Azure Expert Managed Service Provider (MSP)

Audit Process and Criteria
Azure Expert MSP Program Guide

Valid
July 1 – December 31, 2019

VERSION 1.7

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Introduction

Azure Expert MSP is a program available as part of the Microsoft Partner Network. The program is designed to ensure that customers and Microsoft field personnel can connect with the most capable Azure managed service Providers to meet specific business needs, with the following goals:

✦ Make the most relevant and capable Partners discoverable to customers.
✦ Recognize Partners’ proven capabilities and specialization in harnessing Azure services in tandem with their service management expertise to deliver business solutions for their customers.
✦ Differentiate MSPs who have passed a rigorous onsite audit of their IT service management capabilities (across people, process and technology), and have demonstrated an ability to deliver consistent, repeatable high-fidelity managed services on Azure.

Application for Azure Expert MSP Status

https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/dashboard/mpn/program/azureexpertmsp

Definition of an Azure Expert MSP

Azure Expert MSP status is aimed at Partners who already have an established Azure managed services practice and have a minimum of 15 customers using their cloud management platform.

Azure Expert MSPs are a highly evolved form of managed services Partners. The core of an Azure Expert MSP’s business places a significantly higher focus on “Automation & Dev-Ops” over traditional MSP’s who focus on the people & processes associated with the customer lifecycle. Azure Expert MSP’s are highly technical organizations with skillsets across DevOps/Sysops, architecting cloud solutions and technical professional consulting. An Azure Expert MSP pivots on business outcomes of their customer’s solutions and applications, and not on workloads or offers.

An Azure Expert MSP must offer repeatable, highly automated solutions to enable and support hyper-scale cloud implementations. Their service follows an agile customer-driven design, and mixes consultancy, migration and management to evolve a customer from a “Design, Build, Operate” process to a dynamic “Design, Optimize, Transform” cycle. Focus is on creating end-user value through business value metrics, SLAs, resiliency and continual optimization to drive outcomes for customers.

An Azure Expert MSP must:

✦ Be able to guide customers towards innovative business solutions to support their digital transformation efforts and high performance, agile environments.
✦ Deliver & manage a full customer cloud engagement lifecycle: Plan/Design → Build/Migrate → Run/Optimize.
✦ Implement Cloud Assessments, Cloud Enablement Services and Cloud Operations, supported by state-of-the-art Cloud Tooling that enables margin expansion at scale.
✦ Demonstrate use of automation and well-articulated repeatable process and policy for operations, security and management.
✦ Drive application innovation.
✦ Manage from the application/solution down, not from the infrastructure up.
 Operate an automated CMP integrated with Microsoft Cloud Platform. CMP can be a combination of homegrown tools, enabling 3rd party ISV applications and APIs and Microsoft native tools.

Provide application level performance monitoring and management tied to business outcomes.

Microsoft employs an independent third-party audit company to assess compliance against the Azure Expert MSP Audit requirements. The Azure Expert MSP audit is a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence and evaluating objectively to determine the extent to which audit criteria are met.

This document defines the requirements for the Azure Expert MSP program and provides guidelines for the auditing process.

For more information, visit: https://partner.microsoft.com/membership/azure-expert-msp
Audit Process

Process Overview

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Applications are submitted in 3 stages
Initial application Phase:
1. Pre-requisites – you must meet these before you can begin your application
2. Customer evidence

Audit Phase:
3. Audit

Recommended: Please review the audit checklist thoroughly and do not begin your application unless you are ready to undertake the audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Review and validate information included in Partner’s initial application, including customer evidence. Advise the partner that their initial application is complete and they are approved to progress to the audit phase</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Schedule and confirm audit within 48 hours</td>
<td>ISSI (with Partner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conduct pre-audit assessment</td>
<td>ISSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conduct audit within 120 days of the approval for audit date</td>
<td>ISSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provide Gap Report to Partner listing Open Action Items*</td>
<td>ISSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Provide Open Action Item responses to Auditor in Gap Review Meeting, if required*</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Submit Final Report to Partner and Pass or No Pass Report to Microsoft</td>
<td>ISSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Confirm all requirements have been met for Azure Expert MSP Program</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These steps will be skipped if the Partner has no Open Action Items after the Onsite Audit.
Timing Considerations

Note: Partners must meet all pre-requisites and submit admissible customer evidence before they can schedule their audit.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Partners will be audited against the version of the audit checklist that is current at the time of their audit, irrespective of the date they began their application.

While there is no deadline or cut-off for applications, please note that customer evidence reviews can require up to 30 days to complete and audits can only be scheduled once the customer evidence stage is completed. If the partner does not submit admissible customer evidence within the 30 day window, their application will be terminated. Audits must be scheduled at least 30 days in advance and will be subject to auditor availability. Therefore, Partners applying close to the date of checklist updates need to factor in adequate time for their full application cycle – allowing 60 days.

Partners have **120 days** to complete their onsite audit from the date of notification of a successful application, but will be audited against the checklist that is active on the date of their audit.

Audit checklists are updated twice per year.
July 2019: V1.7 – the latest application date to guarantee* you will be audited against v1.7 of the checklist is Nov 1, 2019
January 2020: V1.8 - latest application date to guarantee* you will be audited against v1.6 checklist is May 1, 2020
July 2020: V1.9 – the latest application date to guarantee* you will be audited against v1.7 of the checklist is Nov 1, 2020

*Subject to timely submission of admissible customer evidence by the partner.

If a Partner fails to submit admissible customer evidence within 30 days of their application and/or fails to complete their audit within 120 days from their notification of a successful application, their application will be terminated and they will need to re-start the application process.

Renewal Cycle

To retain Azure Expert MSP status, partners must continue to meet all pre-requisites annually, understanding that the pre-requisites and the audit checklist are updated regularly to reflect technology and market advances.

Partners will be required to undergo an annual Progress Audit. The Progress Audit will focus on (but is not limited to):
- Changes and improvements to the partner’s managed services operations and activities.
- Any new Azure Expert MSP Program Requirements added to this document since the previous audit.
- Validation of any new tools implemented since the last audit.

Partners will undergo a Full Audit every **third** year.
Renewal Timings

60 days before their renewal date, partners will receive a renewal notification. The notification advises the partner that their renewal window will open in 15 days. This is the signal to prepare to meet all pre-requisites and customer evidence requirements, and to ensure readiness for audit against the version of the audit checklist that is current at the time of the partner’s audit. There are 3 phases to the renewal requirements:

1. Pre-requisites
2. Customer Evidence
3. Audit

Each phase must be completed before the partner can move to the next phase.

45 days before the partner’s renewal date, the partner will be able to check on their dashboard to see if they meet the program pre-requisites. If they do, the partner will be able to submit their customer evidence for review. (Please note – this will be a high capacity time for evidence review. Early submission is recommended.) If they don’t meet the pre-requisites, they must rectify quickly to allow themselves adequate time to submit their customer evidence and complete their audit before their renewal window expires.

On their renewal date, partners will receive a notification to advise that they have 30 days remaining in which to complete the 3 phases of their renewal.

Partners must complete all 3 phases of the application within 30 days of their renewal date. Any partner missing the deadline will lose status and will need to re-start their application in full, including undertaking a full audit.

Timeline:
60 days before renewal date – upcoming renewal notification
45 days before renewal date – pre-requisites checked, customer evidence can be submitted, and audit can be scheduled (each phase must be completed before the Partner can move to the next phase)
Renewal date – the system will check to ensure the partner has met all requirements
30 days after renewal date – partners must have successfully completed all 3 phases of the application
Program Pre-Requisites

Overview of Pre-requisites for July - December 2019 Intake Period

Prior to scheduling their Azure Expert MSP Audit, Partners must:

- Have an active Gold Cloud Platform Competency
- Drive a global minimum of $200,000 monthly run-rate of Azure Consumption (ACR) of which $100,000 must be delivered via CSP engagements or Partner Admin Link (PAL). Monthly run-rate is defined as partners meeting the minimum ACR for 3 consecutive months

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**
The monthly run-rate threshold will increase regularly. In July 2020, the threshold will increase to $500,000, of which $250,000 has to be via CSP or PAL

- Have an active CSP contract in place
- Have an MSP Offer listed in Appsource or Azure Marketplace
- Have an Azure MSP Offer promoted to customers on the partner’s own website
- Have 15 FTEs who have passed one of the following exams or combination of exams:
  - RETIRED: Exam 70-532 – Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions*
  - RETIRED Exam 70-533 – Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions*
  - RETIRED Exam 70-535 – Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions*
  - Azure Administrator Associate** (AZ 103)
  - Azure Developer Associate (AZ 203)
  - Azure Solutions Architect Expert (AZ 300 and 301)
  - Microsoft Azure Data Engineer Associate (DP 200 and 201)

*Retired on Dec. 31, 2018 but will be recognized for competency until Dec. 31, 2019
**Individuals who passed AZ100 and were subsequently awarded Azure Administrator Associate will qualify.

- Provide 1 public case study and 3 win wires.

All customer evidence must relate to an Azure MSP project and should be no more than 12 months’ old.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** starting January 2019, there will be an additional to demonstrate a minimum number of active customers using your Cloud Management Platform.

- **July-Dec 2019:** 15 active CMP customers required
- **Jan-June 2020:** 20 active CMP customer required
- **July-Dec 2020:** 25 active CMP customer required

- Have either Advanced Support for Partners or Premier Support for Partners covering Azure

Microsoft reserves the right to add or change requirements.

Detailed View of Pre-Requisites for July 1 – December 31 2019 Audit Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPN Program Tier</td>
<td>Partners must have an active Gold Cloud Platform Competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Consumption Monthly Run-Rate</td>
<td>Partners must drive a minimum of $200,000 USD Azure consumed revenue (ACR) per month derived from customer engagements. Consumed revenue will be measured via Cloud Solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provider (CSP) subscriptions, Partner Admin Link (PAL). Azure Marketplace and Digital Partner of Record (DPOR) based on Microsoft Azure consumption trackers. We will not include any consumption that is for a Partner’s own use or cannot be attributed to a customer.

$100,000 of the monthly run-rate (MRR) must come from either CSP or PAL.

ACR is calculated at a global level. The minimum ACR monthly consumption revenue requirement must be met for 3 consecutive months to be considered monthly run-rate (MRR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certified Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must have a <strong>minimum total of 15</strong> individuals who are employed by the company, and who each complete <strong>one</strong> of qualifying exams.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently, the qualifying Microsoft Certified Professional Exams:
- RETIRED: Exam 70-532 – Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions
- RETIRED: Exam 70-533 – Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions
- RETIRED: Exam 70-535 – Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions
- Azure Administrator Associate
- Azure Developer Associate
- Azure Solutions Architect Expert
- Microsoft Azure Data Engineer Associate

For details on the individual certifications, see [https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/learning/)

Partners must demonstrate compliance by showing associated certified personnel via the Microsoft Partner Network (MPN).

While retired exams are valid for 1 year post retirement, new and renewing Partners will be expected and encouraged to undertake the latest exams in market at the time of their application or re-application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must provide evidence of four (4) Azure customer references, including one (1) public reference with a published case study. Customer references must be for customer engagements started no longer than 12 months prior to the MSP application date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All customer evidence must meet the minimum standard as outlined in the customer evidence guidelines that are available here: [https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/dashboard/mpn/program/azureexpertmsp](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/dashboard/mpn/program/azureexpertmsp).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must have either Advanced Support for Partners or Premier Support for Partners covering Azure. More information is available here: <a href="https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/Support/advanced-cloud-support">https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/Support/advanced-cloud-support</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Marketing Presence on one of the qualifying Microsoft Sites

- **AppSource**
- **Azure Marketplace**

### Marketing of Azure MSP offerings on Partner sites

Please submit the URL for the website where your Azure MSP solution is marketed as part of your customer evidence: [https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/dashboard/mpn/program/azureexpertmsp](https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/dashboard/mpn/program/azureexpertmsp).

### Must have a CSP contract in place


### Partner Geography/Region

For the period of July to December 2019, we will require a full audit of your primary cloud operations center.

For renewal, you will be required to demonstrate consistent capability across all operations centers. These changes will reflect in the updated version of the checklist and will need to be demonstrated in either a progress or full audit.

### Glossary and Audit Phases and Roles

#### Glossary

- **Pre-Audit Assessment**
- **Onsite Audit**
- **Opportunities for Improvement**
- **Open Action Items**
- **Gap Report**
- **Gap Review Meeting**
- **Missed Items**
- **Final Report**
- **Pass Report**
- **No Pass Report**

**NOTE:** Renewing partners should refer to the Progress Audit checklist for stages and timings. The information below refers to Full Audits only.

**Pre-Audit Assessment**
A one-day remote assessment checking Partner readiness for audit and giving guidance on preparation for the onsite Audit.
**Onsite Audit**
Two-day audit. Carried out onsite by a qualified ISSI Auditor at the Partner’s primary Cloud Operations Center. Partners must present evidence for 100% of Category 0 and Category 1 checklist items. Partners may choose not to present evidence for 100% of Category 2 or Category 3 checklist items, but they must still meet the minimum pass threshold for these categories. (See Scoring)

**Opportunities for Improvement**
If a Partner passes the necessary requirements in Categories 0, 1, 2, and 3, but does not meet 100% of all 67 requirements, the Auditor will provide a list of Opportunities for Improvement. These are for the Partner’s only reference. They do not require a response or any follow-up with the Auditor.

**Open Action Items**
If the Auditor deems that the Partner has failed to demonstrate the required evidence for an audit checklist item during the Onsite audit, this will be recorded as Open Action Items, 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 48 business hours of their Evidence Review Meeting. The Gap Report will detail all Open Action Items, and details the evidence still required. Partners have 48 business hours to acknowledge receipt and to schedule a Gap Review Meeting. The Gap Review Meeting must take place within thirty (30) calendar days of the Gap Report being issued. Note: Only checklist items from Category 1, 2 and 3 may be recorded as Open Action Item. Partners must pass 100% of all Category 0 checklist items during the two-day onsite audit.

**Gap Review Meeting**
Partners who receive a Gap Report have thirty (30) 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 3 hours.

**Missed Items**
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 Missed Items 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 onsite 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 chooses not to proceed to a Gap Review Meeting, or fails to acknowledge receipt of the Gap Report.

**Pass Report**
The Pass Report is a summary report sent to Microsoft indicating the Partner’s overall scores for each category and section and indicates a Pass status.

**No Pass Report**
The No Pass Report is a summary report sent to Microsoft indicating the Partner’s overall scores for each category and section and indicates a No Pass status.
Audit Phases

➢ Audit Preparation and Scheduling Phase
➢ Pre-Audit Assessment Phase
➢ Onsite Audit Phase
➢ Gap Review Phase
➢ Implementation Phase

Audit Preparation and Scheduling Phase
Microsoft uses an independent third-party audit company (ISSI) to schedule and conduct MSP audits.

Once a Partner meets all program pre-requisites and customer evidence requirements, 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 onsite audit.

Note: Partners cannot schedule their pre-audit assessment or Onsite audit until they have met all other program pre-requisites and customer evidence requirements (see Program Pre-Requisites).

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 onsite 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).

Audits must be booked a minimum of 30 calendar days in advance. Partners have a maximum of 120 calendar days from notification of a successful application to complete their onsite 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 about the audit scope, expectations and guidance on who should present required evidence during the onsite audit, ensuring you are adequately prepared.

The pre-audit assessment is not:
- A review of prepared materials
- Specific guidance on what is needed to pass each control
- Consultancy-based engagement

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

Pre-Audit Assessment Phase
The third-party audit company (ISSI) will first deliver a pre-audit assessment to help the Partner prepare for the onsite audit.

The pre-audit assessment is mandatory.
Note: Pre-audit assessments for Onsite Audits may not be scheduled before all pre-requisites are met.
During a Progress Audit, pre-audit assessments may be scheduled at any time after release of the checklist.

Partners work directly with ISSI to schedule this remote session (online web conference) which covers the following:
- Conducted using your preferred conferencing platform. The duration is typically 6-8 hours. Partners review the audit requirements and discuss the required evidence with an experienced MSP auditor.
- To ensure objectivity, conducted by someone other than your assigned onsite auditor.
- Deliverable is a written report detailing any identified gaps and recommendations for closure.
- Recommend scheduling this at least three (3) weeks prior to your onsite audit.

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

**Onsite 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 are available to present the required evidence. This is often a significant undertaking, requiring several hundreds of man-hours of preparation.

The Azure MSP audit is conducted over two days, onsite at the Partner’s nominated Cloud Operations Center.

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. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for each section are highly recommended to 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 **Onsite 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 send a **Pass Report** to Microsoft (subject to Auditor Terms and Conditions).
2. The Partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the **Onsite Audit**.
   a. The Auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit at the end of day two, 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 meets the required minimum scores across all 4 audit categories during the **Onsite 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 48 business hours from the **Onsite Audit**. Upon receipt of the **Gap Report**, the Partner has 48 business hours to acknowledge receipt and schedule a Gap Review Meeting. The **Gap Review Meeting** is conducted over Skype with the Auditor, and must take place within thirty (30) 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 send a **Pass Report** to Microsoft (subject to Payment 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 send a **No Pass** Report to Microsoft

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 ensure the right subject matter experts available to discuss and show systems as appropriate.

All audit evidence must be reproducible and verifiable.

**Role of the Microsoft Partner Development Manager**

The Microsoft Partner Development Manager (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: USD$2,000  
Onsite Audit: USD$6,000 + T&E  

A Gap Review Meeting not exceeding 3 hours: 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.

**Scoring Methodology**

The audit checklist comprises 67 checklist items divided into 8 sections and 4 categories.

The Partner score is based on the total number of Category 0, 1, 2, and 3 requirements verified.

Partners must meet the minimum scores by category to pass, whilst providing adequate evidence demonstrating existence, effectiveness and efficiency of processes, policies, procedures and tooling against the checklist item being assessed.
The following table outlines the passing score criteria by category listed in the audit checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Passing Score Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 0</td>
<td>Must meet 11/11 requirements – must be met during onsite audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Must meet 39/39 requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Must meet 9/12 requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Must meet 2/5 requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section illustrates a sample audit scorecard for demonstrating compliance across each of the audit categories in the checklist.

**Sample Audit Score**

The following example provides details of the scoring methodology; the total number of Category 0, Category 1, Category 2, and Category 3 requirements for each section are listed in the grey columns, and the example Partner results are listed in the green columns. Partner scores are totaled and represented as a percentage.

Partner must meet the minimum required score per category to pass the audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements Section</th>
<th># of Requirements</th>
<th>Example Minimum Viable Partner Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat 0</td>
<td>Cat 1</td>
<td>Cat 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0  Business Health and Managed Service Focus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0  Microsoft Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0  Assessment and Design</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0  Build and Migration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0  Cloud Operations and Service Management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0  Security and Governance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0  Cloud SLAs, Customer Satisfaction, and Cost Optimization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0  Continual Improvement and Process Optimization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Azure Expert MSP Audit Checklist

The V1.7 Azure Expert MSP checklist is made up of 67 checklist controls. For some controls, a reference customer or customer evidence is required as part of the documentation requested. This is different from the customer evidence supplied during the initial application process. For audit evidence relating to customer engagements, you must present evidence from different customers in each section – the same customer may not be used for evidence in more than one section.

1.0 Business Health and Managed Service Focus

Partner must demonstrate business and financial health and must provide evidence of commitment to and focus on providing cloud managed services to customers.

Partner Roles Required
*Executive team, Human Resources, Business Development/Sales/Account Managers, Finance (CFO)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Positioning and Messaging of your Azure Managed Services</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Met (Y/N)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Partner must provide an overview of their business, and their relationship with Microsoft. The overview must address:  
+ Company history and structure  
+ Partner capabilities around Azure managed services  
+ Company resources utilized and invested towards your Azure managed services practice covering people, processes and technology  
+ Location of your primary cloud operations center(s), and all other secondary facilities supporting your Azure managed service practice  
+ Scale of the services offered compared to overall business  
+ Overview of your customer life-cycle management (e.g. automated monitoring tools, provisioning and orchestration scripts, migration, provisioning portals, billing management tools, IT service management tools and framework etc.)  
+ Relevant strategic alliances and customer base (including targeted verticals)  
+ Competitive differentiation and ROI, quantitative business outcomes  
+ Include information on your business model (IaaS, SaaS, PaaS) | | |
| Required Evidence | Present to the Auditor as if customer facing, and for no longer than 30 minutes. Presentation content must include either material used for customer presentations in the last 12 months, or a role play that adequately represents your customer sales pitch. | |
| 1.2 Financial Health | Category 1 | Met (Y/N) |
| Partner must be able to describe the following:  
+ Overall company financial health | | |
| Required Evidence | Records of company financial health from the previous fiscal year. Records must include either Dun & Bradstreet Reports, Audited Financials, Paydex scores or Risk Ratings. | |
| 1.3 Thought Leadership | Category 2 | Met (Y/N) |
| Partner must be able to provide examples of cloud managed services related Thought Leadership | | |
### Required Evidence
Examples of Thought Leadership published by Company and/or key personnel within your organization. (e.g., LinkedIn articles, whitepapers, blogs, videos, major conference presentations online, etc.), current as of 18 months from the audit date.

### 1.4 Succession Planning
Partner must be able to describe the following:
- Succession planning for key personnel within your Azure managed services practice
- Approach to retain Azure managed service practice top talent
- Approach to stay up-to-date on Azure skillsets

**Required Evidence**
Succession plan for key personnel within your Azure managed services practice including those responsible for managing the managed service practice at the leadership level.

### 1.5 Offer Development
Partner must have a process for managing its services, including:
- Financial Management and Pricing
- Customer Demand
- Management of the pipeline
- Pricing Models, including use and positioning of Azure Hybrid Benefit

**Required Evidence**
Description of process, and the relevant evidence for managing the complete set of services. Process must include methods for financial management, including budgeting and pricing. Partners must have a clear pricing model, including customer facing presentation on Azure Hybrid benefits. Consumption based, tiering, flexible options for professional services.

### 1.6 Sales Support Materials
Partner must have material to support sales personnel, including:
- Service-specific website
- White papers
- Detailed Sales Processes
- Services catalog

**Required Evidence**
Documentation as described above or equivalent, that are used to support the sales. Evidence must cover the scope of all bullets listed above.
2.0 Azure Services

Customers who are looking for service providers to move and manage their cloud estates require partners who demonstrate breadth and depth of expertise in the range of services the cloud vendor offers. They must function as a trusted advisor to lead customers on how best to uniquely use different Azure services and to architect solutions that meet the customers’ business needs effectively and efficiently. Partners must demonstrate strong capabilities to architect and deploy solutions on Azure (including automated provisioning/deprovisioning of environments, resources and services) and show evidence of being able to effectively monitor, govern and operate these Azure estates on-behalf of their customers using Azure’s native capabilities, across the life-cycle.

Partner Roles Required

*Cloud Solution Architects, Cloud/Platform Engineers, Service Engineers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Azure Services</strong></td>
<td>Category 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Customer objectives will determine which Azure services are used when designing and building operationally sustainable solutions for the customer. Azure Expert MSPs must demonstrate proficiency in core and fundamental Azure services so that they can confidently lead customers during their cloud and transformation journey.

Customers should be able to either access the Cloud Management Portal or Azure portal directly (governed via Policy, access control and other governance rules) to provision these Azure services while still relying on the partner for on-going management, support and governance (optimal) or, have access to a well-defined catalog of Azure services that the partner is able to deploy, support, manage and govern on-behalf of the customer (less optimal).

**Required Evidence**

Verifiable asset or demonstration that the partner can effectively use the specific Azure capability/service either standalone or as part of a composite solution comprising multiple Azure services:

- It is preferred that evidence of an active customer be used. If a required Azure Service is not currently being used by an active customer, a use case / demonstration in a hypothetical customer environment and/or test environment is required.
- Acceptable evidence includes a step-by-step walk through of how the partner would provision (or did provision), configure, change/update and delete the service, starting with Azure portal / partners’ service catalog / UI or CLI / Scripting and ARM Templates, moving on to showcase policy definitions available/applicable in template form, and can optionally be accompanied by architectural designs.

**Scoring**

- You must demonstrate evidence from a minimum of 15 distinct customers throughout section 2.1
- Each sub-section requires that you provide evidence from 3 distinct customers (customers may be used in more than one sub-section as long as you still meet the 15 minimum across all sub-sections)
- To qualify as demonstrated customer evidence, you must have a minimum of 3 customers per service
Azure Expert MSPs need to accumulate the minimum required points in this section for a passing grade:

- The total minimum score required is **1200** points – additional minimums per sub-section and customer environment apply:
  - A minimum of **800** points must come from services where a **customer environment** is used to provide evidence.
  - Each of the following sub-sections has a minimum required score.
    - 250 points total for Networking sub-section
    - 350 points total for Management Tools sub-section
    - 70 points total for Migration sub-section
    - 80 points total for Storage sub-section
    - 140 points for Security sub-section
    - 150 points total for Compute sub-sections (Can come from Infrastructure or Application services or a combination)
    - 60 points for Data Platform sub-section
    - 100 points for Analytics and Cognitive Services sub-section

Partners must register a score for each row in the table below that is market **required**. Only one score per row applies – either customer environment or hypothetical use. Column scores cannot be added together in the same row. At least one of the required pieces of evidence submitted in this section must relate to Windows Server on-premises customer migration to Azure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Section</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Points for leveraging services (only one column can be used as evidence, partners cannot accumulate points from both columns in the same row)</th>
<th>Customer Environment</th>
<th>Hypothetical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Application Gateway</td>
<td>Required 20 vs Optional 10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure CDN</td>
<td>Optional 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure DDoS Protection</td>
<td>Required 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure DNS</td>
<td>Optional 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Express Route</td>
<td>Required 30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Firewall</td>
<td>Required 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Front Door</td>
<td>Required 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Load Balancer</td>
<td>Required 30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Network Watcher</td>
<td>Required 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Traffic Manager</td>
<td>Required 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Virtual WAN</td>
<td>Optional 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure VPN</td>
<td>Required 30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Network Security Groups</td>
<td>Required 30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual Network Endpoints</td>
<td>Required 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual Network TAP</td>
<td>Optional 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual Network (VNET)</td>
<td>Required 30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>370</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minimum of **250** points is required for Networking sub-section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Tools</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Points for leveraging services (only one column can be used as evidence, partners cannot accumulate points from both columns in the same row)</th>
<th>Customer Environment</th>
<th>Hypothetical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Advisor</td>
<td>Optional 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Alerts</td>
<td>Required 50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azure Automation</td>
<td>Required 30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Requirement</td>
<td>Points</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Backup</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Blueprint</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure ITSM Connectors</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Monitor (including Log Analytics)</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Policy</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Resource Manager</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Service Health</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Update Management</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure VM In-Guest Configuration</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Cost Management</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>520</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minimum of 350 points is required for Management Tools sub-section

**Migration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azure Migrate Server Assessment for VMware and Hyper-V</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Migration Assistant (DMA)</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQL Server Migration Assistant (SSMA)</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Migrate Server Migration VMware and Hyper-V (use of Azure Site Recovery is also accepted)</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Database Migration Service</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Data Box</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A minimum of 70 points is required for Migration sub-section

**Storage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azure Archive Storage</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Blob Storage</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure File Storage</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Queue Storage</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minimum of 80 points is required for Storage sub-section

**Security**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azure Active Directory &amp; Identity</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Key Vault</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Security Center</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure MFA</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>210</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A minimum of 140 points is required for Security sub-section

**Compute - Infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azure Batch</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Managed Disks</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Virtual Machines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Linux</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scale Sets</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Windows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compute - Application Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure App Service</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Container Service (AKS)</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Functions</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Logic Apps</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Notification Service</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Service Fabric</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Service Fabric Mesh</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Web Apps</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Platform</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Cosmos DB</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Redis Cache</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure SQL Database</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure SQL Database for MySQL</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure SQL Database for PostgreSQL</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure SQL Datawarehouse</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure SQL Managed Instance</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analytics &amp; Cognitive Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Data Factory</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Data Lake store</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Event Grid</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Event Hub</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure HDInsight</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Machine Learning</td>
<td>Optional</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azure Stream Analytics</td>
<td>Optional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power BI</td>
<td>Optional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minimum of 150 points is required for Compute sub-sections (Can come from Infrastructure or Application services or a combination)

A minimum of 60 points is required for Data Platform sub-section

A minimum of 100 points is required for Analytics and Cognitive Services sub-section

---

### 2.2 Application Modernization

Partner demonstrates the ability to deliver the following application modernization outcomes for customers on Azure using containers, microservices (e.g. decomposing of applications into loosely coupled and smaller services), and/or serverless frameworks:

- **Increased business agility:** Continuous delivery and code portability with containers or guest executables and a consistent deployment experience
**Reduced time to market**: Highly available and resilient applications running on Azure infrastructure that scales on demand

**Reduced TCO**: Reduced cloud infrastructure costs via increased utilization of cloud VMs for production workloads and reduced maintenance costs

### Required Evidence

Evidence should be in the form of implemented customer design (demonstration of production or test/UAT environments and related architecture diagrams/whitepapers) by Partner for Cloud DevOps ready and/or Cloud Native applications, using Azure Service Fabric, Service Fabric Mesh, or Azure Container Service (AKS), or other containers/microservices on Azure - such as Windows Containers, Docker EE on Azure or partner-solutions on Azure such as Pivotal CloudFoundry. See Audit terms section for cloud-native and cloud-DevOps-ready definitions.

Partner must demonstrate a minimum of 2 of the capabilities outlined below to show they have the functionality needed to support continuous integration, continuous delivery, and continuous deployment:

- **Capability with one or more Azure app modernizations services** (App Service, Service Fabric, Service Fabric Mesh, Azure Container Service (AKS), Azure Container Instance (ACI), or other containers/microservices on Azure - such as Windows Containers, Docker, Pivotal CloudFoundry), and is able to identify trade-offs to design the appropriate cloud-native or cloud-DevOps-ready solutions to meet the functional, operational and deployment related requirements of their customers' apps, using one of the above choices. See Audit terms section for cloud-native and cloud-DevOps-ready definitions.

- **Automated build and deployment of containers and microservices onto Azure** (i.e. abstracts application deployment from infrastructure deployment).

- **Ability to articulate and advise customers on alternative options for blue/green deployment** (which requires two identical sets of hardware with added costs and no improvements to capacity or utilization), such as rolling deployments (staggers rollout of new code) or canary testing (small group of users first).

- **Collection and analysis of container and microservices metrics for performance and security** (e.g. scan container images to discover vulnerability and misconfigurations to prevent runtime risks).

Life-cycle operations, such as deployment, troubleshooting and controlling of containers and microservices on Azure (via AppInsights, Log Analytics and other operations and security capabilities on Azure).

### 3.0 Assessment and Design

Partner must have the ability to assess customer requirements and design relevant solutions that incorporate both customer requirements and best practices.

#### Partner Roles Required

*Pre-Sales Solution Architect/Professional Services/Platform Engineer/Sales*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Design Processes</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2 Security Assessment**
Partner must have a methodology to assess customer security policies.
- A methodology for performing and identifying gaps in customer’s security policies and procedures
- A framework to document and report of customer’s existing security implementation on Azure, gap identification and best practice recommendations to jointly address with partner input & managed services

**Required Evidence**
Description of security assessment process and the relevant assessment document, and reports for at least two (2) projects. Evidence provided must clearly indicate security conditions and recommendations (including but not limited to just-enough, just-in-time and multi-factor authentication requirements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**3.3 IaaS, PaaS & SaaS Demonstration**
Partner must be able to describe and demonstrate how certain Azure services selected in Section 2.1 are provisioned and deprovisioned, including any related change management policies.

**Required Evidence**
Description and demonstration of how the above are provisioned, including an explanation of both manual and automated deployment processes across at least three (3) sub-sections selected in Section 2.1. Demonstration must be live either through the Partner’s production environment or test environment and must include all the relevant tools. Evidence must review three (3) Azure services adopted across at least three (3) customers each. (e.g. a minimum of nine (9) use-case demonstrations across three (3) sub-sections of Section 2.1 must be presented to auditor).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**3.4 Architecture Design (Topology)**
Partner must be able to describe and demonstrate the design of the Azure Virtual Network environment when relevant to the overall solution:
- vNET peering (same region)
- Global vNET peering (Cross region)
- Site-to-Site Azure VPN Gateway
- ExpressRoute
### Required Evidence
Description of above design with the relevant network and architectural diagrams for customer implementations, design guides, and specifications. The Auditor will also review use-cases with at least three (3) customers to demonstrate consistent use of best practices leveraging the Hybrid Networks best practice guidance.

### 3.5 Assessment and Design Tools
Partner must demonstrate specific owned products/tools used during the standard assessment and design, including for assessment of customer infrastructure and processes, and for design and development of a migration strategy.

**Required Evidence**
Demonstrations of products/tools and/or API’s used by partner for assessment and design, including tools for discovery, assessment and planning. The Auditor will also review use-cases with at least three (3) customers to demonstrate consistent use of best practices.

Either:
Partners must prove experience using native Azure migration tools by obtaining at least 70 points in the Migration Section 2.1.

Or: Partners can leverage 3rd party tools that are mentioned on the Azure Migration webpage.
In this scenario, Partners can demonstrate experience by
- Referencing the tools used in three (3) Statements of Work to assess viability of the customer migration to Azure provided above
  Or
- Providing snapshots of results/output file from the tools that were used for successfully complete the three (3) customer Cloud Assessments above

### 4.0 Build and Migration
Partner must have processes in place for building for and migrating customers to Azure, and for supporting customers during the migration process.

**Partner Roles Required**
Agile PMO/Service Management/Customer Onboarding/DevOps/Platform Engineer/Solutions Architect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 <strong>Configuration and Change Management</strong></td>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner must have documented processes for Configuration and Change Management that address:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ How custom server images are built and managed</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Application of patches and upgrades (including the requirement to enable back-out if patch or upgrade needs to be reversed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ How Azure Policy (Azure Resource Policy) is applied to migrating assets during migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Application management and deployment via a DevOps methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Management of changes to OS hardening baselines, security groups, or OS firewalls managed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required Evidence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Documented configuration and change management processes, and the relevant change and configuration records for at least two (2) projects.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2 Service Validation and Testing
Partner must have documented processes for Service Validation and Testing, including a methodology to ensure that deployed services meet customer expectations. This step should be performed right after customer’s Azure estate moves to Partner’s management umbrella through migration or build process. This includes all estate and services at the time of service provider binding, and all new services added from there on. Partners need to prove that IT operations can support customer across the lifecycle.

**Required Evidence**
Documented service validation and testing processes, and the relevant service validation and testing records for at least two (2) projects where customer was recently onboarded to Partner’s management umbrella, or a new estate or service was added to Partner’s management umbrella for an existing customer.

### 4.3 Service Transition
Partner must have a process for transitioning MSP services for a customer workload with minimal business disruption, if any. The process must include:
- Methods for ensuring that transition is achieved with minimal business disruption of services, if any; including planning for maintenance windows, and adhering to agreed planned maintenance timeframes
- Maintenance of customer records, including their disposition
- Policies addressing data considerations, including how data governance, confidentiality, integrity, and quality are preserved during migration
- Partner must be able to provide evidence that standard terms and conditions (e.g., SLAs) are consistent with policies and procedures

**Required Evidence**
Description of processes addressing the above and evidence of customer migration showing the above are met, for at least two (2) projects.

### 4.4 Migration Risk Assessment
Partner must have a process for assessing risks during migration, similar to business risk assessment section in the Cloud Adoption Framework

**Required Evidence**
Description of process and evidences of risk assessment for at least two (2) projects.

### 4.5 Cloud Migration Practice for Azure
Partner must have a public facing webpage demonstrating Cloud Migration approach and capability.

**Required Evidence**
(a) Partner must demonstrate publicly available website promoting the Cloud Migration Practice, which should mention migration to Azure.
(b) Website must also contain or link to at least two (2) customer case studies from at least two (2) migration scenarios below:
- Rehost Windows servers on Azure
- Rehost SQL on Azure
- Refactor SQL on Azure
### 4.6 Infrastructure Migration

Partner must provide documented and demonstrated infrastructure migration capability. Design documents (provided in Section 3.1) must include infrastructure architecture that is aligned to or similar to the best practices and reference architectures described in the migration section of the Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF).

**Required Evidence**

Partners must provide description of infrastructure migration with relevant migration design documents and completed migration records for at least one (1) of two (2) compute infrastructure migration scenarios highlighted below:

- Rehost Windows servers on Azure
- Rehost Linux servers on Azure

Migration design documents can be statements of work, customer proposals, project updates that outline the framework and methodology of using of the framework.

Each example should be scoped to have yielded or to be yielding at least 50 VMs (Windows or Linux) on Azure.

### 4.7 Database Migration

Partner must provide documented and demonstrated database migration capability. Design documents (provided in Section 3.1) must include database architecture that is aligned to or similar to the best practices and reference architectures described in the migration section of the Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF).

**Required Evidence**

Partners must provide description of infrastructure migration with relevant migration design documents for at least two (2) projects from two (2) of the eleven (11) migration scenarios highlighted below:

- Rehost SQL on Azure
- Rehost Postgre SQL on Azure
- Rehost MySQL on Azure
- Rehost MariaDB on Azure
- Refactor SQL on Azure
- Refactor Postgres SQL on Azure
- Refactor MySQL on Azure
- Refactor MariaDB on Azure
- Rearchitecture Postgre SQL on Azure
- Rearchitecture MySQL on Azure
- Rearchitecture MariaDB on Azure

Migration design documents can be statements of work, customer proposals, project updates that outline the framework and methodology of using of the framework.
Each example should be scoped to have yielded or to be yielding at least 10 SQL VMs or 1 SQL Managed Instance OR 5 SQL DBs in last 12 months. Each Postgre SQL, MySQL, and Maria DB example should create at least one (1) Azure Compute instance after the migration.

4.8 Application Migration
Partner must have documented and demonstrated application migration capability. Design documents (provided in Section 3.1) must include an application migration overview that allows tooling to abstract application deployment from infrastructure deployment, and allows customers to independently or, in conjunction with the managed service, deploy and configure their applications.

Migrations can be from on-premises to Azure, from other public-clouds to Azure, from IaaS to PaaS models, or migrations from hybrid environments to Azure.

Required Evidence
Partners must provide description of infrastructure migration with relevant migration design documents for at least one (1) project from five (5) migration scenarios highlighted below.

- Refactor web applications on Azure
- Rearchitect web applications on Azure
- Rebuild web applications on Azure
- Rearchitect applications with Azure Kubernetes Service
- Rebuild applications with Azure Kubernetes Service and Azure Containers

Migration design documents can be statements of work, customer proposals, project updates that outline the framework and methodology of using of the framework.

4.9 Migration Tools
Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools/scripts used for assessment and migration of workloads.

Required Evidence
Partners must prove experience with minimum one of the following:

- Experience using native Azure migration tools by obtaining at least 70 points in the Migration section of 2.1.
- Experience with the 3rd party tools that integrate with Azure Migrate (webpage) by demonstrating a customer project where assessment data is available from Azure Migrate or available to partner offline.
- Experience with all other 3rd party tools by referencing the tools used in a project plan for successfully migrating a customer to Azure, or providing snapshots of results/output file from the tools that were used.

4.10 Provisioning and Orchestration Tooling
Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools used for provisioning and orchestration Azure environments (e.g. in a Cloud Management Portal including both provisioning and orchestration management.)

Required Evidence
Demonstrations of products/tools/scripts used for provisioning and orchestration of services in Azure environments including viewing of service template/packages used in the deployment of end customer Azure environments. Demonstration must provide auditor fully functional Azure environment (e.g. Virtual Machine with associated vNET/Internet Access or Azure Database ready to accept connections) and be completed in a customer-facing manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.11</th>
<th>Automated Deployment Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools/scripts used for automated provisioning and deprovisioning, and deployment of infrastructure, including tools for continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrations of products/tools/scripts used for automated deployment, including creation of workload deployment templates, automation of routine operations, and automated scale-out. Demonstration must be done in a customer-facing manner.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.12</th>
<th>High Availability &amp; Resilient Infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must demonstrate the ability to setup regions and availability zones based on data residency, sovereignty, compliance and resiliency requirements. Partner must leverage the Azure Resiliency, high availability and availability zones best practices for creating appropriate infrastructure.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner must demonstrate customer use-cases for Availability Sets, Availability Zones, VM scale sets, region pairs and storage replication. Demonstration must also validate partner ability to meet Cloud SLA’s provided in Section 7.1 for at least two (2) projects.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.13</th>
<th>Knowledge Management</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must have documented processes for Knowledge Management, including for:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Managing all relevant service information (i.e. in a knowledge management database)</td>
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<td>✦ Ensuring that the information is accessible and maintained.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Documented Knowledge Management processes, including evidence that processes are implemented. Records of activities must be provided, including evidence of entries in a searchable Knowledge Management database. Evidence must also include knowledge base articles submitted on an ongoing basis and usage logs, demonstrating that the knowledge base is used on an ongoing basis.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**5.0 Cloud Operations and Service Management**

Partner must have a documented Service Management System in place.

**Partner Roles Required:**

*Service Delivery Manager, Operations Manager, Engineer, Cloud Security & Compliance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Operational Support</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrated evidence of 24x7 customer support, showing that multiple customer cases are received, logged and responded to.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.2 Help Desk Operational Procedure</strong></td>
<td>Partner must maintain Help Desk/Service Desk Operational Procedures and must have methods for ensuring that support procedures are followed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partner must have documented support priority and severity level definition, and corresponding Help Desk callback SLA policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Documented Help Desk/Service Desk processes and callback policy, including evidence that processes are implemented and records of activities. Evidence of checks, verification or regularly conducted audits to ensure that support procedures are followed and promised service-level objectives are met.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.3 Service Delivery System</strong></td>
<td>Partner must have a Digital Service Delivery system available; system may be off-the-shelf or custom-built.</td>
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<td>Partner must have a process for creating a ticket for each call as required and must explain or show how tickets are created and entered into the system.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partner must ensure that all customer interactions/queries are logged, even if they do not result in creation of a ticket.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Partner must be able to demonstrate live the digital Service Delivery System during the audit through actual cases.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.4 Escalation Process</strong></td>
<td>Partner must have a documented and robust Escalation Process through the Partner management structure and, when necessary, to Microsoft; and must explain or show how escalations are handled.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documented escalation procedure(s) must address the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✦ Definition of customer calls by priority/severity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✦ Timeframe for each level of escalation by priority</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✦ Timeframe for escalation to Microsoft by priority (if necessary)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✦ Process for escalation of incidents within the Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✦ Process for the escalation of incidents by the Partner to Microsoft (if necessary)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✦ Managerial and technical escalation at each level of escalation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Documented Escalation Procedure(s) and demonstration of computer-based Service Delivery System on escalation. There should also be evidence presented of previous escalations to ensure that service-level agreements (SLA's) were honored.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.5 Help Desk Metrics</strong></td>
<td>Partner must maintain metrics for Help/Service Desk including call back and response/resolution times, and evidence of improvement action when SLA is not met.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Help Desk metrics can either be automated by the computer-based Service Delivery System or compiled manually. If compiled manually, Partner must show how the raw data are captured.

**Required Evidence**
Help Desk metrics and evidence of actions taken to improve performance must be presented.

### 5.6 Personnel Training
Partner must select and train personnel as appropriate. Records must be maintained.

**Required Evidence**
Evidence of personnel training plans and records. Partner must provide evidence of documented training plans for internal personnel, including:
- New hire training requirements
- Ongoing training and sharing of best practices
- Training for sales and technical personnel on new products, protocols, and features
- Solution selling to business decision makers
- Hiring and retention of Microsoft certified personnel

### 5.7 Incident Management Process
Partner must maintain a documented Incident Management Process, including incident management tools (custom or 3rd party) that addresses incident management requirements, and be ready to demonstrate live how incidents are managed and escalated when necessary.

**Required Evidence**
Documented Incident Management Processes, including how critical incidents are handled and escalated where appropriate. Partner must demonstrate live how critical or highest severity incidents are handled with records of activities.

### 5.8 Service, Problem and Incident Management Tools
Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools/APIs (custom or 3rd party) used for service management, problem management and incident management workflows, including receiving and managing customer requests.

**Required Evidence**
Demonstrations of products/tools used for service management, including for logging and tracking of customer requests, capturing and maintaining service knowledge, and for providing self-service incident tracking to end customers. Demonstration must be done in a customer-facing manner.

### 5.9 Non-Microsoft Tools for Workloads Support
Partner must demonstrate additional non-Microsoft products and tools for supporting runtime of workloads on Azure. These may include the use of external tools for providing functionality such as 3rd party tools for CDN, 3rd party tools for DNS, 3rd party tools for providing autoscaling, configuration management, service catalog, etc.

**Required Evidence**
Demonstrations and lists of additional tools and technology used for workloads support. Demonstration must be done in a customer-facing manner and should include evidence of use in multiple customer engagements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td><strong>Event Management Process</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partner must maintain an Event Management Process, including tooling (custom or 3rd party), that addresses how events are detected, filtered, and handled through the appropriate process.</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Documented Event Management Processes. Partner must demonstrate live how events are handled.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td><strong>Problem Management</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partner must maintain a documented Problem Management process, including tooling (custom or 3rd party), and be ready to demonstrate live, root-cause analysis or problems stemming from incidents with no available resolution that have been logged in a known-errors Database.</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Documented problem management process and live demonstration of problem resolution, including records of activities with root causes identified. Evidence of entries in a known-error database or knowledge base must be provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td><strong>Configuration Management Database</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partner must be able to demonstrate use of a Configuration Management Database (CMDB).</td>
<td>Category 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Demonstration of CMDB. e.g. Partners use Azure as the source of truth for all deployed infrastructure (VMs, etc.) and services, and are able to query the current state in or from Azure (e.g. using Azure Resource Graph) and then update a centrally managed database for Cloud VM configuration, in addition to other Configuration Items (CIs) that may exist from on-premise infrastructure, etc. This CMDB (SQL database or any ITSM tool), would give partners a central database that would make management tasks easier – for example, when the root cause for an incident is determined, a scan against the CMDB would determine which other resources (VMs, etc.) are impacted by the same issue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td><strong>Asset Management</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partner must implement formal methods and tools for Asset Management and asset tracking.</td>
<td>Category 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Demonstration of Asset Management and tracking tools/databases and APIs, including evidence of an asset management strategy. Partner must also be able to produce a report (during the audit) of currently active assets for a given customer, share resource tagging strategy, demonstrate the ability to leverage custom resource tags to identify and track Azure resources used - including documentation of types of assets tracked, details for specific assets, and how these assets are integrated with internal asset management systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td><strong>Security Event Management</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partner must be able to demonstrate real-time how security events are or would be managed and integrated with support operations.</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Demonstration of tools and methods for managing security events; records of actual events must be provided; there must be a customer-notification SLA; Security event records and logs must also be maintained for the agreed retention period. The process must show how this is integrated with support operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.15</th>
<th>Release Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must have documented Release Management processes, including tooling (custom or 3rd party), and must be able to demonstrate how releases are managed. This must include a process for rolling back changes when necessary and must describe how rollback is accomplished.</td>
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</table>

**Required Evidence**
Documented Release Management processes, and showcase of deployed tools, including evidence that processes are implemented. Records of activities must be provided, including records of rollbacks, if available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.16</th>
<th>Integrated Monitoring Tools</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools used for monitoring of infrastructure and services.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Required Evidence**
Demonstrations of products/tools used for monitoring and alerting, including demonstration of capabilities for proactive monitoring and alerting, troubleshooting, customer self-service monitoring, and integration with existing monitoring solutions. Demonstration must be done in a customer-facing manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.17</th>
<th>Security Management Tools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools used for maintaining workload security after migration to the cloud. Partner must use Multi Factor Authentication</td>
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</table>

**Required Evidence**
Demonstrations of products/tools used for security, including demonstration of capabilities for MFA (multi-factor authentication) to access sensitive customer environments, tools for preventing security breaches and for anomaly detection, and for business continuity and disaster recovery. Demonstration must be done in a customer-facing manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.18</th>
<th>Third Party Service Providers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must have a process in place for evaluating and managing 3rd Party Service Providers.</td>
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</table>

**Required Evidence**
Description of 3rd Party Service Provider (see Definitions) management process, and the relevant evidences including records of 3rd Party Service Provider evaluation and re-evaluation, 3rd Party Service Provider communication, performance monitoring, and 3rd Party Service Provider agreement. Records must also specify how security compliance of IaaS, PaaS or SaaS solutions has been addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.19</th>
<th>ISO 20000 certification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner must be certified to the ISO 20000 Standard for IT Service Management.</td>
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</table>

**Required Evidence:** Current ISO 20000 certificate, scoped to the Partner’s Azure managed service practice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.20</th>
<th><strong>Automated Cloud Management Platform (CMP)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operate an automated CMP integrated with Microsoft Cloud Platform. CMP can be a combination of home-grown tools and APIs, enabling 3rd party ISV applications and APIs, as well as Microsoft native tools. The specific requirements are defined below.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Required Evidence:** Partners should demonstrate all the following with a minimum of 15 customers:

- **Service Request Management** — An interface (UI or API) by which cloud services are consumed and/or requested by the customer of the MSP. It can be a clearly defined finite set of services provisioned from a self-serve service catalog or a service interface that serves as a pass-through to native Azure capabilities. The former could cater to infrastructure and operations (I&O) staff that just wants to provision IaaS resources while the latter could cater to developers that want flexibility to use a full suite of public cloud services. Typically provided by CMPs or IT service support management (ITSSM) tools, Azure portal service catalog created by the customer/the MSP on-behalf-of the customer, or MSP’s own custom portal/interface.

- **Provisioning, Orchestration and Automation** — Core orchestration/automation/provisioning capabilities by 3rd party CMP software/APIs, or Azure platform native tools, or 3rd party enabling ISV software. Includes provisioning of subscriptions and Azure resources (VM, Virtual Network, Storage and others), automation of resource provisioning and orchestrating life-cycle of provisioned resource (using Azure Policy, Azure Automation, Desired State Configuration, scripting) or 3rd party tools. An MSP should be able initiate the workflow for a brand-new subscription or Azure Resource for a customer from the “Service Request Management” layer mentioned above and then automate through this layer. Subscription management tools (quota adjustments, limits of use, tagging) also fall into this category.

- **Governance and Policy** — Detailed policy enforcement and governance (e.g. clearly defining what users (end-customer and MSP staff) can do and cannot do during the lifecycle). Example: Cannot provision VM’s in a specific geography and cannot create a storage resources without geo-replication. This layer also includes automation policies that allow reactions to environmental conditions (e.g. enabling autoscaling, and autoscaling rules).

- **Consumption Monitoring and Metering** — Base-level monitoring and metering functionality, mostly geared toward monitoring consumption of the cloud resources, possibly with show-back for internal users and charge-back for end-customers. Should be able to monitor consumption for the customer on a resource and subscription and tenant basis. Includes tracking, reporting, charge-back of consumption. Use of Azure Optimize and Cost Management (Cloudyn) and/or other 3rd party tooling are example proof points.

- **Resource Utilization Optimization** — Managing and automating efficient operational use of the infrastructure footprint. Tied to orchestration and automation, requires MSP to optimize resource state and configuration, based on consumption, performance and utilization indicators/counters/alerts. MSIT ARO Toolkit, Azure Automation, custom scripts/counters/alerts. MSIT ARO Toolkit, Azure Automation, custom scripts/tools and other 3rd party optimization tools are example proof points.

- **Access Management** — Sign-on, user access and control management (both for end-customer user and MSP user). Either through native Azure interfaces or MSP’s own tooling or 3rd party tooling.
- **Service-Level Management & Monitoring** — Includes end-to-end monitoring of an application/solution environment, in other words, the estate managed by MSP in Azure. Monitoring of resource/service health, utilization, incident status, as well as logging and alerts (manual, automated or ML based) are included in this category.
### 6.0 Security and Governance

Partner must have security policies in place to protect internal and customer environments.

#### Partner Roles Required

*Cloud Security & Compliance, Head of Internal Audit, Process Governance Lead, Engineer*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
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<tr>
<td>6.1 Information Security Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Category 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner must have evidence of documented Security Policies and Procedures to protect the internal environment from threats that may impact customers. Security policies must address physical security, network and server security, and logical data security. Partner must use Multi Factor Authentication</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Documented Security Policies and Procedures (such as ensuring just-enough and just-in-time access with multi-factor authentication implemented as necessary for access to customer environments) and relevant evidences of physical, network, server and logical data security implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2 Review and Testing of Information Security Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Category 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security policies must be subject to regular review, approved by an appropriate authority, communicated to all concerned persons on the staff, and periodically reviewed and tested for suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Records of security policy review, approval, communication, and periodic auditing/testing. Records of periodic auditing/testing must identify the item under test, the results, and suggestions and recommendation for improvement, as well as evidence of actions being taken.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 User Account Provisioning</td>
<td>Category 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner must have a process for provisioning named user accounts (for customer staff and for authorized personnel of the partner) on Azure and guest users, including flowchart and approval hierarchy documentation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrations of products/tools/process used for account provisioning, as well as documented process flow and approval process. Demonstration of consistent use of above in multiple customer engagements. Demonstration of cases where access account provisioning request cases that are/were denied.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.4 Account Credential Management</td>
<td>Category 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner must provide documentation of process and tools to demonstrate how credentials and role-based access control for Azure related service accounts are managed and secured (e.g., for monitoring, etc.), for customer staff (where customer retains access to Azure resources), and/or for authorized personnel of the partner.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrations of products/tools/process used for credential management, as well as documented process flow and approval process to ensure just-enough and just-in-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td><strong>Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery</strong></td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partner must have a documented and communicated Business Continuity and Disaster</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recovery Plans to ensure continued operation of services during any outage.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Documented Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan, including evidence of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>personnel awareness of the plan; plan must include all foreseeable scenarios</td>
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<td>that may affect the Partner’s ability to provide its services, and the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>corresponding response plans including recovery.</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td><strong>Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Testing</strong></td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partner must provide evidence that Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plans are tested periodically (minimum once per year).</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Records of at least annual Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>testing, including testing of all scenarios as identified in section 6.5</td>
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<td>through simulated test conditions. Where it is not feasible to simulate a</td>
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<td>test condition, evidence of alternative validation or verification must be</td>
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<td></td>
<td>provided.</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
<td><strong>Geographic Security &amp; Governance Compliance</strong></td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partner must provide evidence of compliance to geographically-specific</td>
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<td></td>
<td>legislative security and governance requirements which are also available for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Azure, as of the audit date, as listed here: <a href="https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/">https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>trustcenter/compliance/complianceofferings</td>
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<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evidence of identification of applicable local and national security, and</td>
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<td>governance requirements and records of legislative compliance (e.g., through</td>
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<td>certification, attestation, etc.).</td>
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<td>6.8</td>
<td><strong>Governance and Policy Tooling</strong></td>
<td>Category 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partner must demonstrate specific products/tools used for detailed policy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>enforcement and governance of Azure environments (e.g., functionality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>provided in a Cloud Management Portal which clearly defines what customers</td>
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<td>can do within Azure Environments - restricting cost and access to services/</td>
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<td>resources made available to developers). DevOps customers can be governed</td>
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<td>native (i.e. without a CMP tool).</td>
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<td><strong>Required Evidence</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrations of products/tools used for providing detailed policy</td>
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<td>enforcement and governance to end customer Azure environments.</td>
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<td>6.9</td>
<td><strong>ISO 27001 Certification</strong></td>
<td>Category 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partner must be certified to the ISO 27001 Standard for Information Security</td>
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<td>Management.</td>
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<td><strong>Required Evidence:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Current ISO 27001 certificate, scoped to the Partner’s Azure Managed Service</td>
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<td>practice.</td>
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<td>6.10</td>
<td><strong>ISO 22301 Certification</strong></td>
<td>Category 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partner must be certified to the ISO 22301 Standard for Business Continuity</td>
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<td>Management.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Evidence:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current ISO 22301 certificate scoped to the Partner’s Azure Managed Service</td>
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<td>practice.</td>
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</table>
7.0 Cloud SLAs, Customer Satisfaction, and Cost Optimization

Partner must monitor performance to SLAs and customer satisfaction and must demonstrate resource and cost optimization efforts.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.1 Cloud SLA</strong></td>
<td>Category 0</td>
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</table>
| Partner must have established managed service SLA (service level agreements), or SLO (service level objectives). SLAs/SLOs must include response times when customer opens ticket/initiates request and turnaround time for customer-initiated changes/requests and if within SLA/SLO, expected or average response time and/or average/expected service objective satisfaction rate/frequency.  

**Required evidence:** Evidence of SLAs, SLOs, KPIs or metrics for response time, turnaround time, average/expected service objective satisfaction rates for customer-initiated change/requests. Evidence must show integration of Cloud SLA’s in Service Management Tool and provide at least two (2) customer contracts where Cloud SLA have been adopted. | | |

| **7.2 SLA Management** | Category 1 | |
| Partner must have a process for managing the SLA/SLO including reviewing and reporting of SLA/SLO with the customer, handling of customer issues and contract renewal.  

**Required Evidence:** Description of SLA/SLO management process and evidences of the above activities. | | |

| **7.3 Service Level Compliance** | Category 2 | |
| Partner must provide adequate best practices and have ongoing review process in place to ensure that Partner continues to meet SLA/SLO commitments.  

**Required evidence:** Partner must provide examples of these SLA/SLO compliance best practices (e.g. dedicated Account Manager assigned to customers, face-to-face regular review/business review meeting, customer-facing performance report which includes trending, suggestion and improvement, etc.). | | |

| **7.4 Customer Satisfaction** | Category 1 | |
| Partner must have a documented process to continually improve customer satisfaction. The process must include:  
  ✦ Identify the type of data (qualitative and quantitative) to be collected  
  ✦ Collect, review and analyse these data  
  ✦ Identify gaps in customer satisfaction and customer issues  
  ✦ Action, plan and timeline to address gaps and customer issues  

**Required Evidence:** Documented customer satisfaction processes and evidence of customer satisfaction data, analysis and action to address gaps and customer issues. Net promoter score or other survey approaches are also accepted as part of evidence. | | |

| **7.5 Cost Optimization** | Category 1 | |
Partner must maintain processes for measuring and optimizing customer cost.

**Required Evidence:**
Records of customer review meetings, including evidence that recommendations and opportunities are communicated and implemented where appropriate.

### 7.6 Workload Optimization Tools

Partner must maintain processes for measuring and optimizing customer workloads (e.g., functionality provided in a Cloud Management Portal which clearly monitors consumption of cloud resources, providing end customers with recommendations on optimization of Azure environment).

**Required Evidence**
Demonstrations of products/tools used for workload optimization. Demonstration must be done in a customer-facing manner aligned with the Optimize Cost And Performance best practice guidance.

### 7.7 Service Level Measurement & Performance

Partner must measure and review service objectives and performance (e.g., SLA for three (3) customers and service levels). Measurements must include:

- Security Patterns
- Security Center: # of recommendations not resolved in a defined period
- Redundancy and Resiliency: using load balancing, using ASR/BCDR, using right storage solutions (basic/premium)
- Management and Monitoring: a monitoring stack (OMS, Puppet, Chef, Recovery Failover Plan, Service SLA automated, ITSM Stack)
- Patterns and Practices that have been documented and associated with knowledge base articles
- Billing and Subscription Management
- Partner-caused downtime (that is not attributed to Azure)
- Support Incidents/Severity/Resolutions

**Required Evidence:**
Records of internal reviews across all of Partners Azure Sales, Delivery and Operations teams to measure/report on the health of each of the service objectives highlighted within this section.

### 8.0 Continual Improvement and Process Optimization

Partner must have a documented continual improvement methodology and evidence that continual improvement is a permanent objective.

**Partner Roles Required**
*Business Optimization Manager, Head of Operational Excellence, Process Improvement Manager*

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Met (Y/N)</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.1 Continual Improvement</td>
<td>Category 1</td>
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</table>
Partner must have a documented methodology for Continual Improvement throughout the Azure managed services lifecycle and must explain or show how continual improvement is implemented throughout the organization.

**Required Evidence:**
Documented Continual Improvement process and relevant evidences of Continual Improvement activities throughout the organization. Evidence must show the disciplined methodology used, including process for identifying the strategy for improvement, defining metrics, gathering and processing of data and use of data for improvement decisions. Records of improvement activities must be provided.

### 8.2 Data Collection and Analysis Records Management
Records identified in section 8.1 documented methodology must follow a records management process. Partner must maintain disciplined records (records management) of source data, including records of data collection, analysis, and corrective action.

**Required Evidence:**
Records of data collection, analysis, and corrective action and records management process.

### 8.3 Capacity Management Processes
Partner must maintain processes for executing and measuring of Capacity Management, including associated reporting.

**Required Evidence:**
Records of Service Design documentation that demonstrates continual process improvements associated with Capacity Management Processes.

### 8.4 Process Automation
Partner must maintain processes for evaluation of activities and identification of opportunities for Process Automation.

**Required Evidence:**
Records of process evaluation and recommendations for automation of activities (e.g. LEAN, Six Sigma, Agile Sprint Planning, Monthly/Quarterly business reviews, etc.).
Audit Terms and Definitions

**Change Management:** Process of controlling changes to the infrastructure, tools, process, environments or any aspect of services, in a controlled manner, enabling approved changes with minimum disruption.

**Configuration Management:** The process responsible for maintaining information about Configuration Items (CI) required for delivering an IT service, including their relationships. This information is managed throughout the lifecycle of the CI. The primary objective of Configuration Management is to underpin the delivery of IT Services by providing accurate data to all IT Service Management processes when and where it is needed.

**Configuration Management Database:** A database used to manage configuration records throughout their lifecycle. The CMDB records the attributes of each CI, and relationships with other CIs. A CMDB may also contain other information linked to CI’s, for example: Incident, Problem or Change records. The CMDB is maintained by Configuration Management and is used by all IT Service Management processes.

**Demonstration:** A Partner will be required to carry out demonstration of live Production and/or Dev/Test Azure environments as required evidence where specified. Screenshots or pre-recorded video captures will not be acceptable evidence for submission.

**Event Management:** The process responsible for monitoring all events that occur through the IT infrastructure. It allows for normal operation and detects and escalates exception conditions.

**Incident Management:** The process responsible for managing the lifecycle of all Incidents. The primary objective of Incident Management is to return the IT service to customers as quickly as possible.

**ISO 20000:** Service management system (SMS) standard; specifies requirements for Service Providers to plan, establish, implement, operate, monitor, review, maintain and improve an SMS. Requirements include design, transition, delivery, and improvement of services to fulfil agreed service requirements.

**ISO 22301:** Business continuity management system (BCMS) standard; specifies requirements to plan, establish, implement, operate, monitor, review, maintain and continually improve a documented management system to protect against, reduce the likelihood of occurrence, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptive incidents when they arise.

**ISO 27001:** Information security management system (ISMS) standard; specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining and continually improving an information security management system. Also includes requirements for the assessment and treatment of information security risks tailored to the needs of the organization.

**Knowledge Base:** A database containing information about incidents, problems and known errors. The Knowledge Base is used to match new incidents with historical information, improving resolution times and first-time fix rates.

**Net Promoter Score:** A customer loyalty index measuring the willingness of customers to recommend a company’s products or services to others. Used to evaluate customer and brand loyalty.

**Presentation:** Partners may be required to provide presentations to ISSI Auditors, as required evidence to sections outlined within the Audit Checklist. Presentations can be in-person or remote and must be delivered in conjunction with Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent business productivity applications.
**Problem Management:** The process responsible for managing the lifecycle of all problems. The primary objectives of Problem Management are to prevent incidents from happening, and to minimize the impact of incidents that cannot be prevented. Problem Management includes problem control, error control and proactive problem management.

**Process:** A series of actions and/or steps taken in order satisfy the specific requirements covered under the required evidence section each checklist item.

**Release Management:** The process responsible for planning, scheduling and controlling the movement of releases to test and live environments. Release Management works closely with Configuration Management and Change Management.

**Service Level Agreement (SLA):** A contractual agreement between an IT Service Provider and a customer. The SLA describes the IT service, documents service level targets, and specifies the responsibilities of the IT Service Provider and the customer.

**Third Party Service Provider:** These Providers cover both instances, independent contractors and 3rd party (solution) applications and/or tooling providers

**Cloud DevOps ready Application** has been built with an N-tier or monolithic model, and yet is still taking advantage of the cloud computing model, using a combination of containers (such as Service Fabric and Azure Container Service), Azure cloud infrastructure, resilient application techniques, monitoring, continuous delivery, and DevOps. This is accomplished without re-architecting and recoding the application, rather by migrating to containers. Refer to the table at this link: https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/modernize-with-azure-and-containers/ for more definition and a compare & contrast to cloud native applications.

**Cloud Native Application** is built and coded with microservices architecture (application decomposed into loosely coupled and smaller services) and is designed for high-throughput, low latency, mission critical workloads on Azure. Cloud native apps achieve higher levels of scalability, long-term agility and significant improvements in deployments, upgrades, versioning, rollbacks, and health monitoring by using microservices architectures. These are containerized microservices or regular applications based on PaaS on Azure App Service, Azure Service Fabric, Azure Container Service (that is, Kubernetes). Please refer to the table at this link https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/standard/modernize-with-azure-and-containers/ for more definition and a compare & contrast to Cloud DevOps ready application.
Azure Expert MSP Program Guide

1. Program Overview

The Azure Expert MSP Program is available to qualifying partners in the Microsoft Partner Network based on program requirements (covered below). Additional details regarding the Azure Expert MSP Program are available in the Partner FAQ. The program is intended to measure partner capability to ensure MSP partners can consistently deliver high-fidelity managed services on the Azure platform.

To join the program, partners must meet the program requirements detailed in this Program Guide, current at the time of their application. Azure Expert MSP status is valid for one year from the date of acceptance into the program. Thereafter, partners must re-qualify annually against the then-current program requirements. Re-qualification timing is specific to the Azure Expert MSP program and may differ from the partner’s anniversary date for their MPN Membership.

Microsoft does not charge a fee for participation in the Azure Expert MSP program, however, qualification requires the partner to submit to an audit to verify compliance with the Azure Expert MSP Program Requirements, performed by an independent third-party auditor selected by Microsoft. There is a cost for the audit that is payable directly to the audit company.

2. Program Requirements for July 1 to December 31, 2019

To become an Azure Expert MSP, a partner must meet all the requirements listed below:

- Active Gold Cloud Platform Status and MPN ID
- Drive a global minimum of $200,000 monthly run-rate of Azure Consumption (ACR) of which $100,000 must be delivered via CSP engagements or Partner Admin Link (PAL). Monthly run-rate is defined as partners meeting the minimum ACR for 3 consecutive months
  
  **IMPORTANT NOTE:**
  The monthly run-rate threshold will increase regularly. In July 2020, the threshold will increase to $500,000, of which $250,000 has to be via CSP or PAL
- A minimum of 15 FTEs who have passed one of the required Azure exams or certifications:
  - RETIRED: Exam 70-532 – Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions*
  - RETIRED Exam 70-533 – Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions*
  - RETIRED Exam 70-535 – Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions *
  - Azure Administrator Associate
  - Azure Developer Associate
  - Azure Solutions Architect Expert
  - Microsoft Azure Data Engineer Associate
  
  *Retired on Dec. 31, 2018 but will be recognized for competency until Dec. 31, 2019
- An approved Azure MSP offer in either Appsource or Azure Marketplace
- Azure MSP offer featured on Partner web properties
- Purchase of Advanced Support for Partners or Premier Support for Partners contract
☐ Provision of 1 Public Case study and 3 MS internal Win wires or 3 private references
☐ An active CSP contract – either a Direct CSP Agreement or Indirect Reseller Agreement
☐ *Successful completion of a third-party, independent audit of people, processes and technology

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 their audit when all other program requirements are fully met.

The audit must be completed within 120 days of audit application and must be against the then-current Program Requirements.

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

If a partner receives a No Pass, they may not re-take 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 3rd party audit company, the partner will be awarded Azure Expert MSP status for one calendar year.

Status and the associated Azure Expert MSP 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 Re-enrollment

Partners must re-qualify annually, completing a re-audit before their current audit pass certificate expires. To re-qualify, partners must meet all the requirements that are current at the time of their re-qualification.

Requirements will be published on the MPN Portal or in the applicable Program Guide.

Partners are required to undertake a full audit every 3 years and currency audits in interim years. Example schedule below:

Year 1 = Full Audit
Year 2 = Currency Audit
Year 3 = Currency Audit
Year 4 = Full Audit

6. Benefits

Partners meeting Azure Expert MSP status will have access to additional benefits. Some benefits will be awarded automatically, but other benefits may have additional requirements. For example, in the case of co-sell, partners must meet all local requirements to be prioritized for co-sell in a given geography.

Full List of Benefits July 1 – December 31, 2019
(1) Azure Expert MSP Badge
(2) Azure Expert MSP Showcase
(3) Co-Sell connections with field for MSP scenarios (must meet local requirements for target geographies)
(4) Customized customer collateral
(5) Eligibility for Azure Migration Program
(6) Eligibility for Migration Factory Incentive (partners must be in the program by July 2019 to be eligible)
(7) Enhanced Azure Bulk Credit
(8) Access to Azure Advisors

All benefits are subject to change

PARTNER FAQ | Azure Expert Managed Service Provider (MSP)

Why do we have an Azure Expert Managed Service Provider program?

Our mutual customers are moving to the cloud faster than ever - today 90% of Fortune 500 companies operate on a Microsoft’s cloud platform, up from 50%, merely four years ago. There is not a single analyst report out there which does not call out “cloud” as a top CIO consideration. What is unique about this accelerated upwards trend is the nature and size of workloads moving to public cloud. There is a distinct progression from brand-new cloud-native apps and burst workloads of the early cloud days, towards mission-critical apps, entire datacenter footprints and hybrid environments. The more advanced and mission-critical the workloads moving to the cloud are, the more advanced and precise are the requirements of our mutual customers, when selecting public cloud vendors and services partners.

We have heard feedback from customers, analysts and partners themselves, that it is difficult for customers to discover partners who are most capable of offering managed services for complex Azure environments.

The capabilities required for such complex services go beyond what is or can be measured in Microsoft’s Competencies today. Partners are keen to earn differentiated recognition from Microsoft that would enable customers to both discover them and to be confident that the partner selected can deliver true quality of services and operations.

To that end, we put together a programmatic offering within the Microsoft Partner Network (MPN) for our most capable Azure MSPs. The program has a stringent set of requirements -including a 2-day audit conducted by an independent auditor. Partners who meet these requirements will be prioritized for customer referrals on complex Azure MSP projects and will also earn access to an enhanced set of program benefits.

This program will ultimately host a total of one hundred partners maximum. So far, about 50 partners participated in a stringent audit process and have earned the badge of Azure Expert MSP.

Program Contact Information

If you have a question we haven’t answered in this document, please contact us at azureexpertmsp@microsoft.com

Why a partner should participate?
Benefits

What are the benefits of being an Azure MSP once all requirements are met?
Once the partner meets the requirements, they will be awarded Azure Expert MSP program status and will have access to enhanced benefits. The benefits are subject to change.

- Azure Expert MSP Badge
- Azure Expert MSP Showcase
- Field connection for co-sell for MSP scenarios (must meet local requirements for target geographies)
- Customized customer collateral
- Eligibility for Azure Migration Program
- Eligibility for Migration Factory Incentive (partners must be in the program by July 2019 to be eligible)
- Enhanced Azure Bulk Credit
- Access to Azure Advisors

Who can participate?
The program is open to any member of the Microsoft Partner Network program who can meet all eight (8) prerequisites and pass the audit.

Is there a cost to participate?
Microsoft will not charge a program fee, however there are direct costs associated with the following requirements:
- Azure Certifications
- Advanced Support for Partners or Premier Support for Partners
- Audit and Pre-assessment

In addition, there are indirect costs associated with preparation for the audit, which can talk several hundreds of man hours.

How much time and resource (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 FTEs 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 for your Azure MSP.

To provide some guidance, we received the following data points from existing Azure Expert MSP partners:
- 40 hours per individual, per exam - including prep and taking the exam
- 200-400 hours of preparation to be audit-ready

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.

Note: In future audits, you may be required to demonstrate consistency in your global offering.

What is the application process?
Details of the application process can be found on https://partner.microsoft.com/en-US/membership/azure-expert-msp
The application is in 3 stages:

Stage One: You must meet all of the following before moving to the next stage:
- A minimum of US$200k of Azure Consumed Revenue Monthly Run-Rate (MRR)* of which $100,000 must be via CSP or Partner Admin Link (PAL)
- Active Gold Cloud Platform Status
- A minimum of 15 Full Time Employees (FTEs) who have passed one of the required Azure exams or exam combinations
- An approved Azure MSP offer in either AppSource or Azure Marketplace
- Purchase of Advanced Support for Partners or Premier Support for Partners contract
- An active CSP contract

This phase is measured automatically and is displayed on your partner membership dashboard

*The Azure Consumed Revenue requirement must be met for a minimum of 3 months to be considered monthly run-rate. Note the MRR requirements will increase to US$500,000 of which $250,000 must be via PAL or CSP on July 1, 2020.

Stage Two: Once you meet the above requirements, you must submit customer evidence for review.
- Azure MSP offer featured on Partner web properties
- Provision of 1 Public Case study and 3 MS internal Win wires

This phase has a 10-day review SLA

Stage Three: Once your customer evidence is approved**, you will be invited to take the audit.
- Successful completion of a third-party, independent audit of people, processes and technology. The audit will be conducted against the checklist that is active on the date the audit is carried out, irrespective of the application date.

*You have 120 days to complete the onsite audit from the date your customer evidence is approved. The audit company will offer several options within the date range for your audit – you must agree one of the options within 120 days of your audit approval.

Important Notes:
Do not apply for the program until you meet all pre-requirements, have thoroughly reviewed the audit requirements and are confident you can meet them.
Take note of the active dates for the audit checklist. The checklist is updated twice per year – January and July. Partners will be audited against the checklist that is active on the date of their 2-day onsite audit. The date of application has no bearing on the version of the checklist used at audit.

How do I apply?
Applications are initiated from your Microsoft Partner Network dashboard: https://partner.microsoft.com/en-us/dashboard/mpn/program/azureexpertmsp

How do I know which version of the audit checklist will be used for my audit?
Each checklist clearly states the dates for which it is considered active. Each checklist is active for 6 months. The checklist update cycle is January 1 and July 1 each year.

I am applying close to the date of a checklist update; can I get early sight of the new checklist?
The checklist is active from the date it is published. We will make best effort to provide a preview up to one month in advance, but this cannot be guaranteed. By giving partners clear notification of the update cadence, we hope that partners will have time to plan their full application process based on the timing that works best for them.

**What happens if I apply during the active phase of one checklist, but then an updated checklist is released before my onsite audit?**

You will be audited against the checklist that is current and active on the date of your onsite audit. The date of application has no bearing on the version of the audit checklist that you will be assessed against.

**Is there a deadline for applying for an audit against a particular checklist?**

Audits must be scheduled a minimum of 30 days in advance of the date you wish to undertake your onsite audit. Because your audit cannot be scheduled until you meet all the pre-requisites, you are advised to factor in enough time for customer evidence review and audit. For partners applying close to the time of a checklist update, we recommend applying a minimum of 8 weeks before the checklist refresh date, to be sure you will be audited against your target checklist.

**How long do I have to take my audit once my customer evidence is approved?**

120 days. But note, booking your audit does not tie-in a particular checklist. Your audit will be conducted using the checklist that is active on the date of your 2-day onsite audit.

**What happens if I don’t take the audit within 120 days?**

Failure to sit the onsite audit within 120 days of your invitation to audit will result in a No Pass report. You may re-apply in 6 months. You will have to re-start the application process.

**What happens if I take the audit, but don’t pass?**

If you do not pass the audit during the onsite audit, you will have a 30-day window to schedule a Gap Review meeting to present your missing evidence. This is only available if you passed all Category 0 requirements during the 2-day onsite audit. If you still do not pass after the Gap Review meeting, you will receive a No Pass report and your application to join the program will be rejected at this stage. You may re-apply in 6 months. You will have to re-start the application process.

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**Requirements**

**Required capabilities**

Azure Expert MSPs are a highly evolved form of managed services partners. The core of an Azure Expert MSP’s business places a significantly higher focus on “Automation & Dev-Ops” over traditional MSPs who focus on the people & processes associated with the customer Lifecycle.

Azure Expert MSP’s are highly technical organizations with skillsets across DevOps/Sys-Ops, Architecting cloud solutions and technical professional consulting. An Azure Expert MSP pivots on business outcomes of their customer’s solutions and applications, and not on workloads or offers.

An Azure Expert MSP must offer repeatable, highly automated solutions to enable and support hyper-scale cloud implementations. Their service follows an agile customer-driven design, and mixes consultancy, migration and management to evolve a customer from a “Design, Build, Operate” process to a dynamic “Design, Optimize, Transform” cycle. Focus is on creating end-user value through business value metrics, SLAs, resiliency and continual optimization to drive outcomes for customers.
An Azure Expert MSP must:
* Be able to guide customers towards innovative business solutions to support their digital transformation efforts and high performance, agile environments.
* Deliver & manage a full customer cloud engagement lifecycle: Plan/Design -> Build/Migrate -> Run/Optimize.
* Implement Cloud Assessments, Cloud Enablement Services and Cloud Operations, supported by state-of-the-art Cloud Tooling that enables margin expansion at scale
* Demonstrate use of automation and well-articulated repeatable process and policy for operations, security and management.
* Drive application innovation
* Manage from the application/solution down not from the infrastructure up
* Operate an automated CMP integrated with Microsoft Cloud Platform. CMP can be a combination of homegrown tools, enabling 3rd party ISV applications and APIs and Microsoft native tools.
* Provide application level performance monitoring and management tied to business outcomes

Core requirements
There are 9 requirements in total, including an audit.

Requirements checklist
Before partners can move to the audit phase, they must first meet all of the following 8 pre-requisites:
A minimum of US$200k of Azure Consumed Revenue Monthly Run-Rate (MRR)*
Active Gold Cloud Platform Status
A minimum of 15 Full Time Employees (FTEs) who have passed one of the required Azure exams or certifications
An approved Azure MSP offer in either AppSource or Azure Marketplace
Azure MSP offer featured on Partner web properties
Purchase of Advanced Support for Partners or Premier Support for Partners contract
Provision of 1 Public Case study and 3 MS internal Win wires
An active CSP contract
When all 8 pre-requisites are met, the partner can move on to the final requirement:
Successful completion of a third-party, independent audit of people, processes and technology

*On July 1, 2020, the MRR requirement will increase to $500,000 monthly Azure consumption, of which $250,000 minimum must be via CSP or PAL. Partners will need to meet the increased threshold on renewal. Pre-requisites are subject to change.

Requirement Details

What is the Azure Consumption requirement?
Minimum of US$200k of Azure Consumed Revenue Monthly Run-Rate. This is measured by partners driving consumption via CSP, Partner Admin Link (PAL), Azure Marketplace or where they are attached as Digital Partner of Record (DPOR) to a customer’s Enterprise Agreement (EA).

What Azure consumed revenue counts towards the monthly run-rate?
Azure Consumed Revenue calculations will be based on partner CSP revenue and EA revenue where the partner is associated as the Digital Partner of Record or via the Partner Admin Link or the Azure Marketplace. We do not count consumption from a partner’s own EA.

How is Monthly Run-Rate (MRR) defined?
Microsoft reviews the last 3 months of Azure Consumed Revenue (ACR) and considers the lowest amount over the 3 months to be your current MRR. Example. July: $320,000 August: $340,000 September: $325,000 = MRR $320,000

**Competency Requirements**

What is the competency requirement for Azure MSP status?
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 are the skilling requirements for becoming an Azure Expert MSP?
Your organization must have a minimum of 15 employees that have passed the required exams.

Your employees must each pass one of the following exams or exam combinations:
- RETIRED: Exam 70-532 – Developing Microsoft Azure Solutions*
- RETIRED Exam 70-533 – Implementing Microsoft Azure Infrastructure Solutions*
- RETIRED Exam 70-535 – Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions *
- Azure Administrator Associate
- Azure Developer Associate
- Azure Solutions Architect Expert
- Microsoft Azure Data Engineer Associate

*Retired on Dec. 31, 2018 but will be recognized for competency until Dec. 31, 2019

It is permissible to have a mix of employees who took the older exams and some employees who have taken the new exams or certifications.

I see the that some of the same exams are a requirement for both Cloud Platform competency and for Azure MSP status. Do I need 15 people in addition to those that took the exams to earn the competency?
No. If anyone in your organization took one of the qualifying exams as part of your competency attainment, those same individuals count towards your 15 skilled people.

Is the skilling requirement global or per country?
Your organization must have a minimum of 15 certified FTEs globally to earn Azure MSP status. However, if you wish to go to market and co-sell with us locally, you may need to demonstrate that you have skilled people at a local level for the Microsoft team to engage with for co-sell activities.

Do I need to have an existing Azure MSP customer offer or solution?
Yes. You must have a market-ready Azure MSP offer that is featured in either:
AppSource
Azure Marketplace
Contact your PDM for more information.

Does my Azure MSP offer need to be featured on my own website?
Yes. As part of our pre-requisites, you will be asked to provide a URL to your own customer-facing website promoting an Azure MSP offer – this is submitted as part of your customer evidence submission.
Customer Evidence Required

What customer evidence do I need to submit to apply?
Provide either
1 verified public case study AND 3 Microsoft internal WinWires

Evidence can be no more than 12 months since completed implementation and must relate to an Azure-based MSP implementation.

Is evidence of an MSP solution on Azure requirement?
Yes. Your customer evidence must be of an active customer where you have implemented your managed services solution on Azure. The evidence must also be less than 12 months old.

I see that customer evidence is also required during the audit – is that the same as the customer evidence needed during the application phase?
The customer evidence required to apply or renew into the program is different from the evidence from customers required during the audit. You can use the same customers in both the application and audit phases.

What customer evidence is needed for the audit against the 1.7 checklist?
You will require customer evidence from a minimum of 15 active customers to meet the audit requirements. All 15 customers must be referenced in sub-section 5.20. Other sections specify the number of customers required to complete that section. Customers referenced in sub-section 5.20 may be used in other sections, however, you cannot re-use those customers in more than one other section. For example, if you use a customer for evidence is section 3, you may use them for all sub-sections in section 3, but you may not use them again in section 4.

Where can I find out more about Cloud Solution Provider?
Find out more here.
Microsoft support contract requirements
Do I need to have a Microsoft support contract?
Yes. You must have an active service contract in place.
Either:
Azure Advanced Support for Partners
OR
Premier Support for Partners

More details here.

How much does Support cost?
US $1,250.00 per month paid towards Azure Advanced Support for Partners program. The cost is higher for Premier Support for Partners.

What’s the difference between ASfP and PSfP and how do I choose?
You will find more information about the differences between support contracts here.

I already have Premier Support for Partners, will that count?
Yes. While we require ASfP as the minimum support requirement, Premier Support for Partners is also acceptable.

Audit
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 available to discuss and show systems as appropriate.

All audit evidence must be reproducible and verifiable.

Role of the Microsoft Partner Development Manager
The Microsoft Partner Development Manager 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.

All audit evidence must be reproducible and verifiable.

Audit Criteria and Process

What will be the criteria for the Audit?

The current audit checklist is V1.7.* It comprises 67 checklist items divided int 8 sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Health and Managed Service Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build and Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cloud Operations and Service Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security and Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cloud SLAs, Customer Satisfaction, and Cost Optimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual Improvement and Process Optimization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The audit checklist will be updated on January 1, 2020. The audit checklist items, sections and categories are all subject to change at that time.
How is the audit scored?

The Partner score for the audit checklist V1.7 is based the 67 checklist items. They are categorized as Category 0, 1, 2, and 3 requirements verified.

Partners must meet the minimum scores by category to pass, whilst providing adequate evidence demonstrating existence, effectiveness and efficiency of processes, policies, procedures and tooling against the checklist item being assessed.

The following table outlines the passing score criteria by category listed in the audit checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Passing Score Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 0</td>
<td>Must meet 11/11 requirements – must be met during onsite audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Must meet 39/39 requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Must meet 9/12 requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Must meet 2/5 requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What happens if I score a total of 62, but only get 1/5 in Category 3?

You would not be deemed to have passed the audit. The score is not based on the total checklist items met. You must meet the minimum score in each of the 4 categories?

Why don’t I need to meet 100% of all requirements?

There are some aspects of your managed service practice that are a must-have where you must score 100%. These are covered in Category 0 and 1. Category 2 and 3 allow flexibility for different approaches, business models as well as the ability to score points for use of emerging technologies. Emerging technology requirements that are optional in this audit checklist may become mandatory in a future audit checklist.

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

There are two possible outcomes at the end of the Onsite Audit

The Partner passes the audit.
The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit, including identifying observed strengths and opportunities for improvement.
The auditor will provide a Final Report to the Partner
The auditor will send a Pass Report to Microsoft (subject to auditor Terms and Conditions)
The Partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the Onsite Audit.
The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit at the end of day two, including observed strengths and Open Action Items.
The partner will receive a Gap Report detailing the Open Action Items
The partner will move into the Gap Review Phase

What happens in the Gap Review Phase?

If you do not demonstrate evidence to the auditor’s satisfaction to meets the required minimum scores across all 3 audit categories during the Onsite Audit, you 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 48 business hours from the **Onsite Audit**. Upon receipt of the **Gap Report**, the Partner has 48 business hours to acknowledge receipt and schedule a Gap Review Meeting. The **Gap Review Meeting** is conducted over Skype with the auditor and must take place within thirty (30) 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**.

- **The Partner passes the audit.**
  - The auditor will confirm the partner has satisfied the required evidence during the **Gap Review Meeting**
  - The auditor will provide a **Final Report** to the Partner
  - The auditor will send a **Pass Report** to Microsoft (subject to Payment Terms and Conditions)
  - The Partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the **Gap Review Meeting**.
  - The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit, including **Missed Items**.
  - The partner will receive a **Final Report** detailing the **Missed Items**
  - The auditor will send a **No Pass** Report to Microsoft

**What happens if a partner does not pass the audit at the end of the Gap Review Phase?**
If a 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. They will have to wait six months before re-applying.

**Process**

**Who conducts the audit?**
The audit is carried out on behalf of Microsoft by an independent 3rd party auditor, appointed by Microsoft. The audit company is **ISSI**.

**Can I contact the auditor to book 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 pre-requisites and provide acceptable customer evidence.

**How long does the audit take?**
The onsite portion of the audit is 2 days. However, there will be significant preparation required to be audit ready. Depending on how large and complex your organization is, this could be in the 100s of man hours. We recommend that you read the audit checklist thoroughly and schedule a pre-audit assessment to streamline your preparation.

**How much does the audit cost?**
The audit is made up of two main stages: pre-audit assessment and audit.
- The pre-audit assessment fee is US$2000
- The audit fee is US$60000 plus travel and expenses.
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 pre-audit assessment is conducted by an auditor to provide a detailed and objective assessment of where a Partner stands against the Azure MSP 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 MSP auditor. To ensure objectivity, different auditors will be assigned to conduct the pre-assessment and the two-day audit.

The intention of the pre-audit assessment is to enable the partner to have a general discussion about the audit scope, expectations and guidance on who should present required evidence during the onsite audit, ensuring you are adequately prepared.

The pre-audit assessment is not:
- A review of prepared materials
- Specific guidance on what is needed to pass each control
- Consultancy-based engagement

The full audit is conducted in your primary center for Cloud Operations. The auditor will spend 2 days onsite doing a full review of evidence presented to meet the requirements of the audit checklist.

**Is the pre-audit assessment mandatory?**
The pre-audit assessment is mandatory and will ensure you are more prepared for the audit.

**Do I need additional customer evidence in the audit on top of what I submitted to meet the pre-requisites?**
Yes. We require that you use a different customer(s) to demonstrate capability for each section.

**Will a partner need to re-qualify after a specific period of time?**
Yes. Partners must meet the pre-requisites each year to retain their Azure Expert MSP status. The pre-requisites will increase year on year as the business grows. In addition, partners will be expected to undergo an annual Currency Audit; the Currency Audit will focus on:
- Changes and improvements to the Partner’s MSP operations and activities
- Any new checklist items added since the partner’s previous audit
- Validation of any new tools implemented since the last audit

**How often will the audit checklist be updated?**
Updates will be made to the audit checklist twice per year. Partners do not need to re-take the audit each time the checklist refreshes. However, new checklist items will be incorporated into their next Progress Audit or Full Audit, depending on which happens first.

**Why is an audit required?**
The audit reviews the people, processes and technology you utilize to run your managed services practice efficiently.

We are validating that you are:

- Be able to guide customers towards innovative business solutions to support their digital transformation efforts and high performance, agile environments.
- Deliver & manage a full customer cloud engagement lifecycle: Plan/Design -> Build/Migrate -> Run/Optimize.
- Implement Cloud Assessments, Cloud Enablement Services and Cloud Operations, supported by state-of-the-art Cloud Tooling that enables margin expansion at scale
Demonstrate use of automation and well-articulated repeatable process and policy for operations, security and management.

Drive application innovation

Manage from the application/solution down not from the infrastructure up

Operate an automated CMP integrated with Microsoft Cloud Platform. CMP can be a combination of homegrown tools, enabling 3rd party ISV applications and APIs and Microsoft native tools.

Provide application level performance monitoring and management tied to business outcomes

How long does program membership last?
If successful in completing all the pre-requisites and the audit, you will be awarded Azure Expert MSP status for 12 months. You may renew into the program annually.

How do I renew?
To renew program status, you must meet all the program pre-requisites that are active at the time of your renewal and pass an audit. In years two and three, your Audit is a Progress Audit. A full audit is required every 3 years.

Year One – Full Audit
Year Two – Progress Audit
Year Three – Progress Audit
Year Four – Full Audit
Etc.

How long do I have for my renewal?
Timeline:
45 days before renewal date – you will receive an upcoming renewal notification
30 days before renewal date – pre-requisites checked, customer evidence can be submitted, and audit can be scheduled (each phase must be completed before the Partner can move to the next phase)
Renewal date – the system will check to ensure the partner has met all requirements
30 days after renewal date – partners must have successfully completed all 3 phases of the application

What is a Progress Audit?
The Progress Audit is conducted annually for renewing partners for their first and second renewal cycles. It will focus on:
Changes and improvements to the partner’s managed services operations and activities.
Any new Azure Expert MSP Program Requirements added to this document since the previous audit.
Validation of any new tools implemented since the last audit.

Other Questions?
If you have a question we haven’t answered in this document, please contact us at azureexpertmsp@microsoft.com