

CAREER ROADMAP

How to Become a CISO (with an AI Security Focus): A Complete Roadmap

The roadmap to the CISO role with an AI-security focus: the technical foundation, the governance experience, the certifications, and the path to the C-suite.

A free career roadmap from GRC Careers · AGJ, the AI governance job board

Read the latest version, and browse live cybersecurity & GRC jobs, at ai-governance-jobs.com/guides/how-to-become-a-ciso

The **Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)** owns an organization's security and increasingly its **AI security** posture, from threats against AI systems to securing the data and models the business now depends on.

WHAT THE MODERN CISO OWNS

- Enterprise security strategy, risk, and the security program
- Governance against [ISO 27001](#), NIST CSF, SOC 2, and the **NIST AI RMF** for AI systems
- Securing AI/ML pipelines, models, and data against new attack classes
- Board and regulator reporting on cyber and AI risk

THE PATH IS A LADDER

CISOs rarely start at the top. The typical climb: security analyst → security engineer/architect or GRC lead → security manager → director → CISO. An AI-security focus is the differentiator now.

CERTIFICATIONS

CISSP is the cornerstone; **CISM** for the management track; **CISA** for audit/assurance; and increasingly AI-security and AI-governance credentials. Full details and salary data are in the [GRC Certifications Guide](#).

THE PATH

1. **Build the technical base** — Security+ → CISSP, hands-on security experience.
2. **Move into leadership** — own a security domain, then a team.
3. **Add governance & AI** — run a program against ISO 27001 / NIST CSF and the NIST AI RMF.
4. **Develop executive skills** — risk quantification, board communication.
5. **Target the role** — **browse live cybersecurity & security-leadership roles on GRC Careers**; titles: CISO, Deputy CISO, VP Security, Head of Security & AI Risk.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long does it take to become a CISO?

Usually 10-15 years of progressive security experience. The path runs from analyst through engineer/architect or GRC lead, then security manager, director, and finally CISO.

What certifications do CISOs need?

CISSP is the cornerstone, with CISM for management and CISA for audit. AI-security and AI-governance credentials are increasingly valuable as CISOs take on AI risk.

Where can I find CISO and security-leadership jobs?

Browse live cybersecurity, GRC, and security-leadership roles on GRC Careers ([ai-governance-jobs.com](#)).

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