SmartSuite

Framework / Cloud Security / CSA STAR

CSA STAR — Security, Trust, Assurance, and Risk Program (CCM v4.1)

CSA STAR is the Cloud Security Alliance's public registry for cloud assurance: a CAIQ self-assessment at Level 1, an ISO/IEC 27001 or SOC 2 audit at Level 2, built on CCM v4.1.



What it is

CSA STAR (Security, Trust, Assurance and Risk) is the Cloud Security Alliance's public registry and assurance program for cloud services: providers publish either a self-assessment or an independent audit result against the Cloud Controls Matrix (CCM), and customers read it instead of sending their own questionnaires. Participation is voluntary. CSA dates the program to 2011, and the current control set is CCM v4.1, released in January 2026.

The Cloud Security Alliance (CSA), a not-for-profit industry body, publishes the program and runs the registry. It does not bind anyone by law. Cloud providers use it to show their security posture to buyers, and buyers, procurement teams and third-party risk teams use the registry entries as due diligence evidence.

At a glance

PUBLISHER
Cloud Security Alliance (CSA)

TYPE
Certification / Assurance Program

VERSION
CCM v4.1 and CAIQ v4.1 (released January 2026); STAR Registry accepts v4.0 and v4.1 until December 2027

EFFECTIVE
2012 (STAR Registry)

DOMAIN
Cloud Security

FAMILY
CSA STAR

REGION
Global

INDUSTRY
Cloud & Technology Providers

ADOPTION MODEL
Certification

IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY
High

Source: cloudsecurityalliance.org/star

Why it matters

- **One registry, fewer questionnaires** Providers publish once to the STAR Registry and customers read the entry, which CSA says reduces the need to fill out multiple customer questionnaires.
- **Two assurance levels** Level 1 is a self-assessment for lower-risk environments; Level 2 adds a third-party audit for medium and high risk environments, so buyers can match the evidence to their own risk.
- **Built on audits providers already run** Level 2 reuses ISO/IEC 27001 certification or a SOC 2 engagement and adds the cloud-specific CCM controls on top.
- **A public control baseline** The CCM v4.1 sets out 207 controls across 17 security domains that any provider can implement and any customer can reference.

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How SmartSuite supports CSA STAR

CCM Control Library

Hold the 207 CCM v4.1 controls with an owner, a review date and links to the ISO/IEC 27001 or SOC 2 controls they map to.

CAIQ Response Workflow

Draft, review and approve the yes/no answers to the 283 CAIQ v4.1 questions, with the evidence reference behind each answer.

Assurance Level Evidence

Keep the ISO/IEC 27001 certificate or SOC 2 report, scope statements and auditor correspondence for STAR Level 2, with expiry dates.

Annual Update and Expiry Calendar

Track the annual Level 1 refresh, the one-year attestation listing and the three-year certification cycle with reminders.

Version Transition Plan

Record the gap between CCM v4.0 and v4.1 controls and the December 2027 and January 2028 dates as an action plan.

Vendor Registry Review

Log the STAR level, CCM version and expiry of each cloud provider you rely on, and report providers without a current listing.

Common framework mappings

ISO 27001:2022 · ISO 27017 · ISO 27018 · ISO 27701 · NIST CSF 2.0 · NIST 800-53 Rev.5 · SOC 2

Official resources

CSA STAR Self-Assessment

Provides a structured format for cloud providers to document security controls implementation.

cloudsecurityalliance.org/star/self-assessment

CSA STAR Certification

Outlines the third-party certification process for evaluating cloud service providers.

cloudsecurityalliance.org/star/certification

CSA Cloud Controls Matrix (CCM)

Defines a controls framework aligned with CSA STAR requirements and standards.

cloudsecurityalliance.org/research/cloud-controls-matrix

CSA STAR Program Overview

Describes the structure and benefits of participating in the CSA STAR assurance program.

cloudsecurityalliance.org/star

Frequently asked questions

What is CSA STAR and who runs it?

CSA STAR is the Security, Trust, Assurance and Risk program of the Cloud Security Alliance. It is a public registry where cloud providers publish a self-assessment or an independent audit result against the Cloud Controls Matrix. Participation is voluntary.

What is the difference between STAR Level 1 and Level 2?

Level 1 is a self-assessment: the provider submits the CAIQ and updates it annually. Level 2 is a third-party audit, either STAR Certification (ISO/IEC 27001 plus the CCM, certificates valid three years) or STAR Attestation (a SOC 2 engagement plus the CCM, listings valid one year).

Which CCM version does STAR use now?

CCM v4.1 and CAIQ v4.1, released in January 2026, with 207 controls in 17 domains and 283 CAIQ questions. The registry has accepted both v4.0 and v4.1 since March 2026. After December 2027 all new submissions use v4.1, and v4.0 is withdrawn in January 2028.

Is a CSA STAR listing a certification?

Only Level 2 STAR Certification is a certification, and only for the service named in the listing. A Level 1 listing is a self-assessment, and STAR Attestation is a SOC 2 report issued by a CPA firm. Check the level and the CCM version shown on the registry entry.

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Does CSA STAR cover AI services?

Yes, through STAR for AI. Organizations submit an AI-CAIQ for Level 1, and since 20 November 2025 they can combine an AI-CAIQ with an ISO/IEC 42001 certification to reach Level 2.

License included / downloadable: No The STAR Registry and the CCM and CAIQ downloads are published free by the Cloud Security Alliance under its own terms; they are not included with the platform.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/csa-star-security-trust-assurance-risk-program

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