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Crypto license

From CryptoLicenseWiki, the free encyclopedia of crypto licenses · Last updated 28 November 2026

Crypto license	
Also called	CASP authorisation (EU), VASP licence or registration, digital asset business licence
Granted by	The financial regulator or anti-money-laundering authority of the jurisdiction
Needed for	Exchanging, transferring, holding or trading crypto-assets for clients

In short: A crypto license is the authorisation or registration a business needs to provide services such as exchange, transfer, custody or trading of crypto-assets for clients. Some jurisdictions grant full conduct licenses with capital and client asset rules; others only require registration for anti-money-laundering purposes.

There is rarely a legal document called a “crypto license”. The term is shorthand for whatever a jurisdiction requires: in the EU a crypto-asset service provider (CASP) authorisation under MiCA, in Singapore a digital payment token licence, in Dubai a VARA licence, and in the UK, Canada or Australia a registration with the anti-money-laundering supervisor. [1]

Who needs a license

The Financial Action Task Force's standards, which most countries follow, cover businesses that exchange virtual assets for money or for other virtual assets, transfer them, hold them for others, or take part in issuing them. [2] National laws build on these activities, and many add conduct rules on top.

License or registration

An anti-money-laundering registration shows that a supervisor has checked a firm's AML controls and its people. A full license usually adds capital, governance, client asset and conduct rules. The comparison table shows which applies where.

License guides

Jurisdiction	Regulator	Website	License
Australia	AUSTRAC / ASIC	austrac.gov.au	Registration with AUSTRAC as a digital currency exchange (DCE) provider
Bahamas	SCB	scb.gov.bs	Registration under the Digital Assets and Registered Exchanges (DARE) Act
Bahrain	CBB	cbb.gov.bh	Crypto-asset service licence under the CBB Rulebook (Volume 6, Crypto-asset module)
Bermuda	BMA	bma.bm	Digital asset business licence (Class F full licence, Class M modified licence or Class T test licence)
British Virgin Islands	BVI FSC	bvifsc.vg	Registration as a virtual asset service provider (VASP)
Canada	FINTRAC / CSA	fintrac-canafe.canada.ca	Registration with FINTRAC as a money services business dealing in virtual currency
Cayman Islands	CIMA	cima.ky	Registration or licence as a virtual asset service provider (VASP)
El Salvador	CNAD / BCR	cnad.gob.sv	Registration with the CNAD as a digital asset service provider (DASP)
Estonia	Finantsinspektsioon	fi.ee	Crypto-asset service provider (CASP) authorisation under MiCA

Jurisdiction	Regulator	Website	License
Germany	BaFin	bafin.de	Crypto-asset service provider (CASP) authorisation under MiCA
Gibraltar	GFSC	fsc.gi	Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) Provider licence
Hong Kong	SFC	sfc.hk	Virtual asset trading platform (VATP) licence
Japan	JFSA	fsa.go.jp	Registration as a crypto-asset exchange service provider
Lithuania	Bank of Lithuania	lb.lt	Crypto-asset service provider (CASP) authorisation under MiCA
Malta	MFSA	mfsa.mt	Crypto-asset service provider (CASP) authorisation under MiCA
Seychelles	FSA Seychelles	fsaseychelles.sc	Virtual asset service provider (VASP) licence
Singapore	MAS	mas.gov.sg	Major payment institution (or standard payment institution) licence for digital payment token (DPT) services
South Africa	FSCA	fsca.co.za	Financial services provider (FSP) licence covering crypto assets
Switzerland	FINMA	finma.ch	No single crypto license: depending on the activity, membership of an anti-money-laundering self-regulatory organisation (SRO), or a FINMA licence (bank, fintech, securities firm or DLT trading facility)
United Arab Emirates	VARA / FSRA / DFSA	vara.ae	VARA licence for virtual asset activities in Dubai (outside the DIFC)
United Kingdom	FCA	fca.org.uk	Registration with the FCA as a cryptoasset exchange provider or custodian wallet provider under the Money Laundering Regulations

Jurisdiction	Regulator	Website	License
United States	FinCEN / states	fincen.gov	Federal registration with FinCEN as a money services business (MSB), plus a money transmitter licence in most states (in New York, a BitLicense or trust charter)

Frequently asked questions

Is a crypto license the same everywhere?

No. The name, the capital and the client protections differ. Compare them in the comparison table.

How do I check a crypto business's license?

Search for the exact legal entity on the regulator's own register. See How to verify a crypto business's license.

References

1. Official Regulation (EU) 2023/1114 on markets in crypto-assets (MiCA) . EUR-Lex. Accessed November 2026.
2. Official Updated guidance for a risk-based approach to virtual assets and virtual asset service providers . Financial Action Task Force. Accessed November 2026.

Source: https://cryptolicensewiki.com/crypto-license/
Version: last updated 28 November 2026. Check the online version for later changes.

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