

# Self-Hosted Applications

## Licensing guidance

## Contents

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Summary.....	1
Details.....	2
Licensing options for Self-Hosted ISVs .....	2
The Services Provider License Agreement.....	2
The “Self-Hosted Applications” use right .....	2
What is a Qualified Unified Solution? .....	3
What are the licensing requirements? .....	4
Required Microsoft Software licenses.....	4
Deploying Your Unified Solution on multi-tenant servers .....	5
Multi-tenant Deployment on Azure using the Microsoft Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows server.....	5
Multi-tenant Deployment in Authorized License Mobility Partner’s Data Center .....	5
Can I mix SPLA and Self-Hosted Applications? .....	5
Frequently asked questions.....	6

## Summary

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Microsoft provides a choice of licensing models for Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) that want to offer their own software as a hosted service. These ISVs, commonly known as “Self-Hosted ISVs,” can license their software in two ways. This guide outlines these two licensing

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models, describes the benefits of the Service Provider Licensing Agreement (SPLA) program, and provides an in-depth look at the “Self-Hosted Applications” use right and its requirements.

## Details

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### Licensing options for Self-Hosted ISVs

The SPLA serves as the primary licensing program and offers a flexible option for all service providers, including ISVs, that offer their applications as a software service. However, if you are an ISV with a qualified Unified Solution, the “Self-Hosted Applications” use right, available through the Product Terms, may be the right choice for you.

### The Services Provider License Agreement

The SPLA serves as the primary licensing program for all hosting business models, including ISVs who host their own applications. It offers a monthly, pay-as-you-go licensing model under a separate agreement that supports hosting and delivering software services. SPLA includes a variety of products and hosting scenarios to help you deliver highly customized and robust solutions to your customers. To learn more about the SPLA program, see [www.microsoft.com/en-us/licensing/licensing-programs/spla-program.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/licensing/licensing-programs/spla-program.aspx).

### The “Self-Hosted Applications” use right

ISVs with qualified Unified Solutions can take advantage of the “Self-Hosted Applications” Software Assurance benefits. The Microsoft Product Terms describe these use rights. This licensing option, separate from SPLA, includes qualification criteria, specific licensing requirements, and a limited set of products. ISVs that license through this option must:

- Host a **qualified Unified Solution**, and
- Purchase the required licenses with Software Assurance under a Commercial licensing agreement (for example, Microsoft Enterprise Agreement) or, in the case of Windows Server only, license the software under SPLA or through Microsoft Azure.<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] SPLA and Azure are valid licensing options for Windows Server only. These options do not apply to other Microsoft products included in a Unified Solution licensed under the Self-Hosted Applications use right.

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## What is a Qualified Unified Solution?

To license your software and Microsoft products (Unified Solution) under the “Self-Hosted Applications” use right, Microsoft requires that you meet all the criteria listed in the Product Terms Appendix B: Software Assurance Benefits, under the heading “Self-Hosted Applications.” Be sure to read that section in the current Product Terms thoroughly to understand the requirements and licensing rights.<sup>[2]</sup>

[2] Access the most current [Product Terms site](#).

In short, your software must meet each of the following requirements:

- Add significant and primary functionality to the Microsoft products

If you only host a Microsoft product in your data center for access by other customers, you do not meet the requirement to add significant and primary functionality (for example, hosting Microsoft Exchange for your customer’s employees). However, if you create a line-of-business application that adds significant and primary functionality to the Microsoft software platform, you qualify. Review the current Product Terms for the formal definition and specific requirements.

- Be combined only with Microsoft products that are eligible for Self-Hosting:

You can include only the products listed in the Product Terms that permit Self-Hosting—such as SQL Server—in a Unified Solution licensed in this manner. The [Product Terms](#) provide this information. If your Unified Solution includes any Microsoft products that do not permit Self-Hosting (for example, Microsoft Office or SharePoint Server), you must license all Microsoft products in your solution through the SPLA program.

- Be the principal service and sole point of access to the Unified Solution:  
Your customer must interact with and primarily access your software; they must never directly access the underlying Microsoft software stack. If you want to provide your customers with direct access to the Microsoft products (for example, access to SQL Server), then you must license your Unified Solution through SPLA.
- Be delivered over the Internet:

If you license your Unified Solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, you may not load it onto your customer’s device. You must provide the Unified Solution as a hosted service through the Internet, delivered remotely to your customer. You may not install any component of the Unified Solution at your customer’s facility. If you want to

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deliver your Unified Solution (or any of its components) by installing it on a customer's device or at their facility, you must license it through the SPLA program (subject to that program's limitations).

- Be owned, not licensed, by you:

You must own the intellectual property that you combine with Microsoft Self-Hosted Applications to create a Unified Solution. If you license the intellectual property that serves as the primary application or service from another company (including Microsoft), you must license your solution through the SPLA program. For example, if you provide Microsoft Exchange as your primary service, you do not qualify for the Self-Hosted Applications use right and must license your solution through SPLA.

## What are the licensing requirements?

If your Unified Solution meets all of the above qualification criteria, you can license your solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, as defined in the Product Terms. You must acquire the appropriate licenses for each Microsoft product used in the Unified Solution, based on the individual product requirements listed in the Product Terms. You must also acquire all required Microsoft licenses through a Microsoft commercial licensing program that includes the Self-Hosted Applications use rights (for example, the Enterprise Agreement). If you host the Unified Solution from Azure servers or from the data center of another Authorized Licensed Mobility Partner, you must acquire Windows Server IaaS—**for Windows Server only**—through Azure, the Azure Hybrid Benefit, or SPLA.

### Required Microsoft Software licenses

#### **Access Licenses:**

In addition to licensing your servers, you must acquire the required access licenses to make your Unified Solution available to your users. For example, you may need Client Access Licenses (CALs) or External Connector (EC) Licenses. Review the product-specific sections of the Product Terms for details.

#### **Active Software Assurance:**

You must maintain active Software Assurance coverage on all required Microsoft licenses used in and supporting your Unified Solution, including all required Access Licenses. If you let your Software Assurance coverage expire and do not renew it, you can no longer deliver your Unified Solution under the Self-Hosted Applications use right and must instead license it through SPLA.

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## Deploying Your Unified Solution on multi-tenant servers

With the Self-Hosted Application Software Assurance benefit, you can combine the Self-Hosting rights with mobility rights to deploy your Unified Solution on qualified multi-tenant servers. If you choose this deployment option, you must license the Windows Server product that supports your Unified Solution through an Authorized License Mobility Partner, your own Service Provider License Agreement, or another Volume Licensing offering that permits Windows Server deployment on shared hardware.

### Multi-tenant Deployment on Azure using the Microsoft Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows server

If your Unified Solution qualifies for Self-Hosting and you own Windows Server licenses with Software Assurance, you can use the Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows Server and apply License Mobility rights for the other included Self-Hosting Applications to upload your Unified Solution to Azure. For details about this option, review the Azure product entry in the Product Terms.

### Multi-tenant Deployment in Authorized License Mobility Partner's Data Center

When you deploy your Unified Solution on multi-tenant third-party servers using your License Mobility through Software Assurance benefit, you must complete the License Mobility Verification form, submit it to your reseller or to Microsoft, and comply with the terms of both the Self-Hosting rights and License Mobility through Software Assurance. Learn more about the [License Mobility through Software Assurance](#) benefit.

An Authorized License Mobility Partner must provide Windows Server through SPLA to support this deployment option.

If you are an Authorized License Mobility Partner under your SPLA, you may deploy your Unified Solution on your own multi-tenant servers. You must report the Windows Server usage within the Unified Solution under your SPLA and comply with the terms of SPLA, as well as the terms of Self-Hosting and License Mobility through Software Assurance for the Self-Hosted Applications.

## Can I mix SPLA and Self-Hosted Applications?

If you choose to deliver your Unified Solution under the Self-Hosted Applications use right, you must license the Microsoft products included in your solution through a Volume Licensing program that provides the Self-Hosted Applications use rights. The only exception is Windows Server, which you can license through SPLA or Azure instead.

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If your Unified Solution requires an additional product that the Self-Hosted Applications use right does not cover (for example, Microsoft Office), you must license your entire Unified Solution through SPLA; you cannot simply purchase a SPLA license for Microsoft Office. The Self-Hosted Applications use right requires you to maintain active Software Assurance on all Microsoft products.

## Frequently asked questions

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**Question 1:** My Unified Solution does not qualify for the Self-Hosted Applications use right; how do I properly license it?

**Answer:** If your Unified Solution does not meet any one of the qualifications for the Self-Hosted Applications use right as written in the Product Terms, you must license your hosted solution through the SPLA. See [www.microsoft.com/en-us/Licensing/licensing-programs/spla-program.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/Licensing/licensing-programs/spla-program.aspx) for more information on the SPLA and how to get started.

**Question 2:** If I am licensing my Unified Solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, may I use licenses from a SPLA as part of my Unified Solution?

**Answer:** With the exception of Windows Server, all software licenses used in your Unified Solution must come from a Microsoft Volume Licensing program that provides the Self-Hosted Applications use rights (for example, the Enterprise Agreement). If you host your solution in the public cloud, you may license the Windows Server component through your software services provider (if they are an Authorized License Mobility Partner), your own SPLA, Microsoft Azure, or the Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows Server.

**Question 3:** If I license my Unified Solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, may I add additional capacity through the SPLA?

**Answer:** No. If you license your Unified Solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, you must acquire all additional licenses for the solution through a Microsoft Volume Licensing program that includes the Self-Hosted Applications use rights (for example, the Enterprise Agreement). You may not use SPLA to supplement capacity, even on a short-term basis. The only exception is for Windows Server when hosting in the public cloud. In that case, you may license Windows Server through your software services provider (if they are an Authorized License Mobility Partner), your own SPLA, Azure, or the Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows Server.

**Question 4:** If I license my Unified Solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, can an Outsourcer host my solution on my behalf?

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**Answer:** Yes. Your Authorized Outsourcer can host your solution on fully dedicated hardware. See the Product Terms for more details about Authorized Outsourcers. If the Outsourcer uses shared hardware, you must license Windows Server through the service provider's SPLA (they must be an Authorized License Mobility Partner), your own SPLA, Azure, or the Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows Server under your Commercial Licensing agreement.

**Question 5:** If I license my Unified Solution through the Self-Hosted Applications use right, may I deploy my Unified Solution on shared hardware?

**Answer:** Yes. You may deploy your solution on shared hardware at an Authorized License Mobility Partner's datacenter or on Azure. In Azure, you can acquire Azure Virtual Machine rights through your Azure subscription or apply your Azure Hybrid Benefit for Windows Server. For the other Self-Hosted Applications in your Unified Solution, you can use License Mobility through Software Assurance rights. If you deploy your solution in an Authorized Mobility Partner's datacenter, you must license the Windows Server used to support your solution through SPLA.

**Question 6:** Do I have to deploy my Unified Solution on shared hardware?

**Answer:** No, it is an option, but you can still self-host on dedicated hardware.

**Question 7:** If I self-host, do I have to use separate hardware or can I mix with my Microsoft Commercial licensing licenses?

**Answer:** You do not have to use dedicated hardware. You can mix.

**Question 8:** Can I use Office or Desktop Applications as part of my Unified Solution if I license it through the Self-Hosted Applications use right?

**Answer:** No. The Product Terms do not designate Office or Desktop Applications as eligible for self-hosting, so you cannot include them in your Unified Solution. If you want to include Office as part of your solution, you must license your entire solution through the SPLA program.

**Question 9:** What happens when my Software Assurance expires? May I still take advantage of the Self-Hosted Applications use right?

**Answer:** No. The Self-Hosted Applications use right requires you to maintain active Software Assurance coverage. If your Software Assurance expires, you lose the right to deliver your solution as a service through Self-Hosted Applications. To continue, you must

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either renew or re-acquire Software Assurance or license your entire Unified Solution through the SPLA program.

**Question 10:** I currently license my solution through SPLA. Should I transition to the Self-Hosted Applications use right?

**Answer:** No. SPLA remains a valid option for delivering your solutions as a software service. It offers more flexibility and does not impose the same conditions as the Self-Hosted Applications use right.

**Question 11:** May I install my Unified Solution (or a component of it) at my customer's facility or on their hardware?

**Answer:** No. The Self-Hosted Applications use rights requires you to deliver the entire service remotely over the Internet. You may not install any part of the solution at your customer's facility or on their hardware.

**Question 12:** How do SPLA and the Self-Hosted Applications option compare?

**Answer:** Talk to your Reseller or Microsoft Account Manager to compare these two options for properly qualified applications.

**Question 13:** Which use rights document governs the Self-Hosted Applications use right?

**Answer:** The Product Terms outlines the Self-Hosted Applications use right and identifies all Microsoft products that support this licensing option. For Unified Solutions hosted in the public cloud, the SPLA, the Online Services Terms (OST), or the Azure Hybrid Benefit provision in the Product Terms defines the Windows Server use rights and requirements.

**Question 14:** Are all Microsoft products included for use under the Self-Hosted Applications use Right?

**Answer:** No. Only select Microsoft products are eligible for use under the Self-Hosted Applications use right. The Product Terms clearly identifies these products, which include popular server products commonly used by Independent Software Vendors (ISVs).

**Question 15:** Do I only need to qualify for the Self-Hosted Applications use right at the time I sign my agreement?

**Answer:** No. You must continue to evaluate your Unified Solution to ensure that you qualify and remain properly licensed any time you make a change—such as adding new components, new functionality, or additional Microsoft products—that could affect your



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eligibility. If your Unified Solution no longer qualifies, you must license it through the SPLA program.

**Question16:** Can my Unified Solution include SPLA licenses or third-party IP?

**Answer:** No. The Self-Hosted Applications use right requires that you be the licensee of all Microsoft software products used in and in support of your Unified Solution with the exception of Windows Server when you are hosting in the public cloud, which can be acquired through Azure or a services provider. If you would like to procure software services (for example, SQL Server compute capacity) from a company with a separate SPLA Agreement, then you must license your Unified Solution through the SPLA.

**Question 17:** Can I use Exchange Online in a Unified Solution if I previously used Exchange Server under the Self-Hosted Applications use right?

**Answer:** No. Exchange Online and Exchange Server are different products. Microsoft Online Services do not include Software Assurance benefits or Self-Hosting use rights. You may only include Microsoft products that are eligible for Self-Hosting in your Unified Solution.

**Question 18:** Can I build a Unified Solution using only Windows Server and Remote Desktop Services, without other Microsoft products?

**Answer:** Yes. You can build a Unified Solution with only Windows Server and Remote Desktop Services as long as your solution adds primary and significant functionality to the Microsoft product.

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