



## Cyber Ops Certification

### Case Study Subject

Sabina Hasanli, Azerbaijan

### Cisco Certifications

CCNA Cyber Ops, CCENT and CCNA Routing and Switching

# Cybersecurity Scholarship Opens Career Opportunities in Azerbaijan

Ask Sabina Hasanli what motivates her, and she will mention her habit of setting goals. “I like to put myself in new professional challenges because they give me the chance to explore new tools and techniques and to increase my skill sets. In fact, it’s crucial because nowadays companies prefer multitasking professionals who possess multiple skills.”

Today, she’s an ICT Security Administrator/Analyst with Azerconnect LLC, providing mobile services throughout Azerbaijan. Her team serves the entire IT staff of about 150, and she finds great value and growth in this new position. It will never become repetitive, she says, because it always has new perspectives.

“It is a job where there will always be vast opportunities to learn more as you are required to interact with nearly every department within an organization,” she says. “This allows you to sharpen your skills and enable personal and professional growth.”

Sabina’s journey to this role began with an email from Cisco: an offer to apply for a CCNA Cyber Ops certification scholarship. Sabina was determined not to miss the opportunity to specialize in security. (She already holds two other Cisco certifications—CCENT and CCNA Routing and Switching—and she has earned a degree in computer science.)

Considering the shortage of females in IT, Sabina was excited by the avenue that the Cisco Global Cybersecurity Scholarship Program afforded. In Azerbaijan, women are only beginning to gain acceptance in technology roles. Sabina is fortunate to have parents and colleagues who support her career goals and her love of math and technology. She found the Cyber Ops training to be a life-changing experience because, by removing financial barriers, the scholarship made her career goals easier to obtain. Furthermore, her new certification provided an immediate benefit to her employer.

“My security analyst job is built around SIEM [security information and event management], and our organization currently is implementing the SIEM solution,” she says. “It was crucial to have employees with hands-on experience with such systems, and my CCNA Cyber Ops certification helped me acquire those skills.”

The course also helped her make new connections with many experts, including her mentors and professionals from different countries—connections she would not have made otherwise. She also learned that security challenges have a common basis, no matter what the

geography. These include a shortage of the “right people” responding to available security data, insufficient budget for the necessary tools, miscommunication between departments, and the fact that people are the weakest link in the security chain.

During her studies, Sabina found that the course materials provided sufficient information to pass the exams. “If something was unclear,” she says, “I was able to ask mentors in live sessions or to discuss it in the technical discussion board. There also were labs per section, which helped to consolidate learning through practical application.”

Prior to the scholarship program, Sabina had found it difficult to determine the appropriate starting point for her interest in cybersecurity. She knew that it required multiple skills— understanding networks and operating systems architecture, coding skills, different attack vectors, and such. But once she had those skills, she didn’t know where to go next. However, the Cyber Ops track proved to be the ideal, well-organized place to begin. It also provided the training necessary for her to move into her current position.

“This certification has provided an excellent foundation for my career,” Sabina says. “I look forward to gaining more practical work experience, which will help me achieve my broader goals. It is no secret that cybersecurity professionals are in high demand in all countries. There are about one million unfilled cybersecurity jobs worldwide, and good candidates are hard to find. Now I’ve become a more attractive candidate, improved my skill sets, and gained an entirely new body of knowledge.”

### For More Information

To begin your exploration of Cyber Ops certification, visit <https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/community/certifications/ccna-cyber-ops>.