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## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Qualified Integrators and Resellers (QIR) Program Changes**

March 2018

The PCI Qualified Integrators and Resellers (QIR) program offers specialized data security training and certification to individuals that install, configure and/or support payment systems. The PCI Security Standards Council (PCI SSC) maintains a [listing of PCI QIRs](#) on its website for merchants to use in identifying and selecting trusted partners.

The PCI SSC has announced changes to QIR Program in response to industry feedback and data breach report findings. The program changes are designed to increase the number of QIRs and equip them to help merchants reduce risk by mitigating the leading causes of payment data breaches.

**Q 1 Why is the PCI SSC revising the QIR program?**

- A** *The PCI SSC continually listens to feedback and adapts its standards and programs to meet evolving needs of the payment security community. As a result of this feedback, the PCI SSC is revising the QIR program to make it simpler for participants and to focus on the three most common causes of data breaches.*

**Q 2 What are the changes to the QIR program?**

- A** *The primary revisions to the QIR program are:*
- *Shorter training course time with a shift in focus to critical security controls, with training content and exam offered online*
  - *Program certification tied to individuals rather than a company, creating opportunity for any company to employ QIR professionals*
  - *Price reduction to \$100 USD per person for new and requalification training*
  - *Introduction of annual requalification cycle (instead of a three-year cycle)*
  - *Expanded program eligibility to include industry practitioners who implement, configure and/or support any payment applications and related payment technologies*

**Q 3 Is the QIR program still focused on PCI Payment Application Data Security Standard (PA-DSS) validated payment applications?**

- A** *Based on feedback we have expanded QIR program eligibility to include industry practitioners who implement, configure and/or support any payment applications and related payment technologies and services on behalf of merchants and service providers, not just those working with PA-DSS validated applications. The PCI SSC continues to support the PA-DSS program and encourage vendors of eligible applications to participate in the program, however we recognize that QIRs may be working with other payments applications and related payment technologies.*

**Q 4 Why is the PCI SSC changing the program eligibility criteria?**

- A** *The PCI SSC wants to encourage as many integrators and resellers as possible to participate in the program and learn about critical security controls. Currently, eligibility for the QIR program is restricted to companies that are either direct providers of PA-DSS validated payment applications, or that are third-party licensed or otherwise authorized by a PA-DSS application vendor to perform implementations. We are now able to open up access to the program to a broader audience.*

**Q 5 How do these changes to the QIR program impact current QIR professionals?**

- A** *Please be assured that the status of current QIR professionals will not be affected as a result of these program updates. The QIR listing will include each QIR professional's contact information and company name. Existing QIRs will keep their three-year qualification period, and move to the new requalification lifecycle once their existing certificate expires.*

*Each QIR will now also be able to access program resources and manage their own continued program participation through the PCI SSC portal (previously managed by a company-based primary contact).*

**Q 6 How do these changes impact QIR professionals' responsibilities?**

- A** *Although the focus of the program will encourage QIRs to better address the critical controls leading to data breaches, the QIR's primary responsibilities won't change.*

**Q 7 Why the shift from a company qualification to an individual qualification?**

- A** *The PCI SSC recognizes that the knowledge an individual acquires through the QIR training is not tied to the company they work for. In other words, if a QIR professional moves to a new organization the knowledge and training they received is still current as long as they are within their qualification window.*

**Q 8 How does this impact existing QIR Companies that have been listed as QIR providers on the PCI SSC website? How does this change impact QIR listings?**

- A** *The PCI SSC's QIR listing will no longer be structured around company participation in the QIR program, but rather around the participation of individual QIR professionals. Merchants seeking to hire a QIR will be able to filter the list of professionals by company affiliation, certification number, and geography.*

*Please note that a legacy company-based listing will also appear on the QIR listing page for the first six months after the new program is launched.*

**Q 9 What will the streamlined QIR training consist of?**

- A** *QIR training will focus on the critical security controls that can mitigate the most common causes of breaches as highlighted by data breach reports and industry feedback - insecure remote access, patching and weak passwords. If QIRs address these critical security controls they will help reduce risk for their merchants, particularly for smaller merchants.*

*The updated training and exam are offered online. The course takes approximately one and a half to two (1.5-2) hours and concludes with a 30-question multiple-choice exam.*

**Q 10 Why is the PCI SSC reducing the qualification period from three years to one year?**

- A** *Part of the feedback received is that the program should be simpler for participants. To help with this PCI SSC is removing the need for Continued Professional Education (CPE) credits and introducing a short annual training and exam (all online). By shortening the certification timeframe and making requalification annual, QIR professionals will stay up-to-date on timely threats and current payment security best practices.*

**Q 11 What are the benefits of becoming a QIR?**

- A** *QIR professionals stand apart from other service providers by achieving an industry-recognized qualification. The QIR training helps service providers understand critical security controls to better help merchants reduce their risk. Finally, successful candidates are listed in the [go-to global directory](#) of qualified providers on the PCI SSC website.*

**Q 12 How does an integrator or reseller enroll in the new QIR Program? Or what is involved in the application process for becoming a QIR?**

**A** To begin your enrollment in the QIR program, please review the [QIR Qualification Requirements](#), which outline the application and participation requirements. At a minimum, candidates must:

- Have at least one year of technology installation and system hardening experience (gained over at least one year or three separate engagements) conducting technically complex installations
- Have training and experience in the implementation of all Payment Applications and related payment technologies and services they implement, including any PA-DSS Validated Payment Applications

Once you have determined if the QIR program is appropriate for you, please go to the [QIR Training page](#) and click on the “Register Now” button.

**Q 13 When is the QIR Training available?**

**A** QIR Training is available via the secure PCI Portal. This self-paced eLearning course offers:

- Flexible scheduling 24/7/365
- Access from home or office
- Reduced travel costs and time away from work

The course takes approximately one and a half to two (1.5-2) hours and concludes with a 30-question multiple-choice exam. Candidates have 60 days to complete the coursework, beginning on the date payment is received. A candidate that passes the exam will receive a QIR certificate and will be listed on the [PCI SSC website](#) as an active QIR Professional.

**Q 14 What happens in the case of a failed training exam?**

**A** Candidates that fail the QIR exam will be allowed two more attempts to pass the exam without being charged an additional fee.

**Q 15 How much does it cost to be trained and qualified as a QIR?**

**A** The fee for QIR training (both New and Requalification) is \$100 per person.

**Q 16 What is involved in the QIR requalification process?**

**A** QIR Professionals must requalify on an annual basis. Individuals can register themselves for requalification through the PCI Portal starting 90 days before the expiration date listed on their QIR certificate. Registration in requalification training must be completed prior to midnight Eastern Time on the date a professional's QIR certificate expires. The window to complete the requalification exam is 4 weeks prior to, and 2 weeks after, the certification expiration date. Professionals who do not requalify on schedule will need to reapply to the program in order to reinstate their QIR status.

**Q 17 Where can I go for additional information on the QIR program?**

**A** Interested applicants can register for the QIR program [here](#). Merchants looking to hire a QIR can search the listing [here](#). Learn more about the changes to the program by reading the [PCI Perspectives blog post Q&A](#). Finally, the Council will host a webinar for existing QIR professionals and companies to help address any questions they have about the changes to the program. Registration for the webinar can be found [here](#).