If you wish to run Kentico in the Microsoft Azure Cloud Services environment, make sure that you are familiar with the following requirements.

Development tools

Install the following software on the machines where you plan to develop your Azure project:

- Microsoft Visual Studio 2015 or 2017 (or the free Visual Studio Express 2015 for Web).
- Microsoft .NET Framework 4.6 (will be installed automatically on your computer during the installation).
- **Azure SDK 2.9.5 or newer**, including Microsoft Azure Tools for your version of Microsoft Visual Studio.

> **ⓘ Azure SDK**
>
> Compatibility was fully tested for Azure SDK version **3.0.1**. Newer versions of the SDK that do not introduce breaking changes should also remain compatible. For more information, see Azure SDK for .NET 3.0 release notes.
>
> You can download the Azure SDKs with Tools for Visual Studio from http://azure.microsoft.com/en-us /downloads/archive-net-downloads/ or using the Microsoft Web Platform Installer.

- Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS) 7.5 or newer – required if you wish to run the application locally on the Microsoft Azure Compute Emulator.

Microsoft Azure requirements

The exact hosting requirements depend on the resource consumption and traffic load of your site and its components. You need to prepare the following services for your Azure subscription:

- **Azure cloud service** – for production (live) deployments of Kentico websites, it is highly recommended to use at least the **Small** Compute Instance Size.
- **Azure storage account**
- **Azure SQL server and database** – required if you wish to host your application database on Microsoft Azure. The smallest available database (1GB) is sufficient for the default Kentico installation.

Kentico licensing

You need a Website license (CMS or EMS) with web farm server licenses for the number of Microsoft Azure instances you are using. The number of required web farm licenses depends on the number of instances, not the number of actual physical servers involved. We recommend that you use two instances to qualify for the Microsoft Cloud service SLA.

For licensing information, refer to Cloud licensing and Price list.

Limitations

If the application database is hosted on Azure SQL Database (formerly known as SQL Azure), it is important to keep in mind that certain statements and expressions are restricted when writing queries (e.g., in custom code, web part properties or for reporting objects). For a comprehensive list of all SQL Database features and requirements, see Azure SQL Database features.

A shortcoming of any application running on Microsoft Azure is the need to redeploy (or at least update your deployment) before any changes made to the project structure or code are reflected. This may make it more difficult and time consuming to perform website maintenance, customization and some development tasks. However, you can use Web Deploy for development and testing purposes.

In addition, the following features of Kentico are currently limited:

- **Full site import** – importing sites is possible, but files stored in the web project, such as custom user controls, ASPX page templates or design files, will not be included in the import process. To work around this limitation, you can copy such files into the target Azure project and include them in the solution before you deploy the application to Microsoft Azure.

- **CSS Theme tabs** – management of files contained in stylesheet Theme folders directly through the Kentico administration interface is not available when running on Microsoft Azure.
- **JavaScript** minification does not work on Microsoft Azure Cloud Services deployments.