



Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop Advanced Specialization

Program Guide, Audit Checklist, and FAQ
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Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop Advanced Specialization

1. Program overview

Partners who demonstrate deep knowledge, extensive experience, and proven success in deploying, optimizing, and securing virtual desktop infrastructure on Azure with Windows Virtual Desktop (WVD) may seek the Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization.

The Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization allows partners with an active [Gold Cloud Platform Competency](#) to further differentiate their organizations, demonstrate their capabilities, and build stronger connections with customers.

Partners who earn an advanced specialization will have a customer-facing label displayed on their business profile, gain access to specific go-to-market programs, and be prioritized in customer searches in the [Microsoft Partner Directory](#). For those reasons, this opportunity is available only to partners who meet additional, stringent requirements.

This document defines the requirements for the Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization program and provides guidelines for the auditing process.

2. Program requirements

To earn the Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization, a partner must meet all the requirements listed below, as assessed by Microsoft and/or a third-party vendor, either automatically or by manual review. These requirements are subject to change.

Prerequisites	
Relative competency	Your company must have an active Gold Cloud Platform Competency.
Performance	<p>Your company must show a monthly average of at least USD2,000 of customer Azure Consumed Revenue (ACR) from Windows Virtual Desktop aggregated from at least one or more customers in the previous three months.</p> <p>Your company should achieve ACR through Digital Partner of Record, Partner Admin Link, or Cloud Solution Provider.</p> <p>Effective September 2021: Performance Increase Notice</p> <p>Your company must show a monthly average of at least USD10,000 of customer Azure Consumed Revenue (ACR) from Windows Virtual Desktop aggregated from at least two or more customers in the previous three months.</p>

<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>Your company must have at least five individuals pass the following certifications (each certification listed below must be held by at least one individual):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Azure Security Engineer • Azure Solution Architect • Azure Administrator • Microsoft 365 Enterprise Administrator Expert <p>AND</p> <p>Your company must also have at least three individuals pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WVD Partner Technical Assessment <p>You can have a combination of the same individuals or different individuals meet both the certification requirement and technical assessment.</p>
<p>Audit</p>	<p>Your company must pass a third-party audit.</p>

3. Information on the audit

The audit checklist will be updated every six months to keep up with technology and market changes. The audit is conducted by an independent third-party auditor.

Partners may only apply for the audit when the Program Prerequisites are fully met. The audit must be completed within 30 calendar days of audit application and must be against the then-current program requirements.

Partners will be awarded a Pass or No Pass result upon completion of the audit. The Pass result is valid for one calendar year.

If a partner receives a No Pass result, they will have an opportunity for remediation on the checklist items that were failed. If they fail their remediation, they may not retake the audit against the same audit checklist. However, they may re-apply to be audited against a subsequent audit checklist providing they still meet all other program requirements.

4. Program status and term

When a partner meets all requirements and Microsoft receives a valid Pass Report from the third-party audit company, the partner will be awarded the Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization for one calendar year.

Status and the associated Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization can only be used by the organization that met all requirements and passed the audit (determined by Partner ID). Subsidiary or affiliated organizations may not advertise the status or leverage the associated badge.

5. Program reenrollment

Partners must requalify annually, completing a re-audit before their current audit pass certificate expires.

To requalify, partners must meet all the requirements current at the time of their requalification. Requirements will be published on the MPN portal or in the applicable Program Guide.

6. How to apply

Only administrators of an organization's Microsoft partner account can submit an application for the Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization on behalf of the organization.

If you have the appropriate role and access, you can apply by [signing in to your Partner Center account](#) and navigating to your Partner Center dashboard > Competencies > advanced specializations. If you are still in PMC, work with your Partner Development Manager to migrate to Partner Center. Once you are fully migrated, you can apply through your Partner Center dashboard.

Audit Process

Process Overview

Microsoft uses an independent third-party audit company, Information Security Systems International, LLC (ISSI), to schedule and conduct advanced specialization audits.

Step	Action	Responsibility
1	Review requirements. Applications are submitted in two stages. Initial Application Phase: (1) Prerequisites (2) Audit <i>Recommended: Please review the audit checklist thoroughly and do not begin your application unless you are ready to undertake the audit.</i>	Partner
2	Validation that partner meets prerequisites.	Microsoft
3	Confirm to third-party audit company that partner is eligible for audit.	Microsoft
4	Schedule and confirm audit within two business days.	ISSI (with Partner)
5	Conduct audit within 30 calendar days of the approval for audit.	ISSI
6	Provide Gap Report within two business days of the completed audit to partner listing Open Action Items.*	ISSI
7	Provide Open Action Items response within 15 calendar days to auditor in Gap Review Meeting, if required.*	Partner
8	Send Final Report to partner within five calendar days of audit or Gap Review Meeting, if necessary.	ISSI
9	Notification to partner of program status.	Microsoft

*These steps will be skipped if the partner has no Open Action Items after the audit.

Glossary and audit phases and roles

Glossary

Pre-Audit Assessment

An optional one-day remote assessment checking partner readiness for audit and giving guidance on preparation for the audit.

Audit

Half-day remote audit. Carried out remotely by a qualified ISSI auditor. Partners must present evidence for 100 percent of checklist items.

Open Action Item

If the auditor deems that the partner has failed to demonstrate the required evidence for an audit checklist item during the audit, this will be recorded as an **Open Action Item** and is included in the Gap Report.

Gap Report

Open Action Items are listed in the Gap Report, which will be sent to partners within two business days of their audit. The Gap Report will detail all Open Action Items and the evidence still required. Partners have two business days to acknowledge receipt and to schedule a Gap Review Meeting. The Gap Review Meeting must take place within 15 calendar days of the Gap Report being issued.

Gap Review Meeting

Partners who receive a Gap Report have 15 calendar days from receipt of the report to close the Open Action Items via a Gap Review Meeting. The Gap Review Meeting is done over Skype and may not exceed three hours.

Missed Item

If the auditor deems that the partner has failed to demonstrate the required evidence for an audit checklist item during the Gap Review Meeting, this will be recorded as a **Missed Item** and is included in the Final Report.

Final Report

The Final Report is provided to the partner and denotes whether they earn a **Pass or No Pass** in the audit. Final Reports showing a "Pass" can be issued at the end of either the audit or the Gap Review Meeting. Final Reports showing a "No Pass" will be issued after the Gap Review Meeting, or in the case where a partner either chooses not to proceed to a Gap Review Meeting or fails to acknowledge receipt of the Gap Report.

Audit Phases

Audit Preparation and Scheduling Phase

Microsoft uses an independent third-party audit company (ISSI) to schedule and conduct advanced specialization audits. Once a partner meets all program prerequisites, Microsoft will pass their details to the audit company. Partners will receive a communication from the auditor asking them to propose dates for their pre-audit assessment and audit.

Note: Partners cannot schedule their pre-audit assessment or audit until they have met all other program prerequisites (see Program Prerequisites).

The audit company will make every effort to accommodate the partner's requested audit date and will attempt to schedule an auditor in the region closest to the remote audit location to minimize travel costs. Once the date and auditor are confirmed, the partner will be provided with a detailed confirmation for the audit day(s).

Partners have a maximum of 30 calendar days from notification of a successful application to complete their audit. Prior to the pre-audit assessment, the partner is expected to review the audit checklist and prepare questions for the auditor around the audit process. The intention of the pre-audit assessment is to enable the partner to have a general discussion of the audit scope, expectations, preparation, and the requirements of the controls, allowing the partner to gain general knowledge of the program requirements.

The pre-audit assessment is not:

- A review of prepared materials
- A deep dive into specific controls

** Please note there is a cost associated with the pre-audit assessment and audit. See Payment Terms and Conditions.*

Pre-Audit Assessment Phase

The Pre-Audit Assessment Phase is **optional** and is conducted by the third-party audit company (ISSI). The purpose is to help the partner prepare for the audit. The pre-audit assessment can be scheduled at any time.

Partners work directly with ISSI to schedule this remote session (online web conference), which covers the following:

- Conducted using the partner's preferred conferencing platform. The duration is typically 6-8 hours. The partner reviews the audit requirements and discusses the required evidence with an experienced MSP auditor.
- To ensure objectivity, the pre-audit assessment is conducted by someone other than the partner's assigned remote auditor.
 - Deliverable is a written report detailing any identified gaps and recommendations for closure.

** Please note there is a cost associated with the pre-audit assessment. See Payment Terms and Conditions.*

Audit Phase

Prior to the audit, the partner is expected to have undertaken a thorough review of the Audit Checklist, compiled all required evidence, and ensured the right subject matter experts (SMEs) are available to present the required evidence.

An agenda will be provided to the partner upon confirmation of the audit date. During the audit, the partner must provide access to the appropriate personnel who can discuss and disclose evidence to demonstrate compliance to program requirements. It is highly recommended that subject matter experts for each section attend.

On the day of the audit, the partner must be prepared to provide the auditor with access to live demonstrations, documents, and personnel as necessary to demonstrate compliance to requirements.

During the audit, the auditor will seek to verify whether the partner can provide satisfactory evidence to show they meet all required audit checklist items.

There are two possible outcomes at the end of the **audit**:

- (1) The partner passes the audit.
 - a. The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit, including identifying observed strengths and opportunities for improvement.
 - b. The auditor will provide a **Final Report** to the Partner.
 - c. The auditor will notify Microsoft (subject to Auditor Terms and Conditions).

- (2) The partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the **audit**.
 - a. The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit, including observed strengths and **Open Action Items**.
 - b. The partner will receive a **Gap Report** detailing the **Open Action Items**.
 - c. The partner will move into the **Gap Review Phase** (See [Gap Review Phase](#)).

Gap Review Phase

If the partner does not demonstrate evidence to the auditor's satisfaction to meet the required scores across all audit categories during the **audit**, the partner will move into the **Gap Review Phase**.

The partner will receive a **Gap Report** detailing the **Open Action Items** with the required outstanding evidence within 2 business days from the **audit**. Upon receipt of the **Gap Report**, the partner has 2 business days to acknowledge receipt and schedule a Gap Review Meeting. The **Gap Review Meeting** is conducted over the partner's virtual conference platform of choice with the auditor and must take place within 15 calendar days of when the **Gap Report** was sent, and last no more than 3 hours. During the **Gap Review Meeting** the partner must present evidence to address all the **Open Action Items**.

There are two possible outcomes at the end of the **Gap Review Meeting**.

- (1) The partner passes the audit.
 - a. The auditor will confirm the partner has satisfied the required evidence during the **Gap Review Meeting**.
 - b. The auditor will provide a **Final Report** to the partner.
 - c. The auditor will notify Microsoft (subject to auditor Terms and Conditions).
- (2) The partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the **Gap Review Meeting**.
 - a. The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit, including **Missed Items**.
 - b. The partner will receive a **Final Report** detailing the **Missed Items**.
 - c. The auditor will notify Microsoft (subject to Auditor Terms and Conditions).

If the partner is still unable to provide evidence that satisfies the auditor during their **Gap Review Meeting**, they will be deemed to have failed the audit and will need to begin the application process again.

Roles

Role of the auditor

It is the role of the auditor to review submitted evidence and objectively assess if the evidence provided satisfies the audit checklist requirements.

The auditor will select and evaluate evidence, based on samples of the information available from live systems. The appropriate use of such sampling is closely related to the confidence that can be placed in the audit conclusions.

All ISSI auditors are under nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with Microsoft. Auditors will also comply with requests from partners to sign a direct NDA.

Role of the partner

The partner must provide objective evidence to satisfy the auditor for all checklist items. It is the responsibility of the partner to have reviewed all checklist items prior to the audit, to have collated all necessary documentation and evidence, and to have ensured the right subject matter experts are available to discuss and show systems as appropriate.

All audit evidence must be reproducible and verifiable.

Role of the Microsoft Partner Development Manager

For partners that have an assigned Microsoft Partner Development Manager (PDM), the PDM is responsible for ensuring that the partner fully understands the requirements prior to applying for the audit. The Partner Development Manager may also attend the audit to address any Microsoft partner business relationship issues that may arise but may not otherwise intervene in the audit process.

Payment Terms and Conditions

Pricing Schedule

Pre-audit Assessment: USD2,000

Audit: USD2,000

Gap Review Meeting: Included

Payment Terms

The cost of the audit and pre-audit assessment, if selected, is payable in full to the audit company and must be settled before the audit or pre-audit assessment. Failure to pay will result in cancellation of the audit.

Audit Checklist

The V1.0 Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization audit checklist is made up of four checklist controls. For some controls, a reference customer or customer evidence is required as part of the documentation requested. A partner must show at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months. The same partner can be used across audit checklist controls or a different customer can be used. For audit evidence relating to customer engagements, a customer case study may be referenced multiple times.

All audit checklist items must be met in order to pass the audit.

This audit aims to validate that the partner:

- Applies a framework for successful migration to a cloud environment (governance, architecture decisions, networking, security, etc.).
- Has experience in successfully migrating production workloads to Azure.
- Uses automated tools and processes for migration assessment and delivery.
- Promotes its workload migration to Azure practice on its public-facing website.

1.0 Pre-Sales

Partner must have pre-sales material that demonstrates the value of Windows Virtual Desktop and documented evidence showing successful delivery of customer projects.

Partner roles required

Sales, Marketing

Requirement

1.1	<p>Requirement: Pre-Sales Partner must show materials supporting pre-sales activities listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sales material that showcases a Windows Virtual Desktop (WVD) offer, including a website with WVD service or an Azure Marketplace services offering for WVD, leave behind material, and customer presentations.• A working demo environment of latest WVD version that showcases the product and the partner's value add to WVD—for example, ISV/IHV partner ecosystem integration or partner value (ticketing, support, automation, methodology).• An initial cost estimate for consuming the WVD service, using the Azure pricing calculator or other methodology.• At least two WVD proposals for customer projects (proposals can be for the same or different customers, proposal do not have to be from signed customers), that should evidence:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supported scenarios: WVD Native Deployments (Greenfield and Migration), excluding Citrix and VMWare <p>Required evidence</p> <p>Accepted documentation (any of the following): Statement of Work, Design documentation, Architecture, Bill of Quantity, Estimated Costs, Request for Proposal, customer presentations, website, and/or implementation and migration methodology.</p> <p>For the demo environment partner should walk through the demo lab environment, or show a document that describes the demo lab.</p>
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2.0 Assessment, Planning, Design, and Proof of Concept

Partner must have a repeatable methodology for understanding the customer environment and use this knowledge to plan, design, and deliver a proof of concept on Windows Virtual Desktop. This must include:

- Methodology to gather new requirements and propose Greenfield WVD-based solution
- Methodology to assess customer's existing environment and propose migrating to WVD-based solution that aligns to the [Azure Cloud Adoption Framework](#)

Partner roles required

Solution Architect/Consultant

2.1 Requirement: Assessment, Planning, and Design

Partner has a repeatable methodology that accurately reviews the customer requirements and existing environment to produce a Windows Virtual Desktop environment design. See [Windows Virtual Desktop deployment or migration](#) for an example of an iterative methodology for deployment.

Repeatable methodology should cover ALL of the following to create a WVD deployment design:

- **Customer Licensing:** Customer's existing licensing and eligibility to consume WVD and Microsoft 365 services.
- **User Landscape:** User Density (Users per Host), User Segmentation (light, medium, heavy), Applications each user group will consume.
- **Application Landscape:** Tooling and telemetry data to accurately understand each of the applications that will be hosted in WVD to ensure app performance meets customer requirement and application licensing compatibility with WVD.
- **Core Infrastructure:** Documented understanding of the customer's existing Azure infrastructure components and identification of the necessary implementation and changes required to accommodate new WVD deployment.
- **Azure landing zone:** Design for the environment in Azure that will host the WVD implementation in alignment with the [design areas outlined in the Cloud Adoption Framework for Azure](#). The landing zone design must also demonstrate how the design considers WVD-specific constraints related to networking identity and Availability and Disaster Recovery in the following bullets, as outlined in the [Azure landing zone review for WVD scenarios](#).
- **Azure Networking:** Design of Azure Networking components, including but not limited to, Hub-Spoke Architecture, Peering, VPN, ExpressRoute, NSG, Private Endpoint, Service Endpoint, Azure Firewall, NVAs, or other Microsoft or third-party solution.
- **Identity & Security:** Document how the following are used within the design:
 - Identity (Azure Active Directory, Active Directory),
 - Azure Security Services (ASC, Sentinel, LA, NSG, Hub-Spoke Design, Azure Firewall, etc.),
 - M365 Security (MDATP, etc.),
 - And/or other third-party security solutions (ControlUp, DeviceTrust, MacCafe, Checkpoint, etc.) or Internet Proxy Solutions
- **Availability and Disaster Recovery Plan:** A recommendation for providing backup, high availability and Disaster Recovery (if applicable) for entire solution, including WVD components (HostPool, Master Images, Profiles, etc.) and for surrounding infrastructure (Domain controller, Patch Management, other Azure components and third-party) when appropriate.
- **Client Configuration &-Connectivity:** A documented view of the customer requirements for clients connecting to Windows Virtual Desktop, including how clients will be deployed and managed.
- **Workspace, Host pool, Session Host design:** A recommended initial design that considers user and application landscapes to appropriately size the environment.
- **Session Host Master Image:** Recommendations for building, securing and maintaining the master image.
- **Profile Storage:** A recommendation for profile storage based on the WVD design, size and IOPS with appropriate hosting recommendation.
- **Patch Management:** Approach for updating patches for pooled and personal desktops.
- **Load Balancing & Scaling:** Recommendations for session host load balancing, scaling to account for user demand at peak times, and to keep costs low during off-peak times.

- Monitoring: A monitoring solution to provide proactive remediation for the WVD environment, integrated into customer's existing monitoring tooling if appropriate.

Required evidence

Partner should provide relevant design documents with evidence of the above items being reviewed from at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months (partner must show that all assessment details above were considered for that customer).

Accepted documentation (any of the following): Assessment report, design document, architectural diagram (Logical/High-Level), templates, methodology documentation, assessment tool output from at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months.

2.2

Requirement: Proof of Concept

Partner can demonstrate that production design though proof of concept validates the design decisions, reviews, and adjusts the WVD Design as appropriate before production rollout.

The POC must cover:

- Validate User Experience. Using appropriate tooling, the partner has evidenced that the user experience based on the WVD design and session host sizing is performing as expected, or that the design has been adjusted to meet expectations.

Required evidence

Partner should provide relevant documentation that shows the Proof of Concept was for at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months, evaluates the design plan, and adjusts, if necessary, the design and associated cost estimate before production rollout commenced from at least one customer with a recent deployment.

Accepted documentation (any of the following): Master design or implementation documentation or POC documents

3.0 Windows Virtual Desktop Deployment

Partner must have successfully deployed, to at least one customer, (Greenfield or Migration from on-premises desktop virtualization) following best practices within the last 12 months. Partner must have a well-defined approach in place for new WVD deployment, migration, supporting customers throughout the deployment process and post deployment tasks.

Partner roles required

Solution Architect/Engineer/

Requirement

3.1 Requirement: Deploy Production Azure landing zone components

- Ensure that Production Azure environment is prepared for the WVD Deployment. This includes: Azure Landing Zone
 - **Azure Networking:**
 - Identity & Security.
 - Availability and Disaster Recovery Plan.

Required Evidence

Partner should provide relevant documentation that shows the deployment was for at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months, and covered the above.

Acceptable evidence of WVD deployment design documents can be statements of work, customer proposals, project updates that outline setting up pre-requisites.

3.2 Requirement: Deploying WVD Native Components (New or Migration scenarios)

Partner must demonstrate and provide documentation of WVD Deployment execution with proof of deployment design execution including all of the elements outlined in 2.1

If its migration scenario then also includes Migrating existing RDS/VDI infrastructure to WVD, making relevant changes, Converting and Migrating User Profiles.

- Client Configuration &-Connectivity
- Workspace, Host pool, Session Host design
- Profile Storage.

Required Evidence

Partner should provide relevant documentation that shows the deployment was conducted for at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months, and covered the above.

Acceptable evidence of WVD deployment: design/implementation documents, statements of work, or project updates that outline deployment of WVD Native components along with migration approach.

3.3 **Requirement: Deploying surrounding infrastructure for WVD**

Partner must demonstrate and provide documentation of deploying management or monitoring tools required for WVD. Management or monitoring tools includes but not limited to: Application Delivery, Image Management, Patch Management, Monitoring Solutions, Policy (Group Policy or other ways), Backup, Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery, Security and Compliance.

- Session Host Master Image.
- **Patch Management**
- Load Balancing & Scaling.
- Monitoring
- Availability and Disaster Recovery Plan.

Required Evidence

Partner should provide relevant documentation that shows the deployment was conducted for at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months, and covered the above.

Acceptable evidence of WVD deployment: design/implementation documents, architectural documents, statements of work, or project updates that outline the above.

3.4 **Post Deployment Validation & Fine-tuning**

Partner must demonstrate and provide documentation of post deployment validation and optimizing, fine-tuning, and securing the entire environment. This includes using monitoring, security and optimization tools which includes but is not limited to: Azure Monitor, Cost Management, Azure Advisor, Azure Security Center, or third-party.

Required Evidence

Partner should provide relevant documentation that shows the deployment validation was conducted for at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months, and covered the above.

Acceptable evidence of post deployment validation and optimizing: design/implementation documents, architectural documents, or project updates, post assessment report that outline the above.

4.0 Project Handoff

Partner hands over the WVD environment to the customer with a set of operational documentation that allows the customer to continue to run their own WVD environment. Performing system maintenance that ensures system stability, scalability, and user experience.

Partner roles required

System Architect

Requirement

4.1 Requirement: Project Handoff

Partner walks the customer through maintaining the WVD environment and provides relevant reference documentation on how to perform operational tasks to enable the customer to be self-sufficient.

1. Partner leaves the customer with a full set of 'as built' design documentation including.
 - Final High Level & Low-Level Designs
 - Implementation & Migration Documentation
2. Partner leaves the customer with a full set of operational documentation based on the design that should reference
 - Troubleshooting
 - Monitoring
 - Scale out/up
 - Image Management
 - Security Management
 - Other WVD operational tasks
3. Partner should discuss with customer an end user plan for adoption.

Required Evidence

Project handoff plan should be referenced in the SOW. Partner must also show final operation documentation that outlines maintenance of the WVD environment. Partner should provide relevant documentation that shows project handoff was conducted for at least one customer with a recent deployment within the last 12 months.,

Acceptable Documentation: operational documentation, Standard Operating Procedures, implementation document

Or

If partner is providing managed services provide evidence that the partner has delivered all of the above service, **with evidence of periodic service reviews against performance metrics, incidents, and DR test, if appropriate.**

Acceptable Documentation: managed services contract, SOW, monitoring reports (including tooling information and metrics measured).

Partner FAQ: Audit

Program contact information

If you have a question we haven't answered in this document, please contact <https://partner.microsoft.com/support>.

Who can participate?

The program is open to any members of the Microsoft Partner Network program who can meet the prerequisites and pass the audit.

Is there a cost to participate?

- Microsoft does not charge a program fee, however there are direct costs associated with the following requirements: Gold Cloud Platform Competency
- Azure certifications
- Audit and optional pre-assessment third-party certifications

In addition, there are indirect costs associated with preparation for the audit.

How much time and how many resources (people) do I need to commit to meeting the requirements?

The amount of time it takes to meet all requirements and pass the audit varies greatly depending on how many individuals you already employ with the required Azure skills, whether or not you have documented customer wins, and how you document your people, technology, and processes.

We're a global company. Does the audit cover all my subsidiaries or just my headquarters? What is the scope?

Microsoft recommends that your organization participate in the audit process where your primary cloud operations center is headquartered and present data and information representing your global footprint.

What is the application process?

1. Go to the [advanced specialization landing page](#).
2. Select "Fill Out Application" under Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop.
3. You will be redirected to a PDF providing more information on the Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization.
4. If interested, you can apply by signing in to your Partner Center account and navigating to your Partner Center dashboard > Competencies > advanced specializations. If you are still in Partner Membership Center (PMC), visit partner.microsoft.com to move your account from PMC to Partner Center.

Important notes:

Please do not apply for the program until you have met all the prerequisites, have thoroughly reviewed the audit requirements, and are confident you can meet them.

Take note of the active dates for the audit checklist. Partners will be audited against the checklist that is active on the date of their half-day remote audit. The date of application has no bearing on the version of the checklist used at audit.

How do I apply?

You can apply by signing into your Partner Center account and navigating to your Partner Center dashboard > Competencies > advanced specializations. If you are still in Partner Membership Center (PMC), visit partner.microsoft.com to move your account from PMC to Partner Center. Once you have moved your account from PMC to Partner Center, you can apply through your Partner Center dashboard.

Partner FAQ: Requirement details

What are the requirements to earn the Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization?

Prerequisites	
Relative competency	Your company must have an active Gold Cloud Platform Competency
Performance	<p>Your company must show a monthly average of at least USD2,000 of customer Azure consumed revenue (ACR) from Windows Virtual Desktop aggregated from at least one or more customers in the previous three months.</p> <p>Your company should achieve ACR through Digital Partner of Record, Partner Admin Link, or Cloud Solution Provider.</p> <p>Effective September 2021 - Performance Increase Notice</p> <p>Your company must show a monthly average of at least USD10,000 of customer Azure consumed revenue (ACR) from Windows Virtual Desktop aggregated from at least two or more customers in the previous three months.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Your company must have at least five individuals pass the following certifications (each certification listed below must be held by at least one individual)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Azure Security Engineer• Azure Solution Architect• Azure Administrator• Microsoft 365 Enterprise Administrator Expert <p>AND</p> <p>Your company must also have at least three individuals pass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WVD Partner Technical Assessment <p>You can have a combination of the same individuals or different individuals meet both the certification requirement and technical assessment.</p>
Audit	Your company must pass a third-party audit

Requirements

What is the required competency?

You must have an active Gold Cloud Platform Competency.

Where can I get more information about the Cloud Platform competency?

You can find details about the Cloud Platform competency [here](#).

What is the customer Azure consumption requirement?

Your company must show a monthly average of at least USD2,000 of customer Azure Consumed Revenue (ACR) from Windows Virtual Desktop aggregated from at least one or more customers in the previous three months.

Your company should achieve ACR through Digital Partner of Record, Partner Admin Link, or Cloud Solution Provider.

Effective September 2021: Performance increase notice

Your company must show a monthly average of at least USD10,000 of customer Azure Consumed Revenue (ACR) from Windows Virtual Desktop aggregated from at least two or more customers in the previous three months.

What customer Azure Consumed Revenue (ACR) counts toward meeting the performance requirement for the advanced specialization?

Azure Consumed Revenue calculations will be based on customer consumption where the partner is attached as Cloud Solution Provider, Digital Partner of Record, or via the Partner Admin link. We do not count consumption from a partner's own Enterprise Agreement.

What are the certification requirements?

Your company must have at least five individuals pass the following certifications (each certification listed below must be held by at least one individual):

- Azure Security Engineer
- Azure Solution Architect
- Azure Administrator
- Microsoft 365 Enterprise Administrator Expert

AND

Your company must also have at least three individuals pass:

- WVD Partner Technical Assessment

You can have a combination of the same individuals or different individuals meet both the certification requirement and technical assessment.

I see that some of the same exams are a requirement for both the Cloud Platform competency and Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization. Do I need five people in addition to those that took the exams to earn the advanced specialization?

No. If anyone in your organization took one of the qualifying exams as part of your competency attainment, those same individuals count toward your five skilled people.

Is the certification requirement global or per country?

Your organization must have a minimum of five certified individuals globally to earn the Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization.

Audit requirements

What are the different roles of people involved in the audit process?

Role of the auditor

It is the role of the auditor to review submitted evidence and objectively assess if the evidence provided satisfies the audit checklist requirements.

The auditor will select and evaluate evidence, based on samples of the information available, from live systems. The appropriate use of such sampling is closely related to the confidence that can be placed in the audit conclusions.

All ISSI auditors are under nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with Microsoft. Auditors will also comply with requests from partners to sign a direct NDA.

Role of the partner

The partner must provide objective evidence to satisfy the auditor for all checklist items. It is the responsibility of the partner to have reviewed all checklist items prior to the audit, to have collated all necessary documentation and evidence, and to ensure the right subject matter experts are available to discuss and show systems as appropriate.

All audit evidence must be reproducible and verifiable.

How is the audit scored?

The partner score for the audit checklist V1.0 is based on four checklist items. Partners must meet all sections by category to pass, while providing adequate evidence demonstrating existence, effectiveness, and efficiency of processes, policies, procedures, and tooling against the checklist item being assessed.

What if I only meet some of the requirements?

Because this is an advanced specialization and an opportunity to truly differentiate your business, we expect partners to demonstrate that they meet each of the four sections and provide the evidence that satisfies the requirements.

What happens if I don't pass the audit outright?

There are two possible outcomes at the end of the **audit**:

- The partner passes the audit.
 - The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit to the partner (this is not shared with Microsoft), including identifying observed strengths and opportunities for improvement.
 - The auditor will provide a Final Report to the partner (this is not shared with Microsoft).
 - The auditor will notify Microsoft of the final result.
- The partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the audit.
 - The auditor will present a brief synopsis at the end of the audit, including observed strengths and Open Action Items.
 - The partner will receive a Gap Review detailing the Open Action Items.
 - The partner will move into the Gap Review Phase. You will have a 15-day window to schedule and complete a Gap Review Meeting to present your missing evidence.
 - The auditor will provide a Final Report to the partner, including the final result: Pass or No Pass (this is not shared with Microsoft).
 - The auditor will notify Microsoft of the final audit result.
 - If partner receives a No Pass report, their application to join the program will be rejected.

Audit Process

Who conducts the audit?

The audit is carried out on behalf of Microsoft by an independent third-party auditor, appointed by Microsoft. The audit company is Information Security Systems International (ISSI).

Can I contact the auditor to schedule the audit before I apply or as soon as I apply?

No. The audit company will not be able to schedule your audit until they receive official notification from Microsoft. Microsoft only issues the notification when you meet all the program prerequisites and apply.

How long does the audit take?

The remote audit will take about half a day. However, there will be significant preparation required to be audit-ready. We recommend that you read the audit checklist thoroughly and consider the pre-audit assessment offered by ISSI to streamline your preparation.

How much does the audit cost?

The audit fee is USD2,000. The optional pre-audit assessment fee is USD2,000. Both fees are paid to the third-party independent auditor. The audit fee must be paid in full before the audit is completed.

What is the difference between the audit and the pre-audit assessment?

The **Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization** pre-audit assessment is conducted by an auditor to provide a detailed and objective assessment of where a partner stands against the Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization audit requirements.

The pre-audit assessment is a remote session, conducted using your preferred conferencing platform. The duration is typically 6-8 hours and allows you the opportunity to review the audit requirements and discuss the required evidence with an experienced **Windows Virtual Desktop advanced specialization** auditor. To ensure objectivity, different auditors will be assigned to conduct the pre-assessment and the half-day remote audit.

The intention of the pre-audit assessment is to enable the partner to have a general discussion of the audit scope, expectations, preparation, and the requirements of the controls, allowing you to gain general knowledge of the program requirements.

The pre-audit assessment is not:

- A review of prepared materials
- A deep dive into specific controls

Is the pre-audit assessment mandatory?

No, the pre-audit assessment is optional. It is recommended that you opt for the pre-audit assessment as it will ensure you are more prepared for the audit.

Partner FAQ: advanced specialization overview

What is an advanced specialization?

An advanced specialization is an extensive validation of a partner's capability to deliver high-fidelity services in a specific solution area. Advanced specializations are customer-facing labels displayed on a partner's business profile and are used in our customer referral engine to enable partners to showcase their differentiated capabilities in a specific solution area. To earn an advanced specialization, partners must first hold gold competency status in an aligned competency.

How is it different from a competency?

A competency measures a partner's broad technical capability in a Microsoft product or technology. An advanced specialization measures more in-depth capabilities in a specific solution area; for example, SAP on Azure. Advanced specializations require that a partner must first have active gold competency status in the competency aligned to the advanced specialization they are interested in earning.

Does a partner need a competency to earn an advanced specialization?

Yes. Advanced specializations can only be earned by partners with an aligned, active gold competency; for example, to earn the SAP on Microsoft Azure Advanced Specialization, partners must first have a Gold Cloud Platform Competency.

What advanced specializations are available to partners?

Advanced specializations can only be earned by partners with an aligned, active gold competency; for example, to earn the SAP on Microsoft Azure Advanced Specialization, partners must first have a Gold Cloud Platform Competency. The advanced specializations available for you to earn will depend on which gold competencies you have attained.

Why would a partner want to get an advanced specialization?

An advanced specialization allows partners to differentiate their capabilities to customers looking for partners who can help them with a business need. Partners with an advanced specialization will be listed first in Partner Finder, a Microsoft-owned, customer-facing tool. Advanced specializations will also be indicated on a partner's business profile alongside their competency status.

What are the benefits of an advanced specialization?

Partners with an advanced specialization will be listed first in Partner Finder, a Microsoft-owned, customer-facing tool. Advanced specializations will also be indicated on a partner's business profile alongside their competency status.

How does a partner earn an advanced specialization?

Each advanced specialization will have a set of requirements that a partner must meet. The specific criteria will depend on the advanced specialization being sought, but can include performance requirements, exams, customer evidence, and third-party certification, among others. Please refer to your Partner Center dashboard for detailed criteria for individual advanced specializations. Advanced specializations are not available in PMC.

What advanced specializations are in market?

The first advanced specializations available require the Gold Cloud Platform Competency:

- Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop
- Linux and Open Source Database Migration to Microsoft Azure
- Data Warehouse Migration to Microsoft Azure

- Kubernetes on Microsoft Azure
- Modernization of Web Applications to Microsoft Azure
- SAP on Microsoft Azure
- Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop

Can a partner have more than one advanced specialization?

Yes, you can earn as many advanced specializations as you qualify for. This will increase your visibility to customers in the Partner Finder tool.

Is the partner's advanced specialization global or local?

It depends on how your company has set up your account. If your company has one global account, then your advanced specialization will be assessed and awarded at the global level. If you have set up your account country by country, only the location that earned the advanced specialization will be awarded it.

Is there a cost associated with the advanced specialization?

Microsoft does not charge a program fee, however there are direct costs associated with the following requirements:

- Gold Cloud Platform Competency
- Microsoft certifications
- Audit and optional pre-assessment third-party certifications

In addition, there are indirect costs associated with preparation for the audit, including travel and expenses and audit preparation hours.

How long does the partner keep my advanced specialization?

Your advanced specialization will remain in place for one year but requires that you maintain an active gold competency defined in the advanced specialization prerequisites. If you do not maintain your Gold Cloud Platform Competency, you will lose your advanced specialization status. On your renewal date, you will need to meet the current requirements, which may evolve over time.

When does the partner renew the advanced specialization?

On the anniversary date of your advanced specialization.

How does my company renew its advanced specialization?

Partners will need to renew against the current published requirements at the time of their renewal.

Will a partner need to requalify for the advanced specialization after a specific period of time?

Yes. Partners must meet the requirements each year. You should expect the prerequisite requirements to evolve year over year, to best meet the needs of customers. Partners will be expected to undergo an annual audit as part of the renewal process.

What happens to the advanced specialization if a partner does not renew their associated gold competency?

To maintain an advanced specialization, partners must keep their gold competency status active at all times.

How will a customer know if my company has an advanced specialization or not?

Your advanced specialization will be listed on your Business Profile.

What can partners tell customers about advanced specialization(s)?

An advanced specialization is a customer-facing label on your Business Profile. It is not a brand and does not have a badge associated with it. However, you can tell your customers which advanced specializations you have earned. They can validate by reviewing your Business Profile in the Partner Finder tool.

What if my company has an endorsement now?

As advanced specializations go live, they will replace endorsements on the customer-facing profile. Each advanced specialization has published objective criteria for partners to earn them.

Can my company have both an endorsement and advanced specialization in their profile?

No. As advanced specializations go live, they will replace endorsements on the customer-facing profile.

Does a partner get a badge to use externally in their marketing to note their advanced specialization differentiation?

Advanced specializations do not have a badge or logo. Your advanced specialization will be displayed on the partner's customer-facing Partner Profile.

Other questions?

If you have a question we haven't answered in this document, go to <https://partner.microsoft.com/support> to create a ticket with our Frontline team.