Microsoft

Software Assurance
Program Guide

What is this guide?

This program guide provides an in-depth overview of Software Assurance and the benefits available through Software Assurance. It's designed to be an ongoing resource throughout the lifecycle of your Software Assurance commitments with Microsoft Commercial Licensing Agreements.

Who is this guide intended for?

- Customers who are new to Microsoft Commercial Licensing and want to learn more about the value of Software Assurance for their organization
- Customers who want to learn more about the broad set of benefits available through Software Assurance
- Customers who have Software Assurance and have questions about using or activating benefits

Table of contents

Software Assurance

Innovation and change characterize technology—today, perhaps more than ever. Organizations need to respond with agility and speed to deliver and manage the technology users demand, on the devices they chose, wherever they need to work.

Software Assurance supports your ongoing success by helping you take full advantage of your investments in IT. Software Assurance, a comprehensive program that includes a unique set of technologies, services, and rights to help deploy, manage, and use Microsoft products efficiently, helps keep you up to date and ready to respond quickly to challenges and opportunities.

Enhancing licensing value

Software Assurance helps unlock the full potential of your investments in Microsoft technologies.

- Reduce software and services costs with rights to new software releases and cost-efficient upgrades
- Improve operational efficiency through access to unique technologies and licensing rights
- Contribute to lower infrastructure costs with license mobility rights to assign specific server licenses to a cloud-hosting partner
- Broaden the value of server licenses through extended use on-premises and in the cloud

Improving business agility

Software Assurance provides a broad range of benefits that help you save time and improve business agility.

- Manage virtual desktops from a variety of devices and locations with extended license rights
- Access enhanced use rights for disaster recovery and availability
- Reduce time spent integrating, managing, and troubleshooting devices with unique optimization tools and services
- Enable work-from-home and on-the-road scenarios with unique technologies available only to Software Assurance customers

How to get
Software Assurance

Commercial Licensing programs are tailored to the needs of different types and sizes of organizations.

Microsoft Commercial Licensing is the most cost-effective, flexible, and manageable way to acquire Microsoft software and cloud services. Software Assurance is only available through Commercial Licensing and is purchased when you buy or renew a Commercial Licensing agreement. It's included with some agreements and is an optional purchase with others. Your available benefits are determined by the types of products and the quantity you purchase.

Find a Microsoft Partner to help you get started.

Enterprise Agreement
includes Software Assurance and offers the best value if you have 500 or more users or devices and want a manageable Commercial Licensing program. This agreement gives you the flexibility to buy cloud services and software licenses under one agreement.

Microsoft Products and Services Agreement
is for transactional purchases of Microsoft online services and software, with Software Assurance as an optional purchase. Suited for organizations with 250 or more users, the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement is the best option for buying what you need, when you need it.

Open Value
is an affordable way for small to midsize organizations with at least five devices or users to manage and use Microsoft licensed products under a single licensing agreement. It includes Software Assurance and is also available as a subscription (Open Value Subscription) if you want to subscribe to rather than acquire Microsoft product licenses.

Campus and School Agreement
is designed for qualified academic customers with a minimum 1,000 equivalent employees or students and includes Software Assurance.

Select Plus
is available to midsize and large government and academic organizations with 250 or more devices with multiple affiliates, and Software Assurance is an optional purchase. *New Select Plus commercial agreements are not available.*

Commercial Licensing programs for government
are available for all sizes of eligible organizations. Software Assurance is included with some Commercial Licensing agreements for government and is available as an optional purchase with others.

Available benefits

Software Assurance includes a unique set of technologies, services, and rights to help you deploy, manage, and use Microsoft products.

You can enhance your IT investments further with Software Assurance. You get tools you need to do more with the IT investments you've made. Benefits apply across a broad range of licensing agreements and provide resources every step of the way. Software Assurance helps keep your organization up to date and ready to respond quickly to change and opportunity.

Budget and Plan

Workplace Discount Program
Employees can subscribe to the latest version of Microsoft 365 for a reduced price to use at home.

New Version Rights
Upgrade each Microsoft product license that's covered by active Software Assurance to the most recent version for no additional cost.

Office Online Services and Office Online Server (OOS)
Provides browser-based versions of Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote from on-premises environments.

Spread Payments
Allows you to spread the costs of your License and Software Assurance purchase across three equal, annual sums versus one up-front payment.

Step-up Licensing
Allows you to migrate your software from a lower to higher level edition at a low cost. You won't pay full cost of each edition, just the pricing difference.

Deploy

Azure Hybrid Benefit
Bring Window Server and SQL Server on-premises licenses with Software Assurance to Azure workloads in the cloud.

License Mobility through Software Assurance
Allows you to deploy certain server applications on-premises or in the cloud in an authorized hosting partner's datacenter, without having to buy additional licenses.

Flexible Virtualization benefit
Allows you to move workloads covered with Software Assurance to any Authorized Outsourcers' servers (shared or dedicated) under expanded Outsourcing Software Management rights.

Windows 10 Enterprise per-User Add-on
The optional Windows 10 Enterprise per-User Add-on provides Windows Software Assurance per-User rights for a primary user with a primary device that's licensed for Windows Enterprise, or Windows VDA per-User rights for a primary user with a primary device that's licensed with Windows VDA.

Manage and Support

Disaster Recovery Rights for servers
Provides licensing for backup servers dedicated to disaster recovery. Permits quarterly patching and testing, and ongoing virtual machine replication from production servers to backup/disaster recovery servers.

Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack
A dynamic desktop solution that helps you personalize the user experience, simplify application deployment, improve application compatibility with Windows, and manage and secure your devices. Available until April 2026.

Microsoft Dynamics CustomerSource
Microsoft Dynamics CustomerSource is an online portal that includes a broad set of product and service support resources for Dynamics customers with Software Assurance coverage.

Failover Rights
Allows a passive failover instance (i.e., nonproduction, but "warm" instance) to run in OSEs on the licensed Server or another server on another server in anticipation of a failover event.

Office Roaming Use Rights
Allows users to remotely access Office, Project, or Visio on their virtual desktops from third-party devices.

Windows To Go Use Rights
Provides a fully manageable corporate desktop running Windows 10 Enterprise edition on a bootable USB stick that can be run on any licensed device or by any licensed user.

Software Assurance benefits are used in a variety of ways across organizations and industries. When combined with the technologies you support every day, the wide-ranging set of benefits can help your organization take full advantage of your Microsoft investments. Here are just some examples of the ways you can get the most from your Software Assurance benefits.

Plan, use, and support—smarter

Your company is growing quickly, and you have a diverse mix of existing employees, new employees, temporary staff, and mobile workers. Employees need to use a variety of company-owned and personal devices to work effectively in the office and on the road. You've given your employees the technology they need; now you're looking to help them take full advantage of those tools to be as effective as they can.

Productive employees are a key ingredient in an agile business. When they use the same software at home and at work, they can gain skills more quickly and make a greater contribution. The [Workplace Discount Program (WDP)](#) benefit offers your employees a way to buy the latest version of Microsoft 365 subscription for their use at home for a reduced price.

In addition, your New Version Rights benefit helps ensure that your employees are always using the latest versions of the software they need.

Along with technical cost-savers, you also get help with budgeting. The Software Assurance Spread Payments benefit works with your budget and helps lower your initial licensing costs. Instead of one up-front payment, you spread the costs of your Commercial Licensing and Software Assurance purchase across three equal, annual sums, helping you forecast your technology budget up to three years in advance.

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On-premises, off-premises, in the cloud—on plan

Organizations around the world are excited about the potential they see in cloud computing. You may already be considering the benefits of using outsourced or cloud-based services for one or more of your server-based applications. Whether off-premises or in your own environment, Software Assurance helps you prepare for cloud migrations with a powerful combination of consultancy and innovative server licensing opportunities.

With the Azure Hybrid Benefit, you can bring Windows Server and SQL Server on-premises licenses with Software Assurance to Azure workloads in the cloud.

With the Flexible Virtualization benefit, you can move your licenses with Software Assurance to any Authorized Outsourcers' servers (shared or dedicated). This applies broadly to software products (e.g., servers and desktop). The same terms that govern on-premises use apply.

Lower-cost off-premises deployments can prove easier to scale and take less effort to manage. License Mobility through Software Assurance helps you retain the value of your existing server license investments by extending their use to the cloud when you assign eligible server licenses to an authorized hosting partner; there's no need to buy additional licenses.

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A boost for efficiency and productivity

IT investments are at the core of your organization; they help keep it efficient, agile, and responsive to customer demands. To maximize their contribution to your success, those investments must be smartly deployed, managed, and operated.

Your Software Assurance Windows To Go Use Rights help your employees work where they choose and on a broad range of licensed devices, using your preconfigured Windows image that can be loaded on-the-fly from a USB storage device.

In addition, Office Roaming Use Rights allow remote access to Microsoft Office via a virtual environment from a variety of public and private devices—with no additional licenses to buy, and without installing any additional software.

For each of your employees in their various roles, you can personalize their experience, simplify application deployment, and improve application compatibility with the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP). MDOP is a suite of technologies that help manage, secure, and monitor your devices, while simplifying and accelerating the deployment of key Windows features. You get greater control of the software your employees are using, less downtime, and support that is more streamlined.

How to start using your benefits

Get to know what benefits your organization is entitled to through your Commercial Licensing agreement, and develop an action plan to activate and use them.

Activating Software Assurance benefits

Your Software Assurance benefits are activated in the Volume Licensing Service Center (VLSC). Before you can activate your Software Assurance benefits in VLSC, your organization needs to provide you with Software Assurance Manager permissions. Once signed in, you'll find a complete list of your available Software Assurance benefits. Getting started and using each individual benefit may differ slightly, but the processes are similar for most.

Review the VLSC Software Assurance Guide (PDF, 923 KB) for steps to activate, download, and use your benefits.

Sign in to the VLSC.

Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)

If your organization has a Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA), go to the Microsoft Business Center to access and start using your benefits. Your Software Assurance benefits are ready to view and use once you sign into the Microsoft Business Center. When you're signed in, you'll find instructions to get started with each benefit, links to more detailed information about each one, and sample communications to send to your users.

Sign into the Microsoft Business Center.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Software Assurance, and why should I have it?

Software Assurance is a comprehensive Commercial Licensing program that includes a unique set of technologies, services, and rights to help you deploy, manage, and use your Microsoft products more efficiently. Using Software Assurance benefits can help you take full advantage of your investments in IT.

How do I get Software Assurance?

Software Assurance is included with some Commercial Licensing programs and is an optional purchase with others. You can purchase Software Assurance through Microsoft partners via your Commercial Licensing agreement.

What Software Assurance benefits are included in my Commercial Licensing agreement?

Your available benefits are determined by your Commercial Licensing agreement, the types of products, and the quantity you purchase. Download the Software Assurance Benefits Chart from the Software Assurance website for an overview of each benefit, and descriptions showing which benefits apply to each type of Commercial Licensing agreement.

Where can I learn more about individual Software Assurance benefits?

Visit the Software Assurance benefit overview to find more details for each benefit.

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Resources

Buying or renewing Software Assurance
Software Assurance is purchased through Microsoft resellers via Commercial Licensing agreements
Find a Microsoft reseller

Online tools to activate and manage Software Assurance benefits
Microsoft Volume Licensing Service Center (VLSC)
Steps to activate, download, and use benefits
MPSA customers go to the Microsoft Business Center

Benefit resources
Azure Hybrid Benefit
Flexible Virtualization benefit guide
Workplace Discount Program (WDP) order site
License Mobility through Software Assurance
Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP)

Worldwide
Find Microsoft Commercial Licensing information for specific countries and regions

Where to learn more
• Software Assurance
• Microsoft Worldwide Commercial Licensing
• Microsoft Volume Licensing Service Center