

Drupal 10 Multisite Setup on Acquia Cloud - Guide

0. Drupal 10 Multisite on Acquia - GOAT Guide

This document explains the enterprise-standard approach to Drupal 10 multisite hosting on Acquia. 130+ customer sites sharing a single codebase, with isolated databases and file systems per site.

0. 1. Core Principle

- One shared codebase for all customer sites.
- Each customer site has:
 - Unique site folder (/sites/customerX.example.com/)
 - Separate database
 - Separate files folder
- Shared core reduces maintenance; site data remains fully isolated.

0. 2. Multisite Request Flow

```
Internet
  v
DNS (Route53 / Cloudflare / GoDaddy)
  v
Acquia Load Balancer (ALB)
  v
Drupal Web Servers (EC2)
  v
Shared Codebase (/docroot or /web)
  v
Drupal detects HTTP_HOST
  v
/docroot/sites/sites.php maps domain -> site folder
  v
/sites/{site}/settings.php loads DB + file paths
```

0. 3. Configuration Files Example

```
sites.php
```

```
$sites['customer1.example.com'] = 'customer1.example.com';
```

```
settings.php
```

```
$databases['default']['default'] = array (
  'database' => 'customer1',
  'username' => 'DB_USER',
  'password' => 'DB_PASS',
  'host' => 'DB_HOST',
```

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```
'driver' => 'mysql',
);
$settings['file_public_path'] = "sites/customer1.example.com/files";
$settings['file_private_path'] = "sites/customer1.example.com/private";
```

0. 4. DNS + Acquia Configuration

Task | Who Does It

Register domains | Customer or business
Create DNS A record | DevOps team
Add domain to Acquia Cloud | Acquia admin
SSL setup | Acquia auto-provisions

0. 5. Filesystem Isolation per Site

- Each site uploads to /sites/{site}/files/

Example:

```
/docroot/sites/customer1.example.com/files/
/docroot/sites/customer2.example.com/files/
```

- Files never mix between customers.

0. 6. Drupal File Path Settings

```
$settings['file_public_path'] = "sites/customer1.example.com/files";
$settings['file_private_path'] = "sites/customer1.example.com/private";
```

0. 7. File Access Request Flow

User requests:

```
https://customer1.example.com/sites/customer1.example.com/files/image.jpg
v
```

Web server serves from /docroot/sites/customer1.example.com/files/image.jpg

For private files: Drupal serves securely via /system/files/

0. 8. Acquia File Handling

Area | How Acquia Handles

Codebase | Shared EFS mounted to all EC2s
Files | /docroot/sites/{site}/files/
Sync | Auto replicated across servers
Permissions | Safe write access via www-data user

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0. 9. Drush, Scripts, and Backups

```
Example command to backup one site's files:  
drush @customer1 rsync @self:%files/ ~/backups/customer1/  
  
- No need to back up full docroot.  
- Each site's files and DB are independently backed up.
```

0. 10. Shared vs. Per-Site Responsibilities

```
Shared | Per-Site  
-----  
Drupal core | Database  
Contrib modules | Files (/sites/{site}/files/)  
Contrib themes | Private files (/sites/{site}/private/)  
Global custom code | settings.php  
  
- Only files + DB need separating per customer.
```

0. 11. Best Practices

- One Git repo for all sites
- DB and files backed up per site
- Use Acquia Cloud Shield + HTTPS
- Config Split for site differences
- Drush site aliases
- CI/CD Pipelines for deployment
- Disaster recovery per site
- Auto-scale with Acquia

0. 12. GOAT Formula

1 shared codebase +
130 site folders +
130 DBs +
separate files per site =
ideal enterprise multisite on Acquia.

0. 13. Example sites.php Mappings

```
<?php  
$sites['customer1.example.com'] = 'customer1.example.com';  
$sites['customer2.example.com'] = 'customer2.example.com';
```

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```
$sites['customer3.example.com'] = 'customer3.example.com';
$sites['customer4.example.com'] = 'customer4.example.com';
$sites['customer5.example.com'] = 'customer5.example.com';

// Optional aliases
$sites['www.customer1.example.com'] = 'customer1.example.com';
$sites['www.customer2.example.com'] = 'customer2.example.com';
$sites['customer1.staging.example.com'] = 'customer1.example.com';
$sites['customer2.dev.example.com'] = 'customer2.example.com';
$sites['customer3.uk.example.com'] = 'customer3.example.com';
$sites['customer3.us.example.com'] = 'customer3.example.com';
?>
```

0. 14. Advanced Automated sites.php Template

```
<?php
/**
 * Example: Automated sites.php for large multisite arrays.
 */
$custom_domains = [
    'customer1.example.com',
    'customer2.example.com',
    'customer3.example.com',
    'customer4.example.com',
    'customer5.example.com'
];

foreach ($custom_domains as $domain) {
    $sites[$domain] = $domain;
    $sites["www.$domain"] = $domain;
    $sites[str_replace('.example.com', '.staging.example.com', $domain)] = $domain;
}
?>
```

0. 15. Additional Recommendations

- Implement health checks for all domains using uptime monitoring.
- Automate database + file backups with cron or pipeline jobs.
- Maintain a single source of truth list for customer domains.
- Use Ansible or similar tools to automate folder + DB provisioning.
- Regularly review site folder permissions for security compliance.

0. 11. Theme Customization per Site

Themes can be changed per site.

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Shared global themes:

- Place themes in /themes or /docroot/themes
- Available to all sites

Example: /themes/corporate_theme/

Site-specific themes:

- Place themes in /sites/{site}/themes/
- Only visible to that site

Example: /sites/customer1.example.com/themes/customer1_theme/

Set theme per site:

- In admin UI: Appearance -> Set Default Theme

OR

- In settings.php or config:

```
$config['system.theme']['default'] = 'customer1_theme';
```

Best Practice:

- Use a global base theme (corporate_base)
- Create child themes per customer (customer1_theme, customer2_theme)