MPN EVOLUTION PARTNER FAQ

LAST UPDATED APRIL 25, 2016

General Frequently Asked Questions			
MPN Competency Value Pack Questions			
MPN Evolution: Competency Specific Questions			
Customer Relationship Management	Devices & Deployment	Digital Advertising	Distributor
Hosting	Identity and Access	Intelligent Systems	Learning
Midmarket Solution Provider	OEM	Software Asset Management	Volume Licensing

Note: this FAQ is a living document; we've tried to anticipate your questions, though we may not have the specific details you are looking for. If you have a question that is not explained below, please contact one of the following resources:

1. Review the information on the MPN Portal
2. Use the MPN Evolution Competency Guide for personalized recommendations
3. Talk to a competency expert using the Live Chat function, available on the MPN Portal on the bottom right of the webpage

General Frequently Asked Questions

Q) Why is Microsoft evolving the Microsoft Partner Network (MPN) competency portfolio?

A) With rapid changes in the technology landscape, customers are demanding both hybrid and cloud solutions to meet their evolving business needs. Demand for cloud services shows no signs of slowing down. IDC predicts that "greater cloud spending" will exceed $500B by 2020. This includes SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, plus all the professional and managed services relating to cloud technology (both public and private), as well as the supporting software and hardware to support cloud implementations. We are optimizing our competency portfolio to help enable partners to respond to these needs. MPN is focused on growing our partners' business through enablement resources, tools, and support to help you successfully connect with and serve your customers.

Q) Which competencies will be retired?

A) We are retiring twelve competencies; Customer Relationship Management, Devices & Deployment, Digital Advertising, Distributor, Hosting, Identity and Access, Intelligent Systems, Learning, Midmarket Solution Provider, OEM, Software Asset Management, and Volume Licensing.

Q) The competency I have isn't listed above. Should I expect changes?

A) If your competency is not listed above, there are no changes at this time.

Q) I currently have a competency that is going to retire. When is the last day I can renew my retiring competency?

A) You must renew the retiring competency on or before your anniversary date or before October 30th, 2016 (whichever comes first). You can view your anniversary date on the Partner Membership Center. We will no longer accept renewals for retiring competencies after October 30th, 2016. For competency-specific scenarios, please review the MPN Evolution Competency Guide for more personalized information. January 30th, 2018 is the last day to be active in a retiring competency -these competencies will be removed from Partner Membership Center on January 31st, 2018.

Q) When is the last day to sign up for a retiring competency?

A) July 30th, 2016 is the last day to sign up for a retiring competency. We will no longer accept new applications for retiring competencies starting July 31st, 2016.

Q) All my competencies are scheduled to retire. What should I do?

A) There are a number of options depending on your business and the services you provide. We have developed a MPN Evolution Competency Guide that will guide you through the various options best suited to your business and customers. The tool highlights the steps you need to take to continue to partner with Microsoft.

Q) A partner who has a renewal date of Jan/Feb/Mar 2017, do they need to renew their retiring competencies by Oct 30 201?

A) A partner can only start their renewal 90 days before their AD so whenever their AD is, just minus 90 days from it and that's the date they can start renewing. If their renewal window starts after Oct 30, 2016 it means they will not be able to renew their Silver or Gold membership and therefore should start planning their transition to the Cloud.

Q) If partners will not be able to renew their retiring competencies in 2017 and their membership will be expired, what they can only do is to attain existing competencies?

A) If a partner doesn't renew their competency membership by their Anniversary Date (AD), they will go into Expired status. If they don't qualify for the non-retiring competency, they can only renew as network member.

Anniversary Date	Partner ability on PMC	Guidance
New Partner to retiring competency after July 30,2016	Cannot join Retiring competency	New Partners will not be allowed to enroll as Silver/Gold competency member for the retiring competency after July 30,2016
Current Partner, renewing between now and October 30, 2016	Can renew retiring competency	Partner can renew and keep their competency till their next anniversary date (< Oct 30, 2017). The partner should be developing a transition plan to earn a modern competency before or within that timeframe. If a partner's 90-day renew early window falls before Oct 30, 2016 they may renew in the retiring competency. There will be no grace period beyond Oct 30, 2016.
After October 31, 2016	Cannot renew retiring competency	Partners must renew the retiring competency on or before their anniversary date or before October 30th, 2016, whichever is earlier. If they don't, they go into expired status on PMC. Once expired, PMC requires them to renew their network membership, then they have to start a "new" enrollment as Silver/Gold competency member into one of our modern competencies.
After January 28, 2018	None	We will have removed the retired competencies from the PMC. The only option for partners will be a modern competency

Q) Will the awards at this summer's Worldwide Partner Conference 2016 include awards for the retiring competencies?

A) Yes. Awards will be given for all retiring competencies.

Q) My business is focused more on consulting than selling a cloud solution. It looks like the only way I can be a partner is to sell a cloud product. Is this true?

A) No. There are different competencies available for partners who are not yet ready to sell or transact in the cloud. Partners can review all our competencies here to find the best fit for their business. Even though we're retiring some of our competencies, the remaining cloud and hybrid competencies will provide you with the tools, support, and resources you need to deliver hybrid and cloud solutions to our mutual customers.

Q) Why should I participate in MPN?

A) The Microsoft Partner Network is the leading partner program in the technology industry. The Microsoft Partner Network is focused on growing our partners' business through enablement resources, tools, and support to help you successfully connect with and serve your customers. Attaining Silver and Gold competencies allows our partners to differentiate themselves and the unique value they bring to their customers. Your profitability is at the core of everything we do.

Q) I am not ready to move to a new competency; is there another option I should consider?

A) If you are not ready to move to a new competency, you can visit the MPN Partner Portal to review all MPN competency options and to learn more about Microsoft Action Packs. Action packs provide a wide range of software and services, including free software to run your business (Windows 10 Enterprise, Office 365 E3, Enterprise Mobility Suite, a monthly credit for Microsoft Azure, Dynamics CRM Online Professional, and more), access to world-class developer tools, pre-sales support and training, digital marketing guidance from the Partner Marketing Center, and connections and networking with other partners.

Q) I am a new partner and was in progress toward one of the retiring competencies. What should I do now?

A) You can still earn the retiring competency as long as it is obtained by July 30th, 2016. You can also use the MPN Evolution Competency Guide to learn about competency options that are in high demand by our customers now and determine which are best suited for your business.

Q) I am a new partner; where can I learn more about the competency opportunities through MPN?

A) We encourage you to visit the MPN Evolution page for more information, and to use the MPN Evolution Competency Guide to learn about competency options that are best for your business.

Q) Where can I find information about how the retirement of my current competency may impact my benefits?

A) For each retiring competency you hold, you can continue to use all your current benefits, including your internal use rights (IURs), through January 30th, 2018 or your anniversary date, whichever is earlier, as long as you renew and remain active in the competency. The MPN Evolution Competency Guide will help answer many of your remaining questions.

Q) How do these changes impact my partner incentives?

A) There is no impact to your partner incentives through June 30, 2017 unless you have the Devices & Deployment Competency. The Devices and Deployment competency will no longer qualify you for the Microsoft Online Services Advisor Sell and Microsoft Online Services Advisor Usage incentives for Enterprise Mobility Suite, Microsoft Intune or AADP. These incentives will require the Enterprise Mobility Management competency as of October 1, 2016.

Q) What resources can I use to help with my transition?

A) Gavriella Schuster explains the program strategy in her blog post here. We realize these updates may require you to make changes and that changes like this take time. The retirement schedule has been designed to give you time to develop capabilities in cloud solutions, build new practices, and transition into one or more of the competencies available. We encourage you to visit the MPN Evolution page and try its Click-to-Chat option, and to use the MPN Evolution Competency Guide to learn about alternate cloud and hybrid competency options.

Q) If I join Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions, can I sell to enterprise customers as the competency name uses "Small and Midmarket?"

A) Yes, if your solution is correct for the customer, there is no restriction on customer size against competency type.

Q) Do I have to pay (again) for the new competencies, even if the old competency is still running or will the existing one run until the end of the runtime?

A) Microsoft does not charge for each competency. Partners only pay once they start their annual membership. As an example, if I hold five Silver Competencies, I would only pay for one Silver Membership.

Q) Are there any updates to Digital Partner of Record (DPOR)?

A) No: as we announced on January 14th, (see the blog here) we believe the performance of every partner involved in a cloud subscription matters and should be recognized. We expanded the review process, so now partners will be recognized for their performance through accelerated progress towards competency qualification. If you work on a cloud subscription but are not listed as the DPOR, data about your work from the following four sources will help you earn credit and qualify for the competency sooner:

- Microsoft Sales (for the transacting partner of Enterprise Agreements and Open licenses)
- Commerce Platform (for CSP subscriptions)
- FastTrack Onboarding Center
- Delegated Admin Privileges (per workload)

Q) Will there be changes to my Internal Use Rights (IURs)

A) Benefits will be determined by the path you choose. Please reference MPN Evolution Competency Guide to review the requirements and benefits for each competency and program within MPN.

Q) What is the difference between a path and an option?

A) There is more than one path to earn a competency. For example: In the Windows and Devices Competency, there are 3 paths (Skills Assessment, Performance, and Certified IP). In the Certified IP path, there are 2 options 1) ISV/App Builder Option – certified App or 2) OEM Option – Certified Device. Ultimately, a partner must complete the requirements in one option of your desired path to earn the competency. That way you can choose the path and option that best suits your business.

- o **Competency**: *overriding brand level unit.*
- o **Paths:** *the main criteria for attainment.* Exams/Assessments, Performance, Certified IP, etc. Each path can have several options
- o **Options:** *the unique set of steps a partner has to go through to earn the competency.*

Q) I still have questions, who can support me?

A) More information is available on the MPN Evolution page. When you visit the site, you can also connect with a MPN expert using Live Chat, who can answer any remaining questions.

MPN Competency Value Pack Questions

Q) What is a MPN Competency Value Pack?

A) Microsoft Partner Network (MPN) Competency Value Pack is a high-value, deeply discounted combination of an exam voucher and exam retakes. There are seven MPN Competency Value Pack options. Each of them maps to a MPN competency and is valid for the three exams for that specific competency.

Q) When are MPN Competency Value Packs available?

A) The MPN Competency Value Packs can be purchased starting April 12th, 2016 through September 30th, 2016. Exam vouchers in the packs must be redeemed and exams appointments scheduled by October 31st, 2016. All exams and retakes must be completed by December 31st, 2016.

Q) Is this a worldwide offer?

A) Yes, this is a worldwide offer.

Q) How many exam retakes does each MPN Competency Value Pack include?

A) For each MPN Competency Value Pack, one candidate gets a total of 15 attempts at passing the three required exams. The standard Microsoft exam policies regarding retakes apply.

Q) Can I use a single MPN Competency Value Pack to schedule different exams?

A) Each MPN Competency Value Pack includes one MCP or Microsoft Dynamics exam voucher, to be used by one person, and that voucher can only be used toward the three exams listed for the chosen competency. The retakes are only for those same three exams, and the voucher cannot be applied toward any other exam or offer.

Q) Which exams qualify?

A) Each of the seven MPN Competency Value Packs applies only to the exams listed for that particular competency. For more details on which exams are required for each competency, consult the preceding competency and exam list or visit our MPN Learning Path page to find or select learning paths.

Q) Can I take an online proctored exam with the voucher in a MPN Competency Value Pack?

A) Yes, if an online proctored exam is available, it can be taken with the voucher in a MPN Competency Value Pack. Get further details concerning the availability of online proctored exams.

Q) Can I schedule my initial exam and the retakes at the same time?

A) No, you cannot register for an exam retake until you have taken and failed the initial exam. For details, see the Microsoft exam retake policy.

Q) Can other offers or discounts be combined with a MPN Competency Value Pack?

A) No. A MPN Competency Value Pack cannot be used in combination with any other offer or discount.

Q) If I have previously paid for an exam and I've purchased a MPN Competency Value Pack, can I get a refund on the one I paid for first?

A) No. MPN Competency Value Pack offers and pricing cannot be applied to purchases made prior to April 12th, 2016.

Q) I know that the last day to purchase a MPN Competency Value Pack is September 30th, 2016. If I purchase a MPN Competency Value Pack prior to September 30th, 2016, but I don't schedule my exam until after September 30th, 2016, is the offer still valid?

A) MPN Competency Value Packs must be purchased by September 30th, 2016. Vouchers must be redeemed and exam appointments must be scheduled by October 31st, 2016. All exams and retakes must be completed by December 31st, 2016, and are subject to seat availability.

Q) Why is my MPN Competency Value Pack voucher code not valid when I try to schedule the exam?

A) If your voucher code isn't valid, you may be using the voucher code for an ineligible exam or using a code after the offer's expiration date. Or you may have run out of retakes in your MPN Competency Value Pack. If none of these reasons apply, contact Courseware Marketplace support for further assistance.

Q) If I have issues purchasing a MPN Competency Value Pack or redeeming a MPN Competency Value Pack voucher, whom do I contact?

A) If you have issues purchasing a MPN Competency Value Pack or redeeming a MPN Competency Value Pack voucher, please contact Courseware Marketplace Support.

Competency Specific Questions

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Competency

Q) Where can I find resources related to the Cloud Customer Relationship Management Competency?

A) You can find more information on the Cloud Customer Relationship Management Competency here.

Q) Is the Cloud CRM Competency available in the US only, or will it be available worldwide?

A) The Cloud Customer Relationship Management Competency will be available worldwide.

Q) Will this program be available to all partners or exclusively to Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online partners?

A) This program will be available to all partners.

Q) Will partners be grandfathered into this competency?

A) There will be no transition scenarios or grandfathering process for this competency. All partners will have to meet the requirements in order to attain the competency.

Q) Are the required exams existing exams or new exams?

A) There is a combination of existing and new exams. You can find the exams listed on the competency portal page. Please review the exam requirements here.

Q) Can partners qualify into the competency using Microsoft Social Listening, Parature, and Microsoft Dynamics Market deployments in addition to CRM Online?

A) Initially, active CRM OL seats will be the only metric counted towards competency attainment. We are planning on including MSL, MDM, and Parature in the future and will develop readiness materials specific to MSL and MDM.

Q) Silver partners earn their competency free of charge until June 30th, 2016. Is this the same for Gold or do they need to pay a fee?

A) Gold partners will need to pay a fee – reduced from the *normal* Gold fee. Please see detailed pricing information here.

Q) Will partners with the Cloud CRM Competency have to pay for access to the Dynamics Learning Competency Portal?

A) Yes: partners will have to pay to access training content on the Dynamics Learning Competency Portal. The $1,000 Dynamics Learning Competency Portal fee is waived for partners on a Partner Advantage Service plan. Dynamics Learning Competency Portal access is granted at a partner organization level so all employees within a company have access.

Q) Do partners need to pay for the Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online training that is associated to the Cloud CRM Competency's required exams?

A) Level 100 training is free. Partners will have to pay to access materials available on the Dynamics Learning Competency Portal.

Devices and Deployment Competency

Q) What happens to my Devices and Deployment competency identity?

A) The devices and deployment competency identity will remain available for you to use as long as you maintain competency status. The identity will be retired entirely on January 31st, 2018.

Q) How do I continue to demonstrate my Windows expertise to customers?

A) The Windows and Devices competency will be available for you to demonstrate your Windows expertise to customers.

Q) I focus on EMS: what competency should I look at instead of Devices and Deployment?

    A) The Enterprise Mobility Management is the best competency for partners focused on services and solutions built on EMS, Microsoft Intune or Azure Active Directory Premium.

Q) Can I still access Desktop Deployment Planning Services?

    A) You will be able to access DDPS with either the Devices and Deployment or Windows and Devices competency.

Q)   How do these changes impact my partner incentives?

    A) There is no impact to your partner incentives through June 30, 2017 unless you have the Devices & Deployment competency.

Q)   I have Devices & Deployment competency. What is the impact on my partner incentives?

    A) The Devices and Deployment competency will no longer qualify you for the Microsoft Online Services Advisor Sell and Microsoft Online Services Advisor Usage incentives for Enterprise Mobility Suite, Microsoft Intune, or AADP. These incentives will require the Enterprise Mobility Management competency as of October 1, 2016.

Distributor Competency

Q) Will I lose my IURs?

    A) If you pass the necessary exams to move to the cloud competency, then you will gain additional IURs and retain the existing IURs if you renew your competency for FY17.

Q) Is there an impact to my Distributor Incentive Program?

    A) There is no impact as long as you qualify and sign the Distributor Channel Agreement.

Q) Will I have access to all the resources currently available for Distributors?

    A) Yes, the resources you receive as a distributor will continue. Please see the Distributor Channel Agreement for details.

Q) Without the Distributor Competency, can we still be an authorized Distributor for Microsoft?

    A) Yes, as long as you have an active Distributor Channel Agreement.

Q) What does this mean for my Distributor Competency status? Do I need to take an exam to gain a cloud competency?

    A) Distributors will get special options to gain cloud competencies; they will need to take both exams and assessments but have no performance requirements to attain their new competency.

Q) Should I take both exams and assessments related to the cloud competencies?

A) Since Distributors represent and act on behalf of Microsoft, our new focus is to invest in the technical skills and assessments for the cloud competencies to help Distributors become more proficient and profitable selling in the cloud.

Q) In the past, the Volume Licensing Competency partners or the Distributors needed a Gold Competency to be called a Microsoft LSP or a Distributor. Now that the competency is going away, will this change?

A) Though the competency is retiring, your requirements and skills are the same but are listed in the Distributor Channel Agreement. Your business skills will now map to your Channel Agreement. The business skills requirements that were required through competencies are now going through your Channel Agreement.

Hosting Competency

Q) How do I earn the Hosting Option in the Cloud Platform Competency and are there additional benefits? Is the fee different?

A) Please reference MPN Evolution Guide to review the requirements and benefits for each competency and program within MPN.

Q) I'm currently a hosting partner: what competency should I be looking at?

A) Our Hosting partners play a key role in our cloud vision and we want to provide a natural path to move to the Cloud Platform Competency through Solution Provider Licensing Agreement (SPLA) revenue so you can continue to focus on offering a variety of solutions to your customers. You can still earn Cloud Platform Competency through driving Azure consumption or the Cloud Productivity Competency through driving active usage of Office 365 workloads. Please reference MPN Evolution Guide to review the requirements and benefits for each competency and program within MPN.

Q) I don't meet the SPLA revenue thresholds for the Hosting Option Competency: what are my options?

A) If your business is focused more on offering services around Office 365, Azure or other cloud solutions, take a look at our cloud competencies.

Q) The performance thresholds for the SPLA Reseller Program are different for Developed and Emerging Markets. What markets do you consider "Emerging Markets?"

A) The markets that are considered "Emerging Markets" are: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Central Asia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India SC, Indian Ocean Islands, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South East Asia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam and West and Central Africa.

Q) I have the Hosting Competency today, is the fee different for the Cloud Platform Competency?
>A) Please reference MPN Evolution Guide to review the requirements and benefits for each competency and program within MPN.

Q) Hosting Option within Cloud Platform is not available as of April 12th. When will it be available?
>A) We do not have a date to share at this time.   Please frequently review the "What's New" page on the MPN Portal for more information.

Intelligent Systems Competency

Q) If I have a device, solution and a cloud solution, which competency should I join?
>A) Both Windows and Devices and Cloud Platform are good options, but pick the primary competency for your business.

Q) What other programs or help can I find with my IoT business?
>A) We have an Azure Certified for IoT program in addition to our competencies.

Identity and Access Competency

Q) Where can I find more information about Enterprise Mobility Suite and partner opportunities?
>A) For Enterprise Mobility Suite information, go here. For competency information, go here.

Q) Where can I find more info around Enterprise Mobility Suite incentives eligibility via the Enterprise Mobility Management Competency?
>A) To learn more about EMS Incentives, visit the portal page, here.

Learning Competency

Q) Why are you changing the Learning Competency Partner program? My core business is still to give training and skills to IT Pro and Developers. Is this business no longer important to Microsoft?
>A) We realize and appreciate the impact that Learning partners make towards readiness. Because your work is key to driving Microsoft technology adoption, we're mainstreaming the Learning Competency into cloud and hybrid competencies with special requirements and added benefits. Specifically, for partners meeting the student training and MCT performance requirements for Silver or Gold levels, there will be Learning partner options into Cloud Platform, Cloud Productivity, Cloud CRM, ERP, Datacenter, Messaging, Content and Collaboration, Project and Portfolio Management, Communications, Data Platform, Data Analytics, Enterprise Mobility Management and Windows and Devices, Application Development, Application Integration and Application Lifecycle.

Q) I've been a Gold and/or Silver Learning Competency partner. What does this program change mean for me? What are my options for next renewal to remain a Gold or Silver Learning Partner?

> A) The timeframe and transition path for the Learning Competency have been published. To help support questions about specific competency changes and determine the best alternatives, reference the new MPN Evolution Competency Guide.

Q) Will the Learning Competency partner branding continue to help identify Learning Competency Partners and if so, how do I get the new branding guidelines?

> A) Discoverability and identity for Learning partners will be retained. However, the 'brand' is the relevant competency exam where the partner has achieved the Learning option.   Learning partners will identify themselves as follows when achieving the learning option into competencies: The guidelines and resources will continue to be available through the Microsoft Learning Program Guide and Microsoft Learning Campaign Factory resources.
>
> Example of branding:
> > **Microsoft Partner**
> > Learning – Silver Cloud Platform Partner
> > Learning – Silver Cloud Productivity Partner

Q) What will happen to the "Training Use Licenses?"

> A) Training use licenses for Classroom deployment will continue and will be enhanced for Silver and Gold partners. For partners not qualifying for Silver or Gold levels, Microsoft will provide an option to sign up for a Learning Specific Action Pack. Action Pack provides a wide range of software and benefits including free software to run your business (Windows 10 Enterprise, Office 365 E3, Enterprise Mobility Suite, a monthly credit for Microsoft Azure, Dynamics CRM Online Professional, and more), access to world-class developer tools, pre-sales support and training, digital marketing guidance from the Partner Marketing Center, connections and networking with other partners.

Q) How will this change impact SATV (Software Assurance Training Vouchers)?

> A) There will be minimal changes to the SATV program. Qualified partners will be able to participate in the SATV program.

Q) Will there be changes to the twice-yearly LeX Rebate Incentive program?

> A) The current Rebate Incentive program will continue till June 30th, 2016. Any possible change to the FY17 Rebate incentive program would be communicated as per standard process and timing.

Q) How does this impact MDF, especially if I am not a Gold partner anymore?

> A) The present MDF program will continue until June 30th, 2016. Further communication with MDF would be made in FY17.

Q) Why are there no country specific KPIs anymore? Is certification not counted towards KPI?
A)   We are taking this opportunity to simplify the program and make it easy for Learning Partners. Based feedback received through the Advisory Council and partner engagements, we are standardizing on one Global KPI which will be "Number of students trained." Certification will continue as a product and would be covered under the Rebate Incentive program. Based on our partners' feedback, we are removing certification as a requirement towards KPIs going forward.

Q) Will MOC, DMOC and MOC On-demand also be retired?
A) No. All Official curriculum products and certifications will continue.

Q) Will there be any changes on Microsoft certification program and if so, when will it be announced so I can review the specific details?
A) There are no changes to the Microsoft Certification program linked to the MPN program change.

Q) Does my Microsoft point of contact change with the new competency structure?
A) Right now, there are no changes to overall engagement and business relationships related to the new competency structure.

Q) As a Silver Learning Competency Partner, how can Microsoft help me differentiate myself from smaller Silver partners or grey market learning centers?
A) Microsoft is mainstreaming the Learning Competency and we will have Learning options into all of the competencies that will remain in MPN. Existing and new partners will need to qualify for the Silver level basis demonstration of qualification and performance. Attaining a Silver level will mean differentiation and superlative benefits.

Q) Will my training for Office or Dynamics be recognized in the new program?
A) There are no changes to the constituents for KPIs and as a result, end-user Office and Dynamics trainings will not be counted towards KPIs. KPIs will be based on qualified products, and information about the same would be available on the Partner KPI dashboard.

Q) Where can I get more information on the new Learning Partner Program - requirements benefits, incentives and resources?
A) MPN will have all information on the portal. All partners would have resources and tools available to evaluate Learning options into the MPN competencies

Q) Are there new participation guidelines I need to be following?
A)   The changes on competency and the related requirements will be available on the MPN Portal, including the KPI requirements and partner tiers. The Program Guide will be updated and will be available in due course.

Q) Can I offer my training cross-border and extend my market volume?
A) All current program rules apply. There is no change to business terms of the Learning program.

Q) As part of a consortium can I be grandfathered and become Gold? And if so, how do I get my training licenses?

A) All license grants will follow MPN guidelines at a Partner Organization level. There are IUR benefits across competencies which are explained on [MPN Portal](#).

Q) Is my support still through PSS (Arvato)?

A) There is no change to business engagement and terms. Partners who are supported by Arvato (PSS) will continue to receive support.

Q) What will the fee be to get the Learning Competency Partner status?

A) The standard MPN fees and policies apply.

Q) What if I drop to silver: how will I cover all my training licenses?

A) License benefits (Training Use) have been enhanced across partner tiers. Please check the Training Use license benefit for Silver partners.

Q) Will Learning Competency Partners In-country awards be dropped?

A) Learning partners will retain their identity and brand. In-country award decisions are at the discretion of Microsoft.

Q) Under the new MPN program, which competencies will be allowed to purchase courseware and if so, how will customers and individuals recognize where to go for reliable and quality Microsoft training?

A) Microsoft Official Learning Product can be purchased by all MPN partners. Learning partners are able to do so at a special price and will continue to have this benefit. Learning partners will be discoverable in PinPoint and will retain the "Learning Partner" branding for identity and discoverability.

Q) Given that the competency is being retired, does that mean that the competency fee goes away? Is it being replaced with some type of LeX fee?
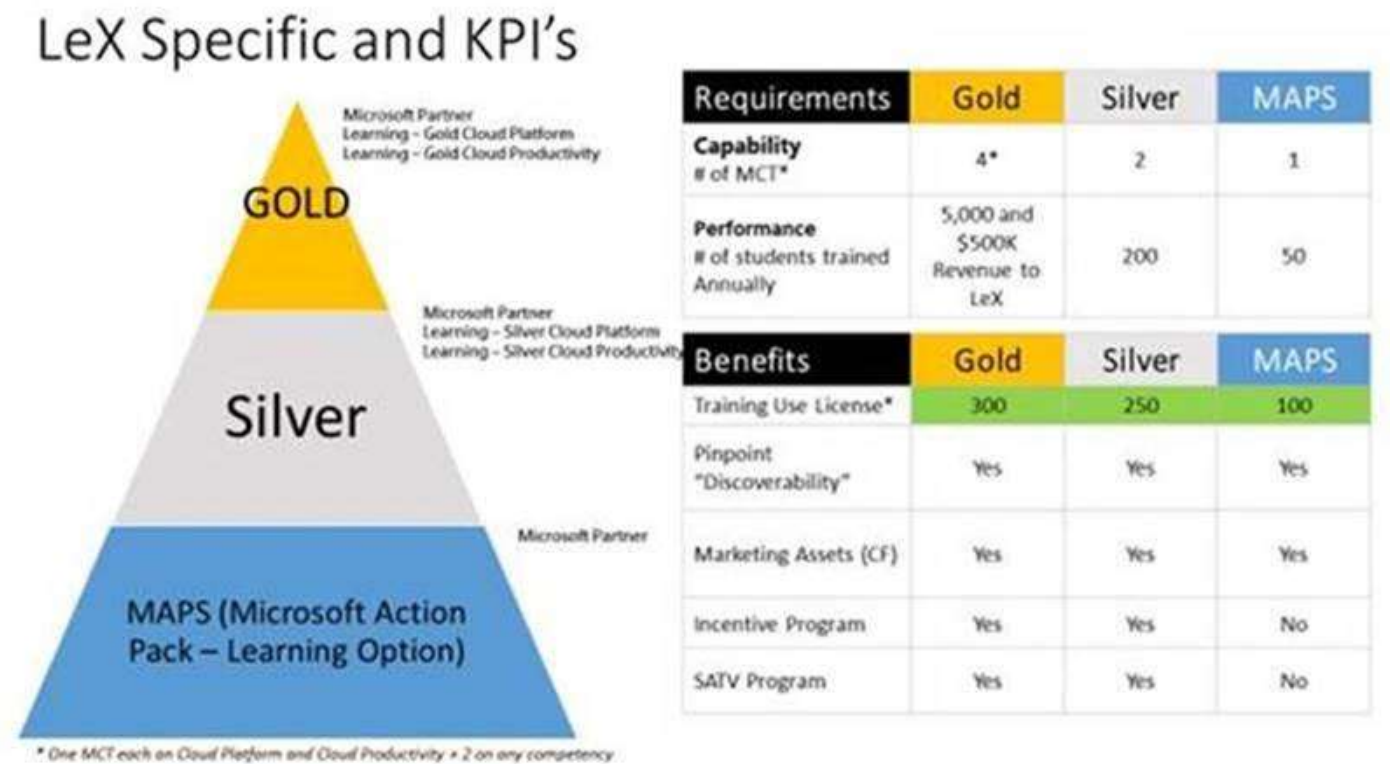
A) Learning partners will be mainstreamed into one or more of the existing MPN cloud and hybrid competencies, depending on solution expertise. The requisite fee for the competency will be applicable. There will be no separate fee.

Q) Will Imagine Academy also retire?

A) This announcement has no bearing on Microsoft Learning products and offerings.

Q) Do you have a simple overview of the LeX specific requirements and KPI's?

A) Yes, see the overview below.

LeX Specific and KPI's

Microsoft Partner
Learning – Gold Cloud Platform
Learning – Gold Cloud Productivity

GOLD

Microsoft Partner
Learning – Silver Cloud Platform
Learning – Silver Cloud Productivity

Silver

Microsoft Partner

MAPS (Microsoft Action Pack – Learning Option)

* One MCT each on Cloud Platform and Cloud Productivity • 2 on any competency

Requirements	Gold	Silver	MAPS
Capability ＃ of MCT*	4*	2	1
Performance ＃ of students trained Annually	5,000 and $500K Revenue to LeX	200	50

Benefits	Gold	Silver	MAPS
Training Use License*	300	250	100
Pinpoint "Discoverability"	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marketing Assets (CF)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incentive Program	Yes	Yes	No
SATV Program	Yes	Yes	No

OEM Competency

Q) What happens to my OEM competency benefits?

A) You will keep your competency benefits through FY17 as long as you maintain OEM Competency status. Windows and Devices Competency will also make you eligible for comparable benefits.

Q) What happens to my OEM Competency brand?

A) You can keep using the OEM Competency brand as long as you maintain active OEM Competency status. The competency and brand will fully retire on January 31st, 2018.

Q) How do I continue to demonstrate my device expertise to customers?

A) We recommend you consider the Windows and Devices Competency.

Q) What happens to my IUR?

A) You will keep your IUR as long as you maintain active OEM Competency status.

Q) When will Windows and Devices competency be available?

A) The Windows and Devices Competency is due to launch April 18, 2016.

Q) Do I still qualify for OEM rebates and incentives?

A) Through FY17, you will qualify for OEM rebates and incentives as long as you maintain active OEM Competency status. Windows and Devices Competency will also qualify you for OEM rebates and incentives.

Software Assets Management Competency (SAM)

Q) Why should I stay a Microsoft SAM Partner?

A) The Microsoft Partner Program offers a wealth of options and benefits for partners. Whether moving to a new competency as a Gold or Silver partner or signing up for the Microsoft Action Pack, you will be eligible for internal use rights, partner community activities, customer leads, and more. Please reference MPN Evolution Guide to review the requirements and benefits for each competency and program within MPN. Although it is ultimately your decision on your business model for SAM and we have always encouraged SAM partners to build a sustainable SAM business, Microsoft will continue to drive SAM engagements with customers through partners despite the retirement of the SAM Competency from the MPN program. We look forward to our continued partnership with you on these SAM initiatives.

Q) What will happen to my SAM incentives when the competency retires?

A) SAM incentives will still be active after July 30th. New partners joining the SAM program after July 30th will have to meet the FY17 SAM eligibility incentive requirements, as determined by the SAM team to qualify for SAM incentives. The SAM team will announce the incentive eligibility requirements at a later date.

Q) Why should I bother renewing my partner status this year?

A) If your competency renewal date is prior to or on October 30th, 2016, you can renew and take advantage of the SAM Gold competency status for a year from your renewal date. If your competency renewal date is between October 31st, 2016 and January 30th, 2017, you should take advantage of the 90-day early renewal option and renew by October 30th, 2016 to enjoy a year of the SAM Gold Competency based on your renewal date. If your renewal date is after January 30th, 2017, you will need to move to a new remaining competency or the Microsoft Action Pack program to continue to be part of the Microsoft Partner Network.

Q) Will SAM no longer be a focus for Microsoft through this competency transformation?

A) SAM will continue to be a focus for Microsoft through this transformation and beyond. The SAM business is healthy and growing as we've laid the groundwork together over the years to assist customers in managing their software licenses and driving legalization. Our direction towards adding more value to customers through our SAM engagements and assisting customers in closing the gap through the Cloud will continue to be our focus and we will partner with organizations around the world that are SAM experts to provide customers with high quality SAM services.

Q) How does the SAM competency retirement impact the SAM incentives that we receive?

A) Our SAM incentive program will continue through FY17. Every year, we review and revise the incentive program to better serve customer and partner needs. Any changes or updates will be announced at WPC in July 2016.

Q) Why should partners continue to bring Microsoft SAM opportunities?

A) Microsoft will continue to drive a SAM program around the world with local SAM teams and partners that have expertise in SAM. The partnerships that we have built will continue as we together identify customer opportunities for SAM and add value and grow our businesses through SAM. By bringing SAM opportunities to Microsoft, your customers will be able to take advantage of empowerments that bring flexibility and choice to align with their IT strategy that only Microsoft can legally give. Working with Microsoft is the best route to helping your customers realize the most value from their software investments.

Q) Will you now lock the SAM partner program and work with only the historic Gold SAM partners?

A) The SAM&C team is looking to maintain a community of skilled partners, whether a historic Gold or Silver SAM Competency partner, or a new SAM partner that enters the market.

Q) As a SAM partner, which remaining cloud and hybrid competencies should I be looking at?

A) There are seven competencies that we recommend you review: Cloud Productivity, Cloud Platform, Data Platform, Datacenter, Data Analytics, Enterprise Mobility Management, and Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions. If none of these are suitable for your business, we recommend the Microsoft Action Pack program.

Volume Licensing Competency

Q) What is required to attain the retiring Volume Licensing Competency?

A) The current Volume Licensing Competency has 5 requirements:

1. Pass a qualifying exam or certification. Two individuals each must pass one of the following:

   a. *MCP Exam 70-671: (Exams passed prior to January 2015 continue to qualify for the competency)*

   b. *Exam 70-672: (Exams passed prior to January 2015 continue to qualify for the competency)*

   c. Exam 74-678: Designing and Providing Microsoft Volume Licensing Solutions to Large Organizations

2. Two of these individuals each must pass the following: (T-36 certification) Enterprise Agreement Life Cycle Process: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3

3. Complete your organization's MPN profile

4. Provide 3 pieces of customer evidence from within the last 12 months

5. Pay the Gold competency fee

Q) What does this mean for LSPs? What is required to maintain partner licensing capabilities in the LSP Channel Agreement?

A) The MCP 74-678 exam will continue to be supported, even after the Volume Licensing Competency retires. MCP 74-678 exam will still be a requirement within the SAM Channel Agreement. The MCP 74-678 and T-36 certification, however, will be incorporated in to the LSP Channel Agreement. Get Licensing Ready continues to be available and supported for all Volume Licensing partners, including VAR, Disti and LSP Partners.