Frequently Asked Questions
for Prospective Candidates

1. What is the Bridge Academy?

The Bridge Academy has been launched in a number of countries globally. The academies are hosted by partners in each location that engage local employers, leverage local NGO's, recruit students, deliver the program and oversee the results. The global Bridge to Opporrnity team provide best practices and advice to the program partners to maximize their impact and leverage the insights of all other preceding programs.

2. How is the history? How was it started?

The program was first developed in partnership with a global IT company that had challenges finding qualified talent. The program has evolved over the last 5 years based on the best practices and lessons learned from each program. As a result, each subsequent program leverages best practices from every preceding program. Our continuous improvement through this process has contributed to our strong results.

3. What is the Program Curriculum?

There are two program curriculums that our partners offer generally, and more to come.

The typical **foundations program** develops foundational IT skills and leads to a certification typically as a **Cisco Certified Technician (CCT)**. The foundational program is typically 20 weeks in duration.

The typical **advanced program** develops analytical skills and typically leads to a certification as a **Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA),** often with additional training credentials in cyber-security. This more advanced program is typically 40 weeks in duration.

Following the certification exams, we typically encourage student internships or apprenticeships in an IT role. Graduates will leave the academy with globally certified IT skills that enable them to find jobs in the industry.

4. How long is the program?

The timing and duration of the program is dictated by the delivery partner and curriculum. Typically, the foundations (CCT) program is 20 weeks and the advanced program (CCNA) is 40 weeks.

5. What is the schedule of classes?

The class schedule is set by the program operator and delivery partners. Generally students should plan on attending a class or live "lecture" 4 – 5 hours a day, five days a week.

Additionally, there are labs that are required and self study needed. Students should plan on this being a full time effort for the duration of the program.

6. Does the program include "soft skills"?

Yes, most all our programs include training on job readiness "soft skills" to prepare our candidates for work in the IT industry.

7. Does the training include soft skills?

Yes, our training is beyond technical training only. It includes lab work, some work experience, hands on experiences, ready for work training, guest lecturers, and mentors. The ready for work training includes the development of soft skills to enable our candidates to succeed in the work place. Our training is complemented with Accenture's Skills-to-Succeed Academy program. We have seen the effect of mentoring. Students will be mentored from technically qualified professionals with experience in the industry, so they gain confidence and turn their newly acquired job skills into strong applications and better interviews. Guest lecturers, and employer site visits further enrich the program.

8. What is the program cost?

Typically, the program is free of cost to the students and employers. We seek funding from other sources to cover the cost of delivering the program. This allows us to enroll the best candidates in the programs without regard to their financial predisposition.

9. What is the application process? How do I apply?

The program application process is led by our delivery partners. Normally they solicit interested candidates to attend an information session and then submit an application. A selection committee will then review the applications and interview the candidates. The selected candidates agree to admission to the program and are then enrolled.

10. What jobs does the program prepare candidates for?

The students who complete the full more advanced program aspire to pass the certification as a *Cisco Certified Network Associate* (CCNA), with a training credential in cybersecurity. They are qualified for Network Security Analyst, Information Security Analyst, Cyber Security Analyst roles, or other entry level IT roles

Students who complete the foundational program aspire to become *Cisco Certified Technician (CCT)* certification. Which will enable them for IT Technician jobs.

11. Is there any work experience as part of the training or is it all just classroom training?

Yes, we include a significant amount of hands-on experience during the programme as required in graded lab work. We also seek opportunities for participation in live work environments to prepare the students for future jobs. At the end of the course, students typically will do a three-month internship at an employer where they can put theory into practice and gain valuable work experience.

12. Are internships at the end of the program assured? Are they paid positions?

With our program partners, we try to arrange internships or apprenticeships for all our candidates after they graduate, and pass their certification exam. However, these

internships are not guaranteed. Most of our certified graduates secure internships after graduation either on own or arranged by the program team. In fact, historically 96% of our certified graduates secure an internship. Internships are typically paid at near full pay for 3 to 4 months. The salaries for these jobs are paid for by the employer.

13. What kind of results has this program achieved?

To date, we have had over 25 cohorts of graduates worldwide and over 350 graduates. Additionally there are over 400 planned graduates from our programs in 2022 and early 2023. Overall, we have had 94% of the enrolled students graduate from the program. 92% of graduates pass their certification exam. 96% of certified graduates secure an initial IT job either as a full time-permanent employee or an intern / apprentice.

The program is based on the Three Talents Bridge to Opportunity model that has achieved strong results with multiple cohorts in several global locations. These previous programmes have over 200 students and another 200+ are currently enrolled in a programme. Graduation and employment rates are typically 90%.

14. What comes next for the programme?

We are incredibly proud to have this program and the success we have seen with many of our students. In the short-term, we expect to continue to support the graduation, certification and employment of our students.

Meanwhile, we continue to enhance the program to continue to increase our impact. For example, we recently published our best practice guide for our partners and launched a monthly webinar of guest speakers and relevant skills development for our students and graduates.

In the longer term we intend to continue to expand our program in new locations. We expect to expand our partners and expand the program locations with our current partners.

15. Who forms the partnership of the IT Bridge Academy?

The Bridge Academy is a unique collaboration between public and private partners. In each location our global team develops a unique ecosystem that includes an orchestrator (organizing partner), delivery partner, employers, government groups, non-government entities (NGO's) and disability advocacy organisations. Our global team works with these partners to organize and launch the program leveraging our global best practices.

16. What possible roles can employment partners play to support the IT Bridge Academy?

Partners play a critical role throughout the program. We seek to engage employment partners from the very beginning of the training so they can participate in and enrich the training throughout.

We ask partners to participate as "guest lecturers", host site visits for the students to their facility, offer mentor volunteer and participate as interested in our advisory or steering committee.

The goal of this program is **full employment**. Employment partners are critical to our success as we offer students three-months internships at the end of the course, so they leave with work experience. We will work with employment partners to design suitable internships that match the employers and the student's expectations.

17. As an employer, what do I gain from participating in this partnership?

As an employer, you are joining a unique partnership between international and national partners, the private and the public sector. You will have access to a pool of talents equipped with in-demand IT and computer skills. Through this partnership, you will have the opportunity to become a more disability-confident and inclusive employer. You will be able to work with and recruit young and talented students with disabilities who are ambitious to build careers in the IT sector.

18. What would be the next steps, for interested candidates?

Attend an information session and apply for program admission. We provide application links on our website. If you are interested in a program and location near you not listed on our website please contact Patrick Romzek (promzek@bridgetoopportunity.org) We will guide you toward an appropriate program.

19. What would be the next steps, for interested partners?

If you are interested in joining the partnership, please contact Patrick Romzek (promzek@bridgetoopportunity.org) We will arrange direct dialogue with you about program locations and partnership opportunities.

20. Does the programme focus on one primary disability?

No, we do not focus on only one disability. We welcome students with all disabilities into our programs, and provide the necessary reasonable accommodations based on their impairment.

21. Are the students trained to work only on specific equipment?

No, we train the students to develop general IT skills, as well as expertise in digital literacy, networking, and cybersecurity. Our training is independent of the technology platform and adaptable to technology from multiple vendors and relevant to most employers.

Want to learn more?

Visit our website at **bridgetoopportunity.org**

Email Patrick Romzek, our founder, at **promzek@bridgetoopportunity.org**