

G-Cloud 15 Service Definition

Microsoft 365 Licensing and Optimisation Services

Service Name	Microsoft 365 Licensing and Optimisation Services
Service Type	Cloud Support Services
Supplier	Howell Technology Group Limited
Framework	G-Cloud 15

Service Summary

Microsoft 365 Licensing and Optimisation Services provide comprehensive licensing advisory, procurement, and optimisation services for Microsoft 365 and associated cloud products. HTG delivers expert guidance on license selection, cost optimisation, compliance management, and subscription lifecycle management, including license auditing, right-sizing recommendations, Enterprise Agreement management, and Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) subscription services. The service ensures organisations maintain appropriate licensing whilst minimising costs and avoiding compliance risks.

Service Description

Microsoft's licensing landscape has evolved into a complex ecosystem, encompassing Microsoft 365, Azure, Dynamics 365, Power Platform, and security products, each with multiple tiers, add-ons, and consumption models. Organisations struggle to understand which licenses they need, identify cost-saving opportunities within their existing subscriptions, maintain compliance with Microsoft's licensing terms, optimise license assignments as business needs change, and navigate transitions between licensing programmes.

HTG's Microsoft 365 Licensing and Optimisation Services address these challenges through deep Microsoft licensing expertise developed through Microsoft Solutions Partner status and extensive experience managing licenses for organisations from 50 to 5,000+ users. The service provides independent, customer-focused guidance that prioritises your business objectives and budget constraints rather than vendor sales targets.

The service spans the complete licensing lifecycle: initial assessment and recommendations for organisations adopting Microsoft 365; ongoing optimisation for existing Microsoft 365 customers seeking cost reduction; procurement services providing competitive CSP pricing with full transparency; compliance auditing to identify and remediate licensing gaps; license management handling assignments, renewals, and lifecycle activities; and strategic planning for major licensing transitions such as Enterprise Agreement renewals or cloud migration projects.

HTG operates as a Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) Direct Bill partner, providing full-service Microsoft licensing with monthly or annual subscription models, transparent pricing with no hidden margins, consolidated billing simplifying financial management, dedicated licensing specialists for ongoing support, and direct escalation channels to Microsoft for complex scenarios.

The service combines technical expertise in Microsoft 365 workload deployment and configuration with commercial acumen in licensing structures and cost optimisation. HTG licensing specialists hold Microsoft certifications and maintain current knowledge of licensing programmes, policy changes, and new offerings. This expertise enables identification of opportunities invisible to organisations managing licensing internally, such as license consolidation opportunities, underutilised premium features, workload migration paths

reducing costs, compliance gaps before Microsoft audits, and upcoming licensing changes affecting your organisation.

Service Benefits

Cost Optimisation

- Identify cost savings averaging 15-30% through license right-sizing
- Eliminate unused licenses and redundant subscriptions
- Optimise licensing tiers matching actual usage patterns
- Consolidate disparate subscriptions reducing complexity
- Leverage volume licensing discounts and promotional programmes

Compliance and Risk Management

- Proactive compliance auditing identifies gaps before Microsoft audits
- Documented compliance posture for audit defence
- Avoid non-compliance penalties and true-up costs
- Maintain license assignment accuracy and documentation
- Navigate complex licensing terms with expert guidance

Strategic Planning and Expertise

- Independent advice aligned with your business objectives
- Navigate licensing programme transitions (EA to CSP, etc.)
- Forecast future licensing costs supporting budget planning
- Evaluate new Microsoft offerings and their business value
- Plan licensing strategy aligned with digital transformation initiatives

Operational Efficiency

- Eliminate internal licensing management overhead
- Simplified procurement through single CSP relationship
- Consolidated billing reduces accounts payable complexity
- Automated license provisioning and de-provisioning
- Reduced time spent researching licensing questions

Flexibility and Scalability

- Monthly subscription flexibility accommodates business changes
- Rapid license provisioning for new users (typically same-day)
- Scale licensing up or down without long-term commitments
- Support for seasonal workforce variations
- Multi-entity licensing for complex organisational structures

Enhanced Value Realisation

- Maximise ROI from existing license investments
- Identify underutilised features and capabilities
- Training recommendations supporting license value extraction
- Workload adoption guidance
- Feature activation planning

Service Features

Licensing Assessment and Advisory

- Comprehensive license audit of existing subscriptions

- Usage analysis identifying optimisation opportunities
- License SKU mapping and recommendations
- Comparison of licensing programme options (CSP, EA, MPSA)
- Total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis
- Right-sizing recommendations based on actual usage
- Future state licensing roadmap development

Microsoft 365 Licensing Expertise

- All Microsoft 365 licensing tiers (Business Basic, Business Standard, Business Premium, E3, E5, F1, F3)
- Microsoft 365 add-ons (Defender, Copilot, Advanced Compliance, etc.)
- Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, OneDrive for Business
- Microsoft Teams, Viva Suite
- Power Platform (Power BI, Power Apps, Power Automate)
- Microsoft Defender and security products
- Entra ID Premium licenses

Azure Licensing and Cost Management

- Azure subscription management and optimisation
- Azure Reserved Instances planning and procurement
- Azure Hybrid Benefit evaluation and implementation
- Azure consumption monitoring and cost control
- Azure Cost Management reporting and recommendations

Enterprise Application Licensing

- Microsoft Dynamics 365 licensing
- SQL Server and Windows Server licensing
- Visual Studio subscriptions
- Project and Visio licensing
- Third-party application licensing dependencies

CSP Subscription Management

- Cloud Solution Provider Direct Bill services
- Monthly or annual subscription billing
- Transparent pricing with published margins
- Consolidated billing across all Microsoft cloud services
- Same-day license provisioning
- Automated subscription management portal
- Invoice reconciliation and support

License Lifecycle Management

- New user license provisioning
- License assignment and reassignment
- Deprovision inactive users
- License renewal management
- Subscription upgrade and downgrade processing
- Multi-factor authentication compliance
- Security defaults configuration

Compliance Management

- License compliance auditing
- True-up calculation and planning
- Documentation of license entitlements

- Compliance reporting for audits
- Guest user licensing compliance
- External user access licensing
- Application licensing requirement assessment

Cost Optimisation Services

- License usage analytics
- Inactive user identification
- Over-licensed user detection
- Feature utilisation analysis
- Alternative licensing option evaluation
- Volume licensing programme assessment
- License consolidation opportunities

Procurement Services

- Competitive CSP pricing
- Quote generation and comparison
- Purchase order processing
- Renewal management and notifications
- Budget forecasting and planning
- Multi-year commitment evaluation
- Promotional programme eligibility assessment

Migration and Transition Services

- Enterprise Agreement to CSP migration
- MPSA to CSP migration
- Direct/Web Direct to CSP transition
- Multi-CSP consolidation
- Licensing programme comparison analysis
- Transition planning and execution
- Minimal disruption transition approach

Reporting and Analytics

- Monthly license usage reports
- Cost analysis and trend reporting
- Compliance status reporting
- Optimisation recommendation reports
- Quarterly business reviews
- Annual strategic licensing reviews
- Custom reporting on request

How the Service is Delivered

Initial Licensing Assessment

HTG begins with comprehensive assessment of your Microsoft licensing estate and business requirements:

1. **Discovery:** Inventory of all Microsoft cloud subscriptions, identification of licensing programmes (CSP, EA, Direct), documentation of current costs and commitments, understanding of business drivers and growth plans
2. **Usage Analysis:** Analysis of license assignment and utilisation, identification of inactive or underutilised licenses, evaluation of feature usage within assigned licenses, assessment of workload adoption and readiness

3. **Compliance Review:** Verification of license compliance, identification of potential compliance gaps, review of guest user and external access, assessment of application licensing requirements

4. **Recommendations:** Right-sizing recommendations for current users, license tier optimisation opportunities, cost reduction initiatives, compliance remediation actions, strategic licensing roadmap

Assessment typically completes within 5-10 business days depending on estate complexity. Detailed findings are presented in comprehensive report with prioritised recommendations and projected cost impact.

Licensing Strategy Development

Following assessment, HTG works with your leadership team to develop licensing strategy aligned with organisational objectives:

- **Cost Targets:** Define acceptable licensing costs and optimisation goals
- **Compliance Posture:** Establish compliance standards and audit readiness
- **Feature Requirements:** Identify required capabilities and workload priorities
- **Growth Planning:** Accommodate anticipated user growth and business changes
- **Programme Selection:** Determine optimal licensing programme (CSP, EA, etc.)

Implementation and Optimisation

HTG executes agreed optimisation initiatives:

1. **License Right-Sizing:** Downgrade over-licensed users, remove licenses from inactive users, consolidate redundant subscriptions, implement recommended license tiers

2. **CSP Transition (if applicable):** Establish CSP billing relationship, migrate subscriptions with zero service disruption, configure automated subscription management, implement license assignment workflows

3. **Compliance Remediation:** Address identified compliance gaps, implement proper guest user licensing, document license entitlements, establish compliance monitoring

4. **Process Implementation:** Automate license provisioning for new users, implement license reclamation for leavers, establish usage monitoring and reporting, create lifecycle management procedures

Ongoing License Management

Reactive Support: HTG responds to licensing questions, requests, and issues through multiple support channels with typical response times of 2-4 hours for standard requests.

Proactive Management: HTG monitors your licensing estate identifying optimisation opportunities, tracking license utilisation trends, managing renewals and expiries, notifying of policy changes affecting your organisation, and recommending new features or offerings.

Regular Reviews: Quarterly business reviews assess current licensing status, cost trends, optimisation opportunities, and compliance posture. Annual strategic reviews evaluate licensing strategy against evolving business requirements.

Service Delivery Models

Advisory Only: HTG provides licensing assessment, recommendations, and strategic guidance whilst you manage procurement and lifecycle through existing channels or direct relationships.

CSP + Advisory: HTG serves as your Cloud Solution Provider handling procurement, billing, and basic license management whilst providing strategic advisory services and optimisation recommendations.

Fully Managed: HTG assumes complete responsibility for licensing including strategy, procurement, lifecycle management, compliance monitoring, cost optimisation, and regular reporting. Includes proactive management and continuous improvement.

Service Management

Service Desk and Support

- UK-based licensing specialists available during business hours (08:00-18:00 GMT)
- Email, telephone, and web portal support
- Ticket tracking through HTG's service management platform
- Dedicated licensing account manager
- Direct escalation to Microsoft for complex scenarios
- Access to online knowledge base and licensing guides

Request Management

- New user license provisioning: Same-day for standard requests
- License changes and upgrades: Within 1 business day
- Renewal processing: Managed proactively before expiry
- Bulk user provisioning: Coordinated according to project timeline
- Emergency licensing requests: Priority handling available

Issue Resolution

- Licensing questions: 4-hour response time
- Billing enquiries: 1 business day response
- Compliance concerns: Priority handling
- Procurement issues: Resolved within 2 business days
- Microsoft escalations: Managed by HTG on your behalf

Change Management

- Licensing programme transitions: Formal project management approach
- Subscription changes: Coordinated to minimise disruption
- Billing changes: Communicated in advance with approval required
- Pricing updates: Transparent notification with comparison to alternatives

Service Reporting

- Monthly: License usage and cost reports
- Quarterly: Business reviews with optimisation recommendations
- Annual: Strategic licensing reviews and forecasting
- Ad-hoc: Custom reports on request

Onboarding and Offboarding

Onboarding Process

Typical onboarding completes within 2-3 weeks:

1. Initial Assessment (Week 1): Licensing discovery, usage analysis, compliance review, requirements gathering

2. **Strategy Development (Week 1-2):** Recommendations presentation, strategy approval, implementation planning

3. **Implementation (Week 2-3):** CSP setup (if applicable), subscription migration or optimisation, process implementation, training and handover

CSP Migration Timeline

For organisations transitioning to HTG as CSP, migration typically occurs over 1-2 billing cycles to align with existing commitments and minimise cost impact.

Offboarding Process

Should you choose to discontinue licensing services:

1. **Notice Period:** 30 days' notice required
2. **Knowledge Transfer:** Complete documentation of licensing estate and recommendations
3. **Subscription Transition:** Coordination of CSP transition to new partner or direct relationship
4. **Final Reporting:** Comprehensive final report on licensing status
5. **Ongoing Support:** Transition support during handover period

No penalties for service termination. CSP subscriptions can transfer to alternative partner without disruption.

Service Constraints and Dependencies

Prerequisites

- Microsoft cloud subscriptions (Microsoft 365, Azure, etc.)
- Administrative access for license management and auditing
- Financial approval authority for licensing changes
- Cooperation with internal stakeholders (IT, Finance, HR)

Service Limitations

- HTG provides licensing advisory and management services only, not Microsoft product support
- Technical implementation of Microsoft workloads available as separate service
- On-premises licensing (non-cloud) supported with limitations
- Dynamics 365 licensing complexity may require specialist engagement
- Very large enterprise agreements (>1,000 users) may require Microsoft involvement

CSP Programme Constraints

- CSP subscriptions have different terms than Enterprise Agreements
- Some Microsoft offers not available through CSP (e.g., certain Azure reservations)
- Subscription pricing subject to Microsoft price changes
- Monthly billing may have slightly higher costs than annual commitment
- Legacy perpetual licensing not available through CSP

Compliance Considerations

- Customer ultimately responsible for licensing compliance
- HTG provides guidance but cannot guarantee audit outcomes
- Some licensing scenarios require legal interpretation
- Microsoft audit processes outside HTG control
- Customer must provide accurate usage information

Data Requirements

- HTG requires visibility into license assignments and usage
- Microsoft 365 admin centre access required for CSP management
- Azure subscription access needed for Azure optimisation
- Financial data required for cost optimisation analysis
- User data required for compliance assessment

Pricing Information

Service Delivery Models and Pricing

Advisory Services: Project-based or retainer pricing for licensing assessment, strategy development, and ongoing advisory services. Pricing based on estate complexity and engagement scope.

CSP + Advisory: Published Microsoft CSP pricing plus transparent service margin covering procurement, billing, basic lifecycle management, and advisory support. Typically, 5-10% margin on license costs with minimum monthly service fee.

Fully Managed Licensing: Per-user, per-month management fee covering complete licensing lifecycle management, optimisation, compliance, and strategic services. Includes CSP subscriptions if required.

Professional Services

Charged separately for specific projects:

- Initial licensing assessment and recommendations
- Enterprise Agreement to CSP migration
- Licensing programme comparison analysis
- Compliance audit preparation
- Strategic licensing roadmap development

Pricing Transparency

Detailed pricing is available through HTG's G-Cloud 15 pricing document. Pricing is based on:

- Number of Microsoft cloud users
- Service delivery model selected
- Complexity of licensing estate
- Current licensing programme
- Professional services requirements

No Hidden Costs

- Transparent service margins on CSP subscriptions
- No charges for standard licensing support
- No fees for license provisioning or changes
- No penalties for reducing license count
- No termination or exit fees

Microsoft Pricing

Microsoft cloud subscription pricing is published by Microsoft and subject to change. HTG provides advance notification of pricing changes affecting your subscriptions.

Data Security and Protection

Data Collection and Processing

- HTG accesses Microsoft admin portals for license management
- Usage data collected from Microsoft reporting APIs
- No access to customer email, documents, or business data
- Financial data processed securely for billing and reporting
- Administrative access governed by least-privilege principles

Data Security Measures

- Multi-factor authentication required for all administrative access
- Role-based access control limiting data exposure
- Secure communication channels for sensitive information
- Encrypted data transmission and storage
- Regular security assessments and audits

Compliance and Certifications

- ISO 27001 certified information security management
- Cyber Essentials Plus certified
- GDPR compliant data processing
- UK Data Protection Act 2018 compliance
- Microsoft Solutions Partner security requirements met

Privacy Protection

- Data Processing Agreement provided
- Privacy policy clearly defines data use
- No sale or sharing of customer data
- Customer data minimisation principles
- Right to erasure upon service termination

Microsoft Admin Access

- Admin access provided through delegated administration (CSP model)
- Least-privilege access principles applied
- All administrative actions logged and auditable
- Access can be revoked by customer at any time
- Multi-factor authentication enforced

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

Service Availability

- 99.5% availability for licensing support services during business hours
- CSP billing portal available 24/7 (subject to Microsoft availability)
- Service desk available 08:00-18:00 GMT, Monday-Friday

Response Times

- Licensing questions: 4-hour response
- Billing enquiries: 1 business day
- License provisioning: Same business day for standard requests
- Urgent licensing needs: 2-hour response
- Complex licensing scenarios: 2 business day resolution target

Proactive Management Commitments

- Renewal notifications 60 days before expiry
- Monthly usage reports delivered by 5th business day of following month

- Quarterly business reviews scheduled in advance
- Annual strategic review conducted each year
- Optimisation recommendations provided within 10 business days of identification

Accuracy Commitments

- 99.9% billing accuracy (errors corrected immediately upon identification)
- Compliance reporting accuracy validated against Microsoft data sources
- Usage analytics accuracy dependent on Microsoft reporting data quality

Business hours defined as 08:00-18:00 GMT, Monday-Friday, excluding UK public holidays.

Terms and Conditions

Service provision is governed by HTG's G-Cloud 15 Call-Off Terms and Conditions, Microsoft CSP Terms (if applicable), and HTG's standard service terms. Key terms include:

Contract Duration

- Minimum initial term: Varies by service delivery model (typically 12 months)
- Monthly renewal thereafter for managed services
- 30 days' notice required for termination
- CSP subscriptions continue until customer cancels

Service Changes

- HTG reserves right to update service features
- Material changes communicated 30 days in advance
- Pricing changes (excluding Microsoft price changes) on 90 days' notice
- Customer right to terminate if changes unacceptable

Liability

- Liability terms as per G-Cloud framework
- Professional indemnity insurance: £5,000,000
- Public liability insurance: £5,000,000
- HTG not liable for Microsoft product functionality or availability

Microsoft Licensing Terms

- Customer subject to Microsoft Cloud Agreement or equivalent
- HTG acts as licensing intermediary for CSP subscriptions
- Ultimate licensing compliance responsibility remains with customer
- Microsoft audit rights apply regardless of CSP relationship

Additional Information

Why Choose HTG for Microsoft Licensing

Microsoft Solutions Partner Status: HTG maintains Microsoft Solutions Partner designation requiring demonstrated expertise, customer success, and security standards.

Independent Advice: As a customer-focused partner, HTG provides unbiased recommendations aligned with your objectives rather than sales quotas.

UK-Based Expertise: Local licensing specialists understand UK market requirements and provide support during UK business hours.

Proven Track Record: HTG manages licensing for organisations across sectors including housing associations, professional services, manufacturing, and defence contractors.

Environmental and Social Value

- Paperless service delivery and reporting
- Cloud services reduce infrastructure environmental impact
- Support for SME growth through affordable licensing access
- Apprenticeship programmes in IT and business services
- Transparent pricing supports public sector value for money

Supplier Information

- Company Name: Howell Technology Group Limited
- Microsoft Solutions Partner status
- Cloud Solution Provider Direct Bill partner
- ISO 27001 certified
- Cyber Essentials Plus certified

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