

Why do we need Windows Administrator Rights?

The delivery of our exams, including our Live-in-the-Application (LITA) exams, in Compass for Windows requires the use of Windows Administrator rights to run properly. This is because the exam driver needs read/write access to the Windows registry to perform the following:

- **Exam Security:** We lock down the exam to prevent the Test Candidate from accessing outside resources.
- **Application Functionality:** Because of how we utilize the locally installed Adobe Creative Cloud, Autodesk, and Microsoft Office applications in our Adobe Certified Professional, Autodesk Certified User, and Microsoft Office Specialist exams, the exam driver needs to access the registry and App Data folders because this is where these applications store settings like Themes, Fonts, Templates, Configurations, etc., which we use to create exam content.
- **Registry Access:** We use the Admin Credentials to take a copy of all related registry settings prior to an exam so that we can restore the exact settings at the conclusion of an exam so that no user or device settings are impacted outside of the exam.

Important: In Windows networks, any domain-level GPOs (group policy objects) in effect that would prevent any of the above actions will override the privileges of a local Windows Administrator.

Wrapping the Admin Credentials into Compass

Compass for Windows can collect and securely store the credentials of a Windows Admin user, allowing Compass to use this account only when required. The Test Candidate can then log in to Windows as a standard user, and will not have access to these stored credentials, nor can they access anything on the machine beyond the rights of their own account.

We take the responsibility of securing passwords seriously:

- Passwords are encrypted with SHA1-256-bit encryption and a unique encryption key is generated when storing the credentials.
- The decryption process takes place locally. The private keys are stored in a secured local location that is only accessible via the Compass for Windows app which is used for decryption. The credentials are never uploaded to a database.
- Decrypted password data is never written to disk.

For more information on Compass for Windows including best practices, see the [user guide](#).