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Australian Signals Directorate

ASD AUSTRALIAN SIGNALS DIRECTORATE
ACSC Australian Cyber Security Centre

IRAP training course and assessment guidance

InfoSec Registered Assessors Program

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Introduction

Notes for participants

The InfoSec Registered Assessors Program (IRAP) training course tests participants' knowledge, skills and experience against those expected of an IRAP assessor. As a pre requisite for enrolling in this course, participants are required to have extensive professional experience using Australian Government frameworks, including the *Information Security Manual* (ISM) and *Protective Security Policy Framework* (PSPF), to secure or assess systems.

To pass this course, participants will need to draw on the knowledge gained through their prior information security implementation/assessment experience and pre-requisite industry certifications. Participants should not rely solely on the information provided in this course to meet the examination and other assessment requirements.

Participants must be prepared to provide evidence of at least five (5) years prior information security implementation / assessment experience and their attainment of industry certification pre-requisites to enrol in this course.

Overview

The IRAP training course covers many aspects required of an IRAP assessor, however it is not designed to explicitly teach participants everything required to become an IRAP assessor. Rather, the IRAP training course and assessments have been designed to validate the knowledge, skills and experience that is required of the participant to be successful as an IRAP assessor. This includes existing knowledge of general information security principles, hands-on technical skills, work experience, IRAP processes and procedures, and relevant Australian Government policy and information security guidelines, with a focus on the ISM, the PSPF, and other Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) publications.

Required reading

Where there is a contradiction between ASD publications and the course material, ASD publications should be considered the authoritative source, unless otherwise specified by the ASD-endorsed training provider or ASD (for examination or assessment purposes).

To ensure the best chance of success, course participants should be familiar with the following publications and documents. All publications are available on the cyber.gov.au website - Resources for business and government | Cyber.gov.au.

- IRAP policy and procedures
- IRAP Common Assessment Framework
- IRAP consumer guide
- Information Security Manual
- Protective Security Policy Framework

- Strategies to mitigate cybersecurity incidents | Cyber.gov.au
- Essential Eight | Cyber.gov.au

IRAP assessor skillset

The following skills and attributes are required of an IRAP assessor. It is important to self-assess your suitability when forming a decision on whether to enrol in the IRAP course.

IRAP assessors are expected to:

- understand and identify information security principles
- understand and adhere to *IRAP policy and procedures*
- adhere to strict independence requirements and conflict of interest declaration procedures
- describe how information security principles can be integrated into ICT systems
- discuss ethical issues involved in providing independent information security services to Australian Government and Industry
- demonstrate the communication skills needed for requirements gathering, development and implementation of information security controls and their appropriate evaluation
- gather requirements for the process of implementing information security advice
- design information security advice
- demonstrate an ability to find applicable and relevant information security advice from ACSC and other applicable Australian Government publications when presented with a problem
- use evidence to evaluate the implementation of security controls
- design sound recommendations and mitigations to remediate control weaknesses
- explain how applying specific information security controls will benefit an organisation
- provide coherent and logical explanations as to why specific information security controls are recommended
- understand and apply the intent of the ISM to systems and services

IRAP training course

The IRAP training course has been designed to prepare the next generation of ASD-endorsed IRAP assessors through hands-on, interactive scenario-based training. The IRAP assessment process tests participants' knowledge, critical thinking skills and experience against those expected of an IRAP assessor.

The course content follows the IRAP assessment methodologies, program policy, and best practice security guidance outlined in IRAP resources and other ASD publications.

The IRAP training course includes:

- Practical, hands-on assessment of ISM controls within a lab-based simulated Government environment to support gathering of evidence, determining control effectiveness, and applying ASD's IRAP assessment framework.
- Theory fundamentals on the IRAP policy and procedures, the IRAP Common Assessment Framework and quality assurance standards, and the assessor's obligations under the ISM and PSPF.
- Interpreting architecture diagrams, defining system and assessment boundaries, considering the attack surface, and understanding how scoping drives assessment depth and focus.
- Applying governance and assessment independence requirements, including navigating conflicts of interest, assessment integrity requirements, and the governance and reporting obligations that underpin every IRAP engagement.
- Producing IRAP-style assessment reports based on your control testing – documenting findings, justifying control outcomes, and providing actionable recommendations – to support informed decision-making by authorising officers.
- Validating acquired knowledge and experience, including control interpretation, contemporary technical knowledge, analytical reasoning, and IRAP requirements and assessment methodologies.

Assessment approach

The IRAP training course includes three assessable components:

- IRAP examination
- IRAP report assessment
- Daily reflections

Participants must meet the minimum requirements for all assessable components to be eligible to join the program (or for existing assessors, to meet their registration renewal requirements).

A full list of pre-requisites for becoming an IRAP assessor are outlined in the *IRAP policy and procedures*.

IRAP examination

The examination contains multiple choice and short answer questions from five categories:

- Lab-based questions
- IRAP policy questions
- Publications and guidelines questions
- Situational questions
- General knowledge questions

A mark of at least 80% is required to pass the IRAP examination component.

The examination occurs on the final day of the IRAP training course. Participants are required to sit their examination at the time prescribed by the invigilator. Deferred examinations are generally not available.

The IRAP examination is open book and participants may use the internet and available resources to assist in answering questions. The use of large language models (LLMs) is permitted however, participants should validate the outputs independently as LLMs often make errors. Multiple choice questions follow a 'negative marking' rubric, whereby marks are lost for incorrect over-selections.

Participants must work individually without assistance from other parties to answer the questions within the allotted time of three (3) hours.

Participants must not share, disseminate, copy, discuss, send or take pictures, of the exam or its questions. Participants caught performing such actions will have their examination and/or application terminated.

Examinations are submitted at the end of the allotted examination time directly to the ASD-engaged training providers. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Training providers will provide participants with examination and other assessment results within 30 days from lodgement of the final assessment. Results will be released by the training providers directly to the participants via email using the contact details provided during enrolment.

Results are released as a final grade. Results will not be published on the Cyber.gov.au / IRAP website.

Results are valid for three months from the date of notification. Applications for IRAP assessor endorsement must be received by ASD within this three month period to be considered for entry into the program.

There are no second attempts at the examination, however participants who achieve a mark between 75% and 79.9% on the examination and pass all other assessment components, may be eligible to sit a supplementary exam. The supplementary examination has a pass mark of 80% and must be sat within three months of receiving initial assessment results.

Participants who receive under 75% in the initial examination or fail the supplementary exam, have not passed the course. Individuals are required to wait for a period of at least 6 months before re-enrolling in the IRAP training course for any subsequent attempt.

IRAP report assessment

During the IRAP training course, participants will conduct assessment activities within the lab environment as part of a scenario-based assessment. Participants will be required to document their assessment activities throughout the course and then use this information to complete a condensed IRAP report using a modified, purpose-built report template.

Participants will be given dedicated time blocks during the course to work on the report, and will be given one week to finalise and submit it to the training provider (the date will be designated by the facilitator).

The report will be assessed against a marking rubric that is based on the *IRAP Common Assessment Framework*. To meet the minimum pass mark for this assessment component, the participant's report must not have any deficiencies which meet the level of 'severe' against the marking rubric and must reflect sufficient evidence of control testing from the lab.

Daily reflections

At the conclusion of each day of the course, participants will be required to complete daily reflections – which have been designed to allow participants to self-reflect on the topics covered during the day.

All daily reflections must be completed and submitted at the end of each day to meet the minimum pass mark for this assessment component.

Examination tips

The following tips may be helpful when answering exam questions

- Read the question carefully, paying attention to key words
- Avoid making additional assumptions about the question or its context
- Select the best answer based only on the information provided (do not construct edge cases)
- Validate your answers against the listed publications, where appropriate

Practice IRAP examination questions

The following questions are examples only and do not appear on the IRAP examination. The following questions are aligned to the December 2024 version of the ISM.

- Lab-based question

  Lab-based questions require the participant to conduct a certain activity within the lab and provide the correct output as the answer. Participants should familiarise themselves with command line capabilities for both Windows and Linux environments.

- IRAP policy questions

Question 1: Explain the concept of IRAP layering for a cloud infrastructure provider, Software-as-a-Service provider, and consuming agency.
Short answer:

- Situational question

Question 2: You are implementing security controls to mitigate Kerberoasting. Which of the following should be implemented? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY):
a. Minimise the number of user objectives configured with SPNs **b. Create user objects with SPNs as group Managed Service Accounts (gMSAs)** **c. Enable RC4 encryption for user objects configured with SPNs** **d. Assign user objects with SPNs the minimum privileges necessary to perform their functions** **e. Ensure user objects with SPNs are not members of the Domain Admins security group**

- Publications and guidelines question

Question 3: Explain the difference between an assessment boundary and an authorisation boundary.
Short answer:

- General knowledge question

Question 4: For which of the following should you use sampling during an assessment? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)
a. Historic application of patches and their timeframes **b. System configurations and control mechanisms that are managed by a central upstream service** **c. Staff understanding of cyber security training, awareness and organisational policies** **d. Configuration of gateways within the assessment boundary** **e. Versions of internet-facing server applications**

Answers to practice IRAP examination questions

Question & answers
Q1: Refer to "Layering IRAP Assessment" within the *IRAP Common Assessment Framework*
Q2: A, B, D, E
Q3: Refer to "Boundary Definitions" within the *IRAP Common Assessment Framework*
Q4: A, C, D

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