

TMap NEXT® and ISTQB® certifications are complementary

Certification schemes in software testing

Software testing is a profession in its own right. Test professionals can enrich their knowledge by taking a range of training courses. Further steps to prove their knowledge and skill levels are the professional examinations and resulting certificates. In software testing various certification schemes emerged in recent years. In Europe the ISTQB and the TMap NEXT schemes are the best known.

Here we briefly describe both schemes and demonstrate that these two schemes are complementary.

Introduction TMap NEXT and ISTQB

The Test Management Approach (TMap®), first published by Sogeti in 1995 and updated as TMap NEXT®, is a test methodology used in many organizations across most business sectors. In 2007 the independent global examination institute EXIN established two certification levels:

TMap NEXT Foundation level
TMap NEXT Advanced level

The International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB®) provides a body of knowledge for software testing and refers to various testing standards.

Based on the initiatives of ISEB (UK) and ASQF (Germany), the ISTQB has published in 2005 their curriculum for software testing. It consists of 3 levels:

ISTQB Certified Tester Foundation level
ISTQB Certified Tester Advanced level
ISTQB Certified Tester Expert level

The ISTQB Advanced level is subdivided in three different modules: Test Analyst, Technical Test Analyst and Test Manager. Expert level modules are not yet published.

Over 40 national member boards are responsible for organizing and monitoring the ISTQB examinations.

Complementary schemes

The TMap test methodology is complementary to the ISTQB body of knowledge. Both schemes use the same starting points and principles, widely accepted as state-of-the-art. While ISTQB provides a view on "what" testing is, TMap elaborates on "how" test activities can be performed. This complementarity is underlined by the many references that ISTQB syllabi and glossary make to TMap.



Foundation levels are different

Although both schemes use the term 'Foundation' level there is a significant difference.

The ISTQB's Foundation level (previously also known as ISEB Foundation) covers the basics of test analysis, design, execution and test management topics, giving a basic grounding in software testing. This makes it well suited for novice testers and for non-testers who want to learn the basics of the profession.

The TMap NEXT Foundation level is a complete training for test engineers that covers in-depth the specification and execution of tests. Subjects discussed are the framework and importance of testing, the TMap NEXT life cycle, test design techniques and the test levels acceptance testing, system testing and development testing. Significant experience is required to successfully pass this examination.

Therefore the TMap NEXT Foundation Level is comparable to ISTQB's Advanced level for Test Analysts.

The TMap NEXT Advanced Level is comparable to ISTQB's Advanced Level for Test Managers.

Independent schemes

The TMap NEXT methodology and the ISTQB body of knowledge are independent. Both exist in their own right. For a tester or an organization there is no specific need to combine the certifications of the schemes.

Since ISTQB does not provide details on the 'how', organizations that use this body of knowledge can benefit from additionally using TMap NEXT as their test method.

A test professional who seeks recognition can choose to work towards certification in either scheme, depending on his company's way of working, business sector or country.

Some professional testers will combine the certifications to broaden their knowledge and skills base.

Further information

For more information see
www.istqb.org
www.exin-exams.com
www.tmap.net
www.sogeti.com

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