



Magento Solution Specialist Certification



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Introduction

This Study Guide is intended to help you prepare for the Magento® Certified Solution Specialist Exam. For each content area of the exam, the Study Guide details the objectives (skills) that are tested by the exam. For each objective, it provides questions that you should ask yourself as you study Magento architecture, functionality, and business usage. References to Magento user guides, Magento U classes, eCommerce trends and definitions, and third-party resources and materials are provided to help you find answers to these questions in preparation for taking the actual exam.

This Study Guide is continually being revised and improved. When preparing for the exam, remember to check the website for the latest version of this Study Guide.

What Is a Magento Solution Specialist?

A Magento Solution Specialist is an expert user of the Magento eCommerce platform. Drawing on a deep background in business and eCommerce, the Magento Solution Specialist can efficiently align business objectives with Magento functionality, optimize use of native features, and avoid unnecessary customization. Whether as a merchant, a manager, a consultant, or an analyst, the Magento Solution Specialist knows how to make the best use of Magento technology.

Who Should Take This Test?

- Business Analysts
- Account Managers
- Project Managers
- QA Engineers
- User Experience Designers
- Web Designers
- eCommerce Consultants
- Magento Platform Users

Prerequisites

The questions in the MCSS exam assume that you have a solid product knowledge of Magento Community Edition and Enterprise Edition, including systems functionality, basics of system architecture, and the most popular third-party modules included in the standard Magento installation.


In addition to Magento-specific knowledge, a Solution Specialist should understand basic eCommerce terms and have a good understanding of typical eCommerce business usage scenarios and trends. As eCommerce is an IT industry, it is also important to demonstrate a solid knowledge of the most common software development methodologies, techniques of building software, and methods of gathering business and system requirements.

You can prepare for the exam by reviewing the most recent versions of Magento reference materials, especially:

- [Magento Community Edition User Guide](#) available on the Magento website
- *Magento Enterprise Edition User Guide* available through the Magento Support portal
- eCommerce with Magento (Magento U course)
- Managing Your Magento Store (Magento U course)

Exam Description

The Magento Certified Solution Specialist Exam is a computer-based test consisting of approximately 60 multiple-choice questions. You will have ninety minutes to complete the exam. The exam is based on the content areas listed below. All questions are based on Magento Community Edition v. 1.8 and Magento Enterprise Edition v. 1.13.

 **Note:** All questions assume the default state of native Magento installations, except where specified in the question.

To prepare for the exam, read through the content descriptions in this guide to determine which areas you need to review. You will not have access to any resources or references during the exam.

This table shows the four content areas of the exam and the approximate percentage of questions you can expect in each area.

Content Area	Approximate Percentage of Exam
eCommerce	13%
Magento architecture	27%
Elements of a Magento eCommerce site	35%
Applying Magento knowledge to business goals	25%

Knowledge and Exam Objectives

You are a good candidate for the Magento Solution Specialist Certification if you have knowledge and experience in the following areas:

1. eCommerce:
 - Online merchandising
 - Systems security
 - User experience and usability
 - Laws and regulations
 - System development
2. Magento architecture, including:
 - Basic elements: Layouts, themes, extension/customization
 - Magento data models
 - Magento data flows (typical flow of data processing)
 - Differences between Magento Enterprise Edition (EE) and Magento Community Edition (CE)

3. Elements of a Magento eCommerce site, including:

- Catalog
- Shopping cart
- Payment
- Shipping
- Checkout (features, flow, taxes)
- Order processing
- Cookies
- Security
- Extensions
- Customization
- Customers (segments, groups)
- Promotions and pricing rules
- Import/export (of customers, orders, products)

4. Application of Magento knowledge to business goals, including:

- Mapping client needs to Magento features
- Recommending the most effective options for implementing client requirements in Magento

Content Area 1: eCommerce

The eCommerce section covers general knowledge related to eCommerce and IT systems development. It tests how well you know current methods of selling goods online, enabling an online business, setting up a web store and product catalog, and positioning a catalog for good search results, as well as different payment methods and order delivery types available on the market. Exam questions on these topics are not Magento-specific but seek to probe your knowledge of eCommerce as a field.

Systems and data security is an important aspect of an online business. This section verifies key aspects of eCommerce security, including payment systems industry standards, data privacy policies for online stores, and customer data security practices.

The last section in this content area tests general knowledge of IT system development methodologies. You might be asked to explain SCRUM, Agile, and Waterfall methodologies and the differences between them; or what tools and techniques are important when collecting business and system requirements for an eCommerce project.

This content area comprises approximately 13% of the exam. Questions are drawn randomly from the following topics and objectives.

1.1 Online merchandising

- Marketing strategies: Omnichannel, multichannel, affiliate marketing, social marketing, email marketing, etc.

- Basic steps of setting up a new online store: Platform selection, hosting, deployment, maintenance
- Search strategies: Keyword search, auto-suggest, auto-complete, guided navigation
- Upselling, cross-selling in eCommerce
- SEO in eCommerce

1.2 Security

- User data security standards in different markets (USA, Canada, Australia, Europe)
- PCI standards and processes
- PA-DSS rules and practices
- SSL usage in eCommerce

1.3 User experience

- Usability principles and issues in eCommerce
- Building a good user experience in eCommerce – best practices

1.4 Laws and regulations

- Customer data privacy regulations in USA and Europe

1.5 System development

- Agile, SCRUM, Waterfall IT systems development processes and practices
- Requirements gathering – tools and techniques

Questions to ask yourself while studying:


- What is the difference between omnichannel and multichannel retailing?
- How can you set up a product catalog for best search results, taking into account issues of duplicate content, meta content, meta title, keyword search terms in product description, attribute weight, and so on?
- What is a "canonical link element"?
- What "social merchandising" techniques and tools are used in eCommerce?
- When is SSL required when transacting data online?
- What is PA-DSS? When should PA-DSS be applied?
- What is the process for getting a site certified as PCI-compliant?
- What are best practices for protecting eCommerce user data?
- What are the best usability practices when building an online catalog and checkout system?
- What are the main characteristics of Agile and Waterfall development methodologies?
- What are SMART requirements?

References:

- Magento Community Edition and Enterprise Edition User Guides
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/knowledge-base/>
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/ecommerce-resource-library/>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/LucidImagination/e-commerce-search-strategies-how-faceted-navigation-and-apache-solr-lucene-open-source-search-help-buyers-find-what-they-need>
- Magento U: Requirements Gathering for Successful Magento Implementations

Content Area 2: Magento Architecture

To be certified as a Magento Solutions Specialist, you must have an excellent understanding of Magento system architecture, including the language and framework of the Magento application and the software required to host and run it. This section of the exam tests your knowledge of Magento data models, MVC architecture concepts, when a functional change requires a customization (code change), and when it could be achieved with native Magento functionality.

 **Note:** This section aims to verify that candidates have the level of knowledge needed to help a business achieve its goals using Magento; it does not require or verify the deep technical knowledge required for Magento architects and developers.

This section also tests your knowledge of the main functional differences between Magento Enterprise Edition and Magento Community Edition.

This content area comprises approximately 27% of the exam. Questions are drawn randomly from the following topics and objectives.

2.1 Basic elements: Layouts, themes, extensions/customizations

- MVC architecture in Magento – what is it and how is it used in the Magento application?
- Templates and layouts in Magento – basic responsibilities and roles when executing Magento code
- Extending Magento functionality with a code change or enabling an extension – basic ideas and process steps
- Configuring site design using options found in the Admin panel under System > Design > Configuration
- Installing and enabling Magento extensions

2.2 Magento data models

- Category tree, category attributes, product–category association
- Product, product types, product options, product attributes, product relationship, product price management
- Tax, product tax, customer tax, shopping cart tax calculation
- Catalog and shopping cart price discounts
- CMS pages and blocks, widgets and banners
- Orders, orders attributes, invoices and payments, order shipping and RMA
- Customers, customer attributes
- Reports

2.3 Magento data flows

- Product attributes management, product creation, product import
- Shopping cart and checkout: Data flow and functionality, payment process
- Order management using Magento Admin functionality
- Customer management using storefront and Admin Magento functionality, customer data import
- Management of multiple websites and stores, multiple currencies
- Magento Web Services API and integration with third-party systems

2.4 Magento editions

- Merchandising features in Magento Enterprise Edition
- Solr search integration
- Magento Secure Payment Bridge
- Payment methods in Magento Enterprise Edition
- Customer attributes and segments in Magento Enterprise Edition
- Full page cache and indexing differences between editions
- All other differences between Magento Community Edition and Magento Enterprise Edition

Questions to ask yourself while studying:

- What are the unique advantages of Magento MVC architecture when building a site?
- What are the two methods available in the Magento Admin (in the System section) to change the design of a site?
- How can you change the layout of catalog pages using Magento Admin functionality?

- How is product data constructed in Magento (product attributes, inventory, price, images, etc.)?
- When does product inventory change (decrease) during the ordering process? How can an administrator control the inventory change?
- What is RMA in Magento and what are the RMA types?
- What are the required attributes for creating a CMS page using Magento Admin functionality?
- What is the process for creating a product, and what catalog data is used in this process?
- How is the price defined for a product and what methods are available for changing product price using Magento Admin functionality?
- What are main differences in Magento indexing between Magento Community Edition 1.8 and Enterprise Edition 1.13?
- What marketing and merchandising features are available only in Magento Enterprise Edition?
- What payment methods and payment functionality are available only in Magento Enterprise Edition?

References:

- Magento Community Edition and Enterprise Edition User Guides
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/knowledge-base/>
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/wiki>
- Magento U courses: eCommerce with Magento, Managing your Magento Store, Stepping Up Sales with Magento Promotions and Discounts

Content Area 3: Elements of a Magento eCommerce Site

Knowing how to build a business solution with Magento requires a solid knowledge of the application itself. This section tests your knowledge of the features and functionality of Magento Enterprise Edition and Community Edition.

This Study Guide lists some examples of questions you might have on the exam, but any aspect of Magento functionality may be asked about. To do well on this section, you should have a solid understanding of Magento features and the ways in which different modules and functionality could be used to support different business requirements.

This content area comprises approximately 35% of the exam. Questions are drawn randomly from the following topics and objectives.

3.1 Catalog

3.2 Shopping cart

3.3 Payment

3.4 Shipping (MyAccount, Wishlist)

3.5 Checkout (features, flow, taxes)

3.6 Order processing (order management, fulfillment, order statuses)

3.7 Cookies

3.8 Security

3.9 Extensions

3.10 Customization

3.11 Customers (segments, groups)

3.12 Promotions and pricing rules

3.13 Import/export (of customers, orders, products)

Questions to ask yourself while studying Magento modules and system sections:

3.1 Catalog

- What are the different product types in Magento Enterprise Edition?
- What are the minimum attributes to create a simple product?
- What is the product “Attributes Set” used for in Magento? Can you have different product types using the same Attributes Set?
- What is the process of creating layered navigation (including category creation and attributes, product attribute types, and product–category associations)?
- What are the different ways in which an Admin user can update product inventory?
- How can you display associated products in the cart and on the product page?

- How can you create page redirects for specific search requests?
- Can a customer submit a JPG image with a product review?
- How can you display a telephone number in a page footer using Admin functionality?
- Which Magento feature can be used to display different content (example: CMS banner) depending on customer type/group?

3.2 Shopping cart

- How can you create a product discount to have it automatically added in the shopping cart?
- What are the different product or order price discount options available in the shopping cart in Magento Enterprise Edition?
- Can guest customers place orders?
- Can customers ship products to multiple different addresses using native Magento functionality?
- How can a customer register an account when placing an order?
- Can shopping cart products be shared among different websites?
- What are the different shopping cart promotion types, and how can shoppers apply them as discounts?
- How does the persistent shopping cart option work in Magento?
- Does Magento Enterprise Edition functionality allow merchants to contact shoppers about their abandoned shopping carts?

3.3 Payment

- What are the different payment types available in Magento EE v. 1.13?
- What is Magento Secure Payment Bridge?
- Does Magento save credit card numbers in the database when the Authorize.Net payment method is used?
- For what product types can the Magento Recurring Profile be enabled?
- Where can the PayPal Express payment method be used on a Magento site (on which pages)?
- What is the difference between the Authorize Only and Authorize and Capture payment actions?

3.4 Shipping (My Account, Wishlist)

- Can a storefront customer select a delivery date when placing an order with the table rates shipping option?
- What shipping methods are available natively in Magento Enterprise Edition?
- What shipping option attributes are available for a customer when placing an order?
- How is the shipping cost calculated for the DHL and table rates methods?
- How can a customer account password be changed by a customer or an Admin user?
- Can customers share their wishlists with friends?
- Can a customer print an order invoice from the My Account section?

3.5 Checkout (features, flow, taxes)

- What product types do not require any shipping cost?
- Can a customer apply a coupon on the order review page?
- Is it possible to change product qty during checkout, on the order review page?
- What is a gift certificate, and how can it be used?

3.6 Order processing (order management, fulfillment, order statuses)

- When an order is saved in the Magento database, what triggers a confirmation email to a customer who pays using PayPal Express? (Logging in to the PayPal account? Clicking the Checkout button? Clicking the Purchase button?)
- When editing a pending order, what order data can be changed?
- What are the different order statuses available in Magento and how can they be managed by a store owner?
- What are the different methods of creating an order in Magento: One Page Checkout, Multiple Addresses Checkout, Backend Create Order, Web Services API, Order Import, Other?
- Does Magento native logic allow for partial shipment or partial payment of an order, and if so, what are the conditions for using this functionality?

3.7 Cookies

- How are cookies used in Magento?
- What customer's data is saved in cookies, and how is it used in the storefront using Magento native functionality?

3.8 Security

- What are three major security features in native Magento EE v. 1.13?
- What is the data encryption, hashing key management method used in Magento EE v. 1.13?

3.9 Extensions

- Where can a merchant find Magento extensions?
- What are the two ways of installing an extension in Magento?
- How can a Magento Admin user disable an extension using Admin functionality?

3.10 Customization

- Does a layout change of a category page from one column to three columns require a customization?
- Which of the following changes requires a code customization: Displaying a banner in the page content area, changing a footer link, changing a product page layout from one column to two columns?
- Does creating a product price attribute require a customization or can this be achieved using native Magento functionality?
- Could you create a “How did you hear about us?” customer attribute to collect customer data during purchase and export it to a CSV file using Magento native functionality, or would that require a code customization?

3.11 Customers (segments, groups)

- How can customer groups be used in assigning discounts?
- What are the differences between customer segments and customer groups?
- Using Magento Enterprise Edition native functionality, how could you display a personalized banner targeted to customers who match specific conditions?

3.12 Promotions and pricing rules

- How can product attributes be used when creating shopping cart discounts?
- How is shopping cart coupon code use tracked with Magento native logic?
- What are the three common methods of creating product price discounts?
- How could you create a product price discount and display a related “on sale” banner on listing pages using Magento Enterprise Edition functionality?


3.13 Import/export (of customers, orders, products)

- What customer and product data can be imported and exported using Magento native logic?

- What is the process of creating a product in Magento using product import functionality?
- What product types can be created in Magento Enterprise Edition v. 1.13 using product import functionality?
- Can you add an image to a product using Magento product import functionality?

Content Area 4: Application of Knowledge to Business Goals

This section tests your ability to apply your knowledge of Magento to specific situations and to respond to typical customer questions. For example, a Magento Solutions Specialist should have the ability to map customer needs to native Magento functionality, where this is possible, or to propose an alternative solution, either a Magento extension or a customization, when native functionality will not meet the need.

 **Note:** This section aims to verify that candidates have the level of knowledge needed to help a business achieve its goals using Magento; it does not require or verify the deep technical knowledge required for Magento architects and developers.

This content area requires solid Magento product knowledge, including a clear understanding of how to leverage Magento features for online business, how Magento can be integrated with third-party solutions, and different approaches to extending Magento functionality.

This section comprises approximately 25% of the exam.

Questions to ask yourself while studying:

- A customer wants to display a CMS block on category pages. What would be the most efficient way to implement that?
- Given a merchant's need to have a Magento Enterprise Edition deployment certified against PCI standards, what payment method(s) would you recommend as the easiest technical solution to satisfy PCI requirements?
- A customer wants the ability to preview product information pages in the production environment before making them live. What Magento Enterprise Edition module would you recommend to satisfy this need?
- A merchant uses a Magento system, along with other online interfaces, as part of a multichannel business, and the merchant uses a business intelligence application to aggregate data from all these systems. What native features would allow the merchant to integrate Magento with this application?

References:

- Magento Community Edition and Enterprise Edition User Guides
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/media/webinars>
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/ecommerce-resource-library/>
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/knowledge-base/>
- <http://www.magentocommerce.com/wiki>
- Magento U: eCommerce with Magento, Managing Your Magento Store, Stepping Up Sales with Magento Promotions and Discounts