Microsoft

Solutions Partner with certified software designations

Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program

Updated April 2024

Contents

Drive software innovation with Microsoft

The Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program

Explore opportunities to develop and sell high-performing software solutions on our AI-powered cloud platform. We'll support you with offerings purpose-built to help you thrive.

Microsoft for Startups Founders Hub

Grow your startup from idea to exit with free access to leading AI models, up to $150,000 in Azure credits, and one-on-one guidance from business leaders and technical experts.

ISV Success

Build, publish, and grow well-architected apps on the Microsoft commercial marketplace through **core** or **expanded** benefits—including cloud credits, software licenses, and developer tooling with GitHub and Visual Studio.

Solutions Partner designations

Differentiate your high-quality, interoperable solutions by attaining **Solutions Partner* with certified software** designations**, which set you apart in areas of high customer demand and increase your discoverability in the marketplace.

*,** Review the disclaimer in the appendix.

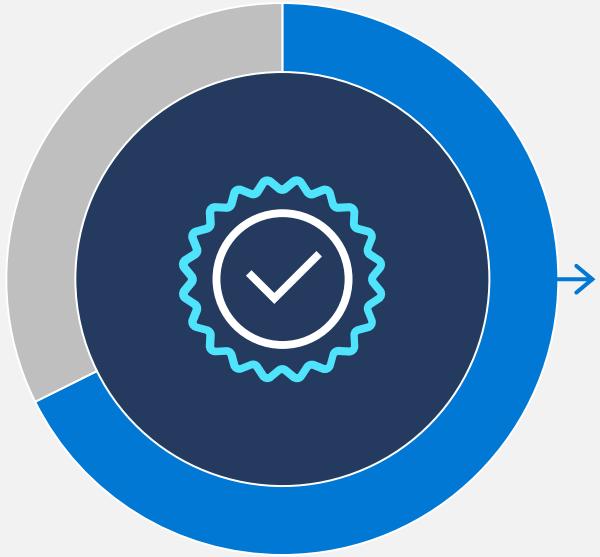
Meet the market demand and stand out to customers

The **global cloud computing** market size[1]:

$1,554.94 billion by 2030

Compound annual growth rate of **14.1 percent** from 2023 to 2030

As customers search for high-performing, cloud-based applications to address evolving business needs, badging helps them determine which solutions are right for their organization.



Two-thirds of respondents indicate certification with badging is a highly important factor when searching for, evaluating, or purchasing software, services, or solutions for their organization.

REASONS WHY BADGING IS IMPORTANT
(among the 68% who say it's highly important)

- Badges increase confidence and trust in the quality of the vendor's solution.
- Badges make it easier to authenticate the credibility of unknown vendors.

[1]"Cloud Computing Market Size," Grand View Research, September 2023.

Source: ISV Solution Designation study. Microsoft, March 2023.

Become a Solutions Partner with certified software

Set yourself apart from the competition by becoming a **Solutions Partner with certified software.** By doing so, you validate that your solution:

- Demonstrates commercial marketplace readiness.
- Meets technical requirements for interoperability with the Microsoft Cloud.
- Has a proven track record of customer success.

Attain a designation to assure customers of the **quality, interoperability, reliability,** and **relevance** of your software solution.

Certified software designations provide exclusive badging to signify that your software can deliver on the value customers expect from solutions built on the Microsoft Cloud.

Solutions Partner with certified software designations

There are two pathways to become a Solutions Partner with certified software: a pathway for **solution areas** and a pathway for **Industry AI**.

Solutions Partner with certified software for solution areas

- Certified software for Azure
- Certified software for Business Applications
- Certified software for Modern Work
- Certified software for Security

Solutions Partner with certified software for Industry AI

- Certified software for Healthcare AI
- Certified software for Retail AI
- Certified software for Financial Services AI
- Certified software for Manufacturing AI
- Certified software for Sustainability AI

Solution area pathway: requirements and validation process

Solutions must address three requirements to attain certified software designations for solution areas.
To pass these requirements, your solution needs to:

Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3
Demonstrate **Microsoft commercial marketplace readiness**, such as transactability and IP co-sell eligibility (if applicable).	Fulfill **customer satisfaction** and **commercial performance** requirements according to the relevant solution area.	Meet **technical requirements** and demonstrate **interoperability with the Microsoft Cloud.**

Please note that the sequence of the requirements listed above reflects the progression through the validation process in Partner Center.
Please also note that fees may apply in order to process technical validations and customer evidence reviews, assessed by a 3rd party auditor. These fees will vary according to various factors such as the type or number of designations applied for, and depth of review required.

For more information about validation, please visit the Solutions Partner with certified software partner playbook or review the documentation.

Technical requirements for the Microsoft Cloud

To attain a certified software designation, your software solution must pass technical requirements to prove interoperability with the applicable Microsoft Cloud solution area(s). For details on the technical requirements, please review the following:

- Azure technical audit criteria
- Business Applications technical audit criteria
- Modern Work technical criteria
- Security technical requirements

Please note, your software solution only needs to meet the requirements for the relevant solution area(s).

For an overview of the requirements for certified software designations for solution areas, please review the appendix or visit Microsoft Learn.

Industry AI pathway: requirements and validation process

Solutions must address five areas of requirements to attain certified software designations for Industry AI. To pass, your solution needs to:

Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5
				
Demonstrate Microsoft **commercial marketplace readiness**, such as transactability and IP co-sell eligibility (if applicable).	Show a clear track record of **customer success by submitting customer evidence**, such as case studies.	Align to **Microsoft Industry Clouds** and map to one or more of the **defined customer scenarios**.	Pass **technical requirements** associated with Microsoft solution areas and demonstrate **interoperability with the Microsoft Cloud**.	Meet additional technical requirements to demonstrate the use of one or more **AI capabilities in industry-specific ways**.

Please note that the sequence of the requirements listed above reflects the progression through the validation process in Partner Center.
Please also note that fees may apply in order to process technical validations and customer evidence reviews, assessed by a 3rd party auditor. These fees will vary according to various factors such as the type or number of designations applied for, and depth of review required.

For more information about validation, please visit the Solutions Partner with certified software partner playbook or review the documentation.

Industry AI capability patterns

To satisfy the Check 5 technical audit, your solution must meet the criteria of one of the four patterns listed below.

Pattern 1: **Microsoft Copilot industry-specific extension**

Pattern 2: **Industry-specific copilot solution**

Pattern 3: **Industry-specific Microsoft Fabric solution**

Pattern 4: **Industry-specific foundation model**

For more information about requirements and validation, please visit the appendix or the Solutions Partner with certified software partner playbook.

Unlock greater growth

Increase discoverability in the Microsoft commercial marketplace.

Becoming a Solutions Partner with certified software helps customers and sellers more quickly and confidently identify your solution in the marketpace for opportunities.

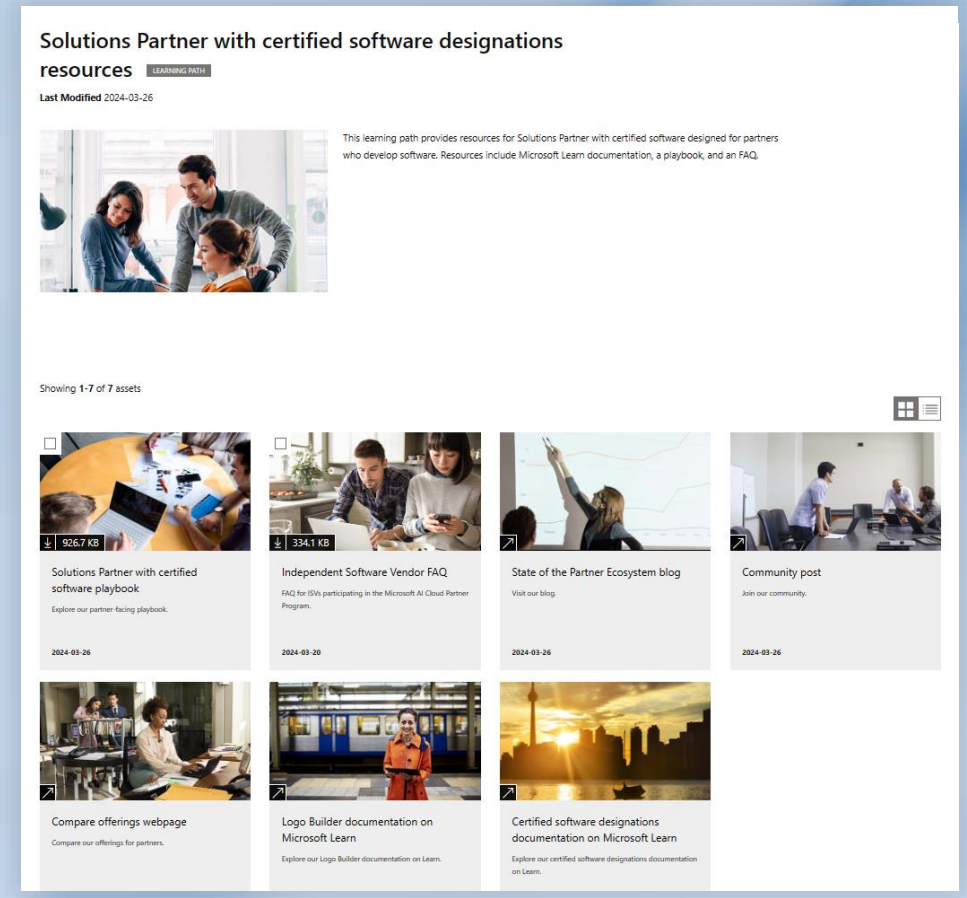
Unlock benefits that fuel greater demand for your solutions.

- ✓ Customer-facing badging
- ✓ Marketing concierge
- ✓ Microsoft solution play cards
- ✓ Nurture assets, emails, and call scripts
- ✓ Customer-facing solution briefs

Next actions

Learn how to successfully prepare for the process of attaining a certified software designation by visiting the resource gallery.

Enroll today and check the progress of your solution(s) throughout the process via the Partner Center referrals workspace.



Helpful resources

- Review the certified software designations playbook and FAQ.
- Explore the Microsoft Learn article for details about the requirements and enrollment process.
- Learn about transactability and co-sell eligibility to meet commercial marketplace readiness criteria.
- Prepare for success with Microsoft Learn trainings and ISV Success, which helps you build, publish, and grow well-architected solutions.
- For specific questions, please reach out to Partner Center support.

Thank you

Appendix

Solutions Partner with certified software

Certified software designation validation

Who validates?

Microsoft will verify commercial marketplace readiness.

Information Security Systems International (ISSI) will conduct the validation of certain technical requirements as well as the review of customer evidence.

How will ISSI validate?

ISSI will validate a partner's solution via screenshots, demo, architecture reference, etc. against the specific technical criteria listed in the following slides.

How to prepare

For certified software qualification processes that involve the external third-party auditor, ISSI, you will need to:

- Ensure access to personnel who can provide compliance with qualifications
- Choose a point of contact throughout the process
- Appoint a subject matter expert for each solution
- Provide demos, screenshots of applications, application architecture diagrams, and customer success story documentation

Solutions Partner with certified software for a solution area

Technical requirements documentation

Solutions Partner with certified software for Azure

Your solution must pass a technical review audit that assesses interoperability with Azure products, platforms, and services, with specific criteria according to the solution's interoperability scenario (Data, AI provider, Compute, Container, Integration (e.g., connectors), Control Plane).

Please review the Azure technical requirements documentation.

Solutions Partner with certified software for Business Applications

Solutions must pass a technical review audit that assesses interoperability with Business Applications products, platforms, and services, with specific criteria to assess feature overlap, operational excellence, data handling, and more.

Please review the Business Applications technical requirements documentation.

Solutions Partner with certified software for a solution area

Technical requirements documentation

Solutions Partner with certified software for Modern Work

Solutions must complete the Microsoft 365 App Compliance Program certification.

Please review the Microsoft 365 App Compliance Program certification documentation.

Solutions Partner with certified software for Security

Solutions must pass a technical review according to the security platform or product that they interoperate with.

- Note on Microsoft Sentinel: the solution must have passed the publishing criteria and be active in the Sentinel content hub gallery.

If the solution integrates with a Microsoft Security platform not listed, it might still be eligible for the Microsoft Intelligent Security Association (MISA), which covers a broader set of platforms.

Please review the Sentinel content and solutions documentation as well as the MISA documentation.

Solutions Partner with certified software for Industry AI

Pattern 1

Microsoft Copilot industry-specific extension

Criteria

The partner has built an industry-specific extension to Microsoft Copilot using their applications, services, and data that complies to the below listed requirements.

- The extensions can be plugins, actions, or similar extensions to Microsoft Copilot, including but not limited to Copilot for Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365 Copilot, and Microsoft Fabric Copilot.
- The solution uses contextual data stored in a Microsoft storage service such as OneLake (through Microsoft Fabric), Azure data services (Azure Cosmos DB, Azure SQL, Azure Synapse Analytics, Azure Database for PostgreSQL, Azure Blob storage, Azure Data Lake Storage Gen2, etc.), Microsoft Graph, Microsoft OneDrive, etc.
- (Recommended) The extension was built using one or more development tools from Microsoft to facilitate customer extensibility. Tools include Copilot Studio, Azure AI Studio (currently in public preview), Microsoft Visual Studio Code, GitHub, GitHub Copilot, etc.

Submission artifacts

- Provide detailed documentation of the partner solution, such as architecture diagrams, screenshots, presentations, demos, videos, etc., to show that the solution fits the pattern (industry-specific extension of Microsoft Copilot) and meets the requirements mentioned.
- Evidence on the partner solution extending one or more Copilots from Microsoft.
- Evidence on using Microsoft's storage services to store and retrieve contextual data used within the extension.
- (Recommended) Evidence on using Microsoft AI development toolchain to build the extension.

Solutions Partner with certified software for Industry AI

Pattern 2

Industry-specific copilot solution

Criteria

The partner has built their own copilot on top of a model from the model catalog in Azure AI Studio and is deployed in Azure Open AI service. The partner's copilot can be hosted standalone or embedded within an existing website, application, etc. and must meet the requirements below.

- The partner's copilot solution should be interoperable with other AI solutions in the ecosystem. This can be achieved in a couple of different ways:
  - Provide an extension to Microsoft Copilot (Pattern 1) that allows a user to use the partner's Copilot capabilities within Microsoft Copilot OR
  - The partner's copilot needs to provide an extensibility model, such as plugins that are compliant with OpenAI specifications.
- The partner's copilot should go beyond a simple chatbot and use an orchestration system to coordinate various subsystems (plugins, data, etc.) to engage the user in a natural language conversation. The orchestration system should include coordinating multiple flows using prompt flow or similar tools and may use orchestration frameworks like Semantic Kernel or LangChain. Functionally, the orchestration system should understand the user's prompt (such as a data inquiry, document summary, or shopping recommendations) and map them to the appropriate flow, plugins/extensions, or contextual data for the user response.
- The partner's copilot has been grounded using retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) or similar methods using contextual data. The solution uses contextual data stored in a Microsoft storage service such as OneLake (Fabric), Azure Data Services (Azure Cosmos DB, Azure SQL, Azure Synapse Analytics, PostgreSQL, Azure Blob storage, Azure Data Lake Storage Gen2, etc.), Microsoft Graph, OneDrive, etc. Copilot may also use Azure AI Search or similar Azure services for contextual information retrieval.
- (Recommended) The extension was built using one or more development tools from Microsoft to facilitate customer extensibility. Tools include Copilot Studio, Azure AI Studio (currently in public preview), Microsoft Visual Studio Code, GitHub, GitHub Copilot, etc.
- The solution should be aligned with the Microsoft Responsible AI Standard. Microsoft is not accountable for identifying or tracking responsible AI practices. *Note: This is not included in the criteria check.*

Solutions Partner with certified software for Industry AI

Pattern 2

Industry-specific copilot solution

Submission artifacts

Provide detailed documentation of the partner solution, such as architecture diagrams, screenshots, presentations, demos, videos, etc., to show that the solution fits the pattern (industry copilot solution) and meets the requirements.

- Screenshot or other visual evidence to show the industry-specific prompt and response in the copilot.
- Evidence on the partner's copilot exposing its functionality within a Microsoft Copilot OR the partner's copilot allows plugins or other standardized extensions from the AI ecosystem.
- Evidence that the partner's copilot uses an orchestration system/framework to coordinate user intent in a conversation.
- Evidence that Microsoft storage services are used to store and retrieve contextual data used within the partner's copilot solution.
- (Recommended) Evidence on using the Microsoft AI development toolchain to build the extension.

Solutions Partner with certified software for Industry AI

Pattern 3

Industry-specific Microsoft Fabric solution

Criteria

The partner has built their products and services on top of Microsoft Fabric or seamlessly embedded Fabric's capabilities within their existing application. The partner's solution can help manage a customer's data estate in Fabric and build the foundation for AI capabilities on top of Fabric. The application must meet the requirements below.

- The solution must use one or more native Fabric workloads or Fabric REST APIs. Workloads include Azure Data Factory, Synapse Data Engineering, Synapse Data Science, Synapse Data Warehouse, Real-Time Analytics, Power BI, and/or Data Activator. Fabric REST APIs include APIs for item management, administration, or workload-specific APIs such as Lakehouse APIs.
- The application must use OneLake as the storage layer for data. Data must be ingested directly into OneLake (such as Lakehouse or Kusto Query Language/KQL) or through mirroring for use within the application. If the data is brought to OneLake from an external storage service through shortcuts, then the data from shortcut must be consumed by a Fabric workload.
- (Recommended) The partner's Fabric application can use items from a Microsoft Industry Solutions workload to create the industry data model (IDM) in OneLake or use an industry-specific item template in Fabric, such as transformation notebooks or prebuilt reports and connectors.

Submission artifacts

Provide detailed documentation of the partner's solution, such as architecture diagrams, screenshots, presentations, demos, videos, etc., to show that the solution fits the pattern (industry-specific Fabric application) and meets the requirements.

- Evidence that the partner's Fabric application uses Fabric workloads and/or Fabric APIs.
- Evidence that the partner's Fabric application uses OneLake for storage.
- Evidence that items from a Microsoft Industry Solutions workload are used.

Solutions Partner with certified software for Industry AI

Pattern 4

Industry-specific foundation model

Criteria

The partner has built an industry-specific AI model.

- The model must be a foundation model built from scratch or fine-tuned from a pre-existing model available in the model catalog in Azure AI Studio (such as GPT-3.5 Turbo or GPT base models).
- The model must be deployed and managed with Azure.
- (Recommended) The extension was built using one or more development tools from Microsoft to facilitate customer extensibility. Tools include Copilot Studio, Azure AI Studio (currently in public preview), Microsoft Visual Studio Code, GitHub, GitHub Copilot, etc.

Submission artifacts

Provide detailed documentation of the partner's solution, such as architecture diagrams, screenshots, presentations, demos, videos, etc., to show that the solution fits the pattern (industry-specific foundation model) and meets the requirements.

- Screenshot or other visual evidence to show the industry-specific prompt and response in the partner's copilot.
- Evidence that the partner's model was built from scratch or fine-tuned from a pre-existing model from the model catalog in Azure AI Studio.
- Provide screenshots or links to prove the model exists and is hosted in Azure in any form and that the model is consumable by partners. Additionally, the partner provides screenshots for three (3) examples of the industry prompt and responses that are specific to the model and industry. The responses should show the value of fine-tuning/building a new model.
- (Recommended) Evidence on using the Microsoft AI development toolchain to build the model.

Disclaimer

*“Solutions Partner” refers to a company that is a member of the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program and may offer software, services, and/or solutions to customers. Reference to “Solutions Partner” in any content, materials, resources, web properties, etc. and any associated designation should be not interpreted as an offer, endorsement, guarantee, proof of effectiveness or functionality, a commitment or any other type of representation or warranty on the part of Microsoft. All decisions pertaining and related to your business needs including but not limited to strategies, solutions, partner selection, implementation, etc., rests solely with your business.

**A certification is (1) specific to the solution’s interoperability with Microsoft products and (2) based on self-attestation by the solution owner. Solutions are only certified as of the date the solution is reviewed. Solution functionality and capability are controlled by the solution owner and may be subject to change. The inclusion of a solution in marketplace and any such designations should not be interpreted as an offer, endorsement, guarantee, proof of effectiveness or functionality, a commitment or any other type of representation or warranty on the part of Microsoft. All decisions pertaining and related to your business needs including but not limited to strategies, solutions, partner selection, implementation, etc., rests solely with your business.