looking toward the future, Afifa plans to work abroad, where she hopes to find more extensive opportunities in cybersecurity. “I have a strong desire to work with international organizations to safeguard the network,” she says. “And, of course, I am very interested in someday working with Cisco’s Talos team.”