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SAP COMPASS

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Two SAP pages, two dates: October 2026 and December 31, 2026. Ask SAP which applies to the runtime you use.

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By the end of this page you can find out which SAP assistants are in your plan, put SAP's own date beside each, and say which runtime date your budget assumes.

On 6 October 2026 SAP dated its assistants. An SAP News piece of 28 September 2026 says Joule Studio runtime is free “through October 2026”; SAP Help says free access to runtime execution “is valid until December 31, 2026”.

Your integrator's plan and your budget each assume a date. It should be the same date, and it should be SAP's.

SAP's guide of 6 October 2026 plans assistants for Q4 2026 and Q1 2027

On 6 October 2026 SAP's chief executive Christian Klein said: “The Autonomous Enterprise has arrived.” SAP's press release of that day says “Joule Work is beginning its customer rollout”.

SAP's guide of the same date gives availability product by product:

“General availability for the Governance Assistant and the International Trade Assistant is planned for Q4 2026.”

“SAP Early Adopter Care program availability for the Joule Assistants noted above is planned for Q1 2027.”

Early Adopter Care is SAP's name for a programme, and the guide's line for it does not say general availability. “The Joule Assistants noted above” are those under the guide's finance heading: Overhead Accounting, Revenue Recognition, Pricing, Quoting, Disclosure and Project Management.

DSAG, the German-speaking SAP user group, put out a press release the same day from Cologne. In our translation from the German, it says: “Between the vision, the solutions available and the actual benefit to customers there is still a gap.” It also says, using SAP's product names: “Robust customer experience of Joule Work and Joule Work Desktop is so far missing.” Its demands include “No coupling of AI to cloud contracts” and “Transparent licence models”.

These are announcements and a user group's statement, and nothing in them is reported to have gone wrong. What is open is what you can run by your go-live, and what it costs to run. We found no price for agent runtime in 2027 in SAP's release or in its guide. We expect SAP to state none by Thursday 29 October 2026. We are wrong if it states one.

One SAP page says October 2026, and another says December 31, 2026

SAP Help's document What is Joule, which is undated and was read on 11 October 2026, says: “Free access to runtime execution is valid until December 31, 2026. After this date, a commercial subscription (AI Units) will be required to continue running your agents.” On that wording, running agents after the date is paid for, in what SAP calls AI Units. An SAP News piece of 28 September 2026, on SAP and

NVIDIA, says: “Joule Studio runtime is available free for SAP customers and partners through October 2026”.

The Help sentence sits under the heading “Joule Studio code editor and Joule Studio CLI for Building Agents”. The News sentence names Joule Studio runtime. They may describe different things.

Whether Joule Studio runtime and runtime for agents built in the Joule Studio code editor and CLI are the same thing, SAP’s pages do not say, and we do not know.

A separate SAP sentence is about design time, which is building agents; runtime is running them. An SAP News piece of May 2026 says “now through the end of 2026, SAP customers and partners can receive free design-time access”.

We think an SAP customer should plan to 31 October 2026 until SAP says which date applies.

Here is what that choice is worth in hours, on example figures that are illustrative only: at 20 hours of agent test runs a week from Monday 12 October 2026, which is 4 hours a working day, the three weeks to 31 October are 60 hours, and the eleven weeks to Friday 25 December plus the four working days to 31 December are 236 hours. The 176 hours between them fall in November and December, the months on which those pages differ.

A FILLED-IN EXAMPLE: AGAINST A GO-LIVE OF 1 FEBRUARY 2027, THE Q1 2027 LINE IS NOT CERTAIN TO ARRIVE IN TIME

In the plan	What SAP’s page says	Page and date	Against the example go-live, 1 February 2027
Governance Assistant	“General availability ... is planned for Q4 2026”	SAP, Innovation News Guide, 6 October 2026	Before go-live, if SAP’s plan holds
International Trade Assistant	“General availability ... is planned for Q4 2026”	SAP, Innovation News Guide, 6 October 2026	Before go-live, if SAP’s plan holds
Joule Assistants: Overhead Accounting, Revenue Recognition, Pricing, Quoting, Disclosure, Project Management	“SAP Early Adopter Care program availability ... is planned for Q1 2027”	SAP, Innovation News Guide, 6 October 2026	Not certain: Q1 runs to 31 March 2027, and the line is for Early Adopter Care
Agent test runs, free runtime	“through October 2026”	SAP News, 28 September 2026	Our planning date, not SAP’s: the budget assumes 31 October 2026
Agent test runs, free runtime	“until December 31, 2026”	SAP Help, What is Joule, undated, read 11 October 2026	Not assumed until SAP confirms it in writing

Ask your steering meeting, then ask SAP in writing

At your next steering meeting, ask:

Which of our planned assistants has an SAP availability date after our go-live, and which runtime date does our budget assume?

Three steps get you the answer.

1. Find out whether your plan has any SAP assistants or agents in it, and list each with SAP's stated availability and the page that states it. Done when each line shows an SAP page, that page's date and your go-live date, or when your integrator has written "none".
2. Ask the question above at the steering meeting. Done when the minutes name each assistant dated after go-live, and the runtime date the budget assumes.
3. Write to your SAP account team. Quote the Help sentence and the News sentence. Ask whether Joule Studio runtime and runtime for agents built in the Joule Studio code editor and CLI are the same thing, which date applies to the one you use, and what it costs from 2027. Done when the dated request is in your programme file. The reply is SAP's to give.

BusinessGPS publishes SAP Compass. Take the weekly email at capability.ai/newsletter.

Sources

1. SAP, press release, SAP Puts the Autonomous Enterprise to Work, Las Vegas, 6 October 2026. <https://news.sap.com/2026/10/sap-connect-sap-puts-autonomous-enterprise-to-work/>
2. SAP, Innovation News Guide, SAP Connect 2026, 6 October 2026. <https://www.sap.com/topics/events/connect/innovation-news-guide-2026>. Read for availability dates and for price.
3. DSAG, press release, Wirtschaftlichkeit und Wahlfreiheit als Maßstab für Innovation und Transformation, Cologne, 6 October 2026. <https://impulsant.dsag.de/formate/pressemeldung/dsag-jahreskongress-2026-wirtschaftlichkeit-und-wahlfreiheit/>. The German, in the order quoted: "Zwischen Vision, verfügbaren Lösungen und tatsächlichem Kundennutzen besteht jedoch noch eine Lücke"; "Belastbare Kundenerfahrungen zu Joule Work und Joule Work Desktop fehlen jedoch bislang"; "Keine Kopplung von KI an Cloud-Verträge"; "Transparente Lizenzmodelle". The English is our translation.
4. SAP Help Portal, What is Joule (PDF), undated, read 11 October 2026. <https://help.sap.com/doc/75f5965fbb514fbc89f1e47c094ea3f/CLOUD/en-US/9d8coef2443b49f993a27de8f38f83af.pdf>
5. SAP News, the SAP and NVIDIA OpenShell piece, 28 September 2026, read 11 October 2026. <https://news.sap.com/2026/09/sap-nvidia-openshell-auditable-ai-agents-enterprise-systems/>
6. SAP News, Announcing New Joule Studio for Enterprise Scale Agentic Development, May 2026. <https://news.sap.com/2026/05/new-joule-studio-enterprise-scale-agentic-development/>