ISTQB®
EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY
2019-2020
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ISTQB® (International Software Testing Qualifications Board - www.istqb.org) has created the world’s most successful scheme for certifying software testers. As of January 2020, ISTQB® had administered over 1,000,000 exams and issued more than 700,000 certifications in over 117 countries world-wide, with a growth rate of about 50,000 certifications per year.

As a non-profit organization, with its mission of “advancing the software testing profession”, ISTQB® regularly conducts international online surveys to assess trends in the testing industry.
We are convinced that this survey provides useful information for anyone working in or involved in testing, as well as providing valuable direction for further evolution of the ISTQB® scheme. This is an exciting time in the testing industry and the survey data will help ensure that ISTQB® develops and maintains syllabi that continue to reflect changing testing practices and meets market demands.

In our 2019 edition, more than two thousand people from 89 countries contributed to the ISTQB® Effectiveness Survey. They confirmed the results of 2013 and 2016, with a very positive evaluation of the ISTQB® certification scheme as the majority of the respondents (74%) indicate the significant value of formally accredited training to certification success.

Similar to ISTQB® Effectiveness Surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, the main motivations behind obtaining Certified Tester Foundation Level (CTFL) certification are career path and test skills development. Employee career path development and company image improvement are still the main motivations for managers to have their employees achieve ISTQB® CTFL certification.

Moreover, Advanced Level certification is highly rated by respondents as 71% of them indicate that obtaining Advanced Level certification is significantly or very significantly important to their careers.

Last but not least, ISTQB® Agile Tester certification is highly rated by respondents as 65% of them indicate that obtaining Agile Tester certification is significantly or very significantly important to their careers.

Continuous testing is the top-rated topic demanded to be addressed in near future by ISTQB® from respondents in this year’s survey followed by cloud testing and business intelligence/big data testing respectively.

This survey was designed by the ISTQB® Marketing Working Group and endorsed by ISTQB® Member Boards, accredited training providers and exam providers.

I would like to thank all of you who responded to the survey. Be sure your valuable feedback will significantly contribute to the future of the ISTQB® scheme.
More than two thousand people from 89 countries contributed to the ISTQB® Effectiveness Survey 2019.

The outcome of the 2019 survey confirms the results of the 2013 and 2016 with a very positive evaluation of the ISTQB® Certification Scheme.

Similar to ISTQB® Effectiveness Surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, the main motivation for obtaining Certified Tester Foundation Level (CTFL) certification are career path and test skills development.

In comparison to previous surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, employee career path development and company image improvement are still the main motivation for managers to have their employees achieve ISTQB® CTFL certification.
The majority of the respondents (74%) indicates that accredited training adds significant value to achieving certification success.

Similar to the previous survey conducted in 2016, Advanced Level certification is highly rated by respondents. 71% of respondents indicate that obtaining Advanced Level certification is significantly or very significantly important to their careers.

ISTQB® Agile Tester certification is highly rated by respondents. 65% of respondents indicate that obtaining Agile Tester certification is significantly or very significantly important to their careers.

Continuous testing is the top-rated topic that ISTQB® should address, according to respondents in this year’s survey, followed by cloud testing, and business intelligence/big data testing respectively.
More than two thousand people from 89 countries contributed to the ISTQB® Effectiveness Survey.
How many years of experience do you have in software testing?

2019 survey respondents have a similar distribution in testing work experience to those in the 2016 survey. More than half of the respondents have 5+ years of experience.
39% of respondents are employed by larger enterprise organizations with more than 500 employees. 63% of the total number of respondents’ in this year’s survey were from companies with more than 100 employees.
How many testing professionals does your organization have?

Survey respondents indicated that 23% of [their] organizations had less than 5 testing professionals and 23% had more than 100 testing professionals.
In parallel with the Effectiveness Survey conducted in 2016, the majority of responses were received from test engineers who define or define and execute tests.
To which Industry does your organization belong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computers (Hardware, Desktop Software)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance / Banking / Insurance</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace / Aviation / Automotive</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare / Medical</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering / Architecture</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government / Military</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotechnology</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical / Chemical</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research / Science</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the previous survey conducted in 2016, the highest number of survey participants are from computers, finance, and consulting – more than half of the respondents belong to companies in these industry sectors.
Almost half of the respondents have management experience of 4 or more years.

Almost 20% of the respondents have management experience of 10 or more years.
What was your motivation in obtaining your ISTQB® Certified Tester Foundation Level (CTFL) certification?

Similar to ISTQB® Effectiveness Surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, the main motivations for obtaining Certified Tester Foundation Level (CTFL) certification are career path and test skills development.
WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION TO HAVE YOUR EMPLOYEES ACHIEVE ISTQB® FOUNDATION LEVEL (CTFL) CERTIFICATION?

In comparison to previous surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, employee career path development and company image improvement are still the main motivations for managers to have their employees achieve ISTQB® CTFL certification. These motivations are followed by employee incentive, customer’s demand, and company policy.
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TESTING STAFF WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CERTIFIED AT THE ISTQB® FOUNDATION LEVEL?

More than half of the managers who answered the survey are considering that 80% or more of their staff will obtain ISTQB® CTFL certification.

Although there is a small decline compared to the previous survey conducted in 2016 (53% vs 58%), managers still strongly preferred that high percentages of their team achieve certification.
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THE ISTQB® CTFL CERTIFICATION WILL AFFECT/IMPROVE YOUR FUTURE?

YOUR CAREER PATH
(DEGREE)

2013
High 43%
Some 19%
Low 38%

2016
High 33%
Some 48%
Low 19%

2019
High 44%
Some 42%
Low 14%

YOUR INCOME
(DEGREE)

2013
High 27%
Some 53%
Low 20%

2016
High 41%
Some 43%
Low 16%

2019
High 20%
Some 47%
Low 33%
Respondents perceive that ISTQB® CTFL certification will affect/improve their future by improving their test skills (85%) and in supporting their career path (87%).

There is a slight increase in both of these metrics compared to the previous survey conducted in 2016.
65% of respondents state that ISTQB® certification fully meets or exceeds their expectation. 29% consider that ISTQB® certification meets their expectations partially and only 6% indicated that their expectations were not met. These results align with the results of the previous surveys conducted in 2016 and 2013.
Would you recommend the ISTQB® Foundation Level (CTFL) certification to your colleagues?

As per the results of the previous surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, 92% of the respondents are happy to recommend the ISTQB® Foundation Level (CTFL) certification to their colleagues. This result demonstrates a high level of satisfaction of test professionals with CTFL certification.
HOW WELL DOES THE ISTQB® CTFL SYLLABUS MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

The ISTQB® CTFL syllabus is meeting (partially, fully or exceedingly) the expectations of 96% of the test professionals who answered the survey.
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THE ISTQB® FOUNDATION LEVEL CERTIFICATION EXAM REFLECTS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CANDIDATES?

74% of respondents consider that the ISTQB® Foundation Level certification exam reflects the knowledge of the examinees either reasonably well or exceedingly well. The same level of satisfaction was demonstrated by test professionals in the previous surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016.
As per the results of the previous survey conducted in 2016, the 2019 survey results indicated that 48% of respondents prepared for ISTQB® CTFL certification by attending a formally accredited training course.
The majority of respondents (74%) indicate the significant value of training to certification success. Only a minority of the respondents (6%) question the value of training to certification success.
How important do you think it is to obtain an ISTQB® Advanced Level (CTAL) certification?

Similar to the previous survey conducted in 2016, Advanced Level certification is highly rated by respondents. 71% of respondents indicate that obtaining Advanced Level certification is significantly or very significantly important to their careers; a slight increase from 68% to 71% compared to the previous survey.
DO YOU PLAN TO OBTAIN AN ISTQB® ADVANCED LEVEL CERTIFICATION?

According to the surveys conducted in 2013, 2016, and 2019, there is an increasing trend in the number of test professionals planning to obtain an ISTQB® Advanced Level certification. Compared to the previous survey conducted in 2016, the interest of test professionals in ISTQB® Advanced Level certification has increased from 73% to 77%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in next 2 years</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, sometimes in a future</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What percentage of your testing staff would you like to see certified at an ISTQB® Advanced Level?

As per the previous survey conducted in 2016, companies want to see ISTQB® Advanced Level certified testers in their teams. The percentage of companies who want 51% or more of their team composed of ISTQB® Advanced Level certified testers counts for 28% of the total number of respondents in 2019.
How important do you think it is to obtain an ISTQB® Agile Tester certification?

ISTQB® Agile Tester certification is highly rated by respondents. 65% of respondents indicate that obtaining Agile Tester certification is significantly or very significantly important to their careers.
Do you plan to obtain an ISTQB® Agile Tester certification?

60% of the respondents indicate that they are planning to obtain an ISTQB® Agile Tester certification.

- Yes, sometimes in a future: 33%
- Yes, in next 2 years: 27%
- No: 21%
- Unsure: 19%
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TESTING STAFF WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CERTIFIED AT AN ISTQB® AGILE TESTER?

58% of the managers who answered the survey are considering that 26% or more of their staff will obtain ISTQB® Agile Tester certification, which means a strong demand for Agile Tester certification.
Please select at least 3 topics that you would like ISTQB® to address in the future.

Continuous testing is the top-rated topic in this year’s survey followed by cloud testing and business intelligence/big data testing respectively. Test metrics and effort estimation which was rated second in the survey conducted in 2016 is now rated as the fifth important topic by the respondents.
Exploratory Testing: 20%
Release Management: 18%
Testing in Finance: 18%
Testing Systems of Systems: 17%
Systems Integration Testing: 16%
Configuration Management in Testing: 15%
Embedded System Testing: 15%
Test Environments Management: 15%
Component Testing: 14%
Testing in Telecommunications: 14%
Effective Reviews: 11%
Managing Distributed Teams: Near-shore, Off-shore, On-shore: 10%
WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN ISTQB® TESTING CERTIFICATION IN THE SUBJECTS THAT WE HAVE JUST RELEASED OR ARE ON OUR ROAD-MAP?

- Advance Level - Test Automation Engineer: 50%
- Advance Level - Security Tester: 43%
- Agile Advanced - Agile Technical Tester: 43%
- Specialist - Usability Testing: 42%
The latest additions to the ISTQB® portfolio/roadmap of most interest to respondents are Test Automation Engineer certification (50% of respondents), Security Tester certification (43% of respondents), and Agile Technical Tester certification (43% of respondents).

These certifications are followed by Usability Testing (42%) and Mobile Application Testing (41%) certifications.
GRAPHICAL EDITING

Gizem Taşçı
Graphical Editing

Okan Coşkun
Graphic Design