

# Microsoft Software Assurance

Frequently asked questions

This document contains a list of questions and answers pertaining to the Microsoft Software Assurance program.

## Contents

General Software Assurance.....	1
Workplace Discount Program.....	2
License Mobility through Software Assurance.....	3
Flexible Virtualization benefit .....	4
Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack.....	4
Microsoft Products and Services Agreement .....	5
New Version Rights.....	5
Office Online Server.....	6
Problem Resolution Support.....	6

## General Software Assurance

### What is Software Assurance, and why do I need it?

Software Assurance is a comprehensive Volume 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 [Volume Licensing](#) programs and is an optional purchase with others. You can purchase Software Assurance through Microsoft partners via your Volume Licensing agreement.

### Which Software Assurance benefits are included in my Volume Licensing agreement?

The [Interactive Benefit Chart](#) (PDF, 768 KB) includes an overview of each benefit, and describes which benefits apply to each type of Volume Licensing agreement.

### How do I activate my 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 the VLSC, your organization needs to provide you with Software

Assurance Manager permissions. Once you have signed in, you'll find a complete list of your available Software Assurance benefits. The process to start using each individual benefit may differ slightly, but the process is similar for most. Review the [VLSC Software Assurance Guide](#) (PDF, 785 KB) for steps to activate, download, and use your benefits.

### **Is Software Assurance available for my small organization?**

Software Assurance is available to organizations that support as few as five devices. Software Assurance is only available through Volume Licensing and is purchased when you buy or renew a Volume Licensing agreement. It is included with some agreements and is an optional purchase with others. Your available benefits are determined by the types and quantity of products that you purchase. The size of your organization may determine which of the broad range of benefits are most immediately useful to you.

### **Which use rights document governs the Self-Hosted Applications use right?**

The [Product Terms](#) outlines the Self-Hosted Applications use right, as well as all products that are included for that licensing option (clearly marked in the Product Terms). With the exception of Windows Server, which alternatively may be licensed under the Services Provider License Agreement (governed by the Services Provider Use Rights) or through Azure (governed by the [Product Terms](#)), products that an ISV licenses in the delivery of their Unified Solution under this option are governed by the [Product Terms](#). For Unified Solutions delivered on dedicated servers, use of Windows Server is governed by either the Product Terms or Service Provider Use Rights.

## Workplace Discount Program

### **What products can I get through the Workplace Discount Program and how much does the Workplace Discount Program cost?**

Employees can get a 30% discount on Office 365 Home or Office 365 Personal annual subscriptions through the Workplace Discount Program.

Please visit the [Workplace Discount Program](#) website to learn more about the program.

### **Who is eligible for the Microsoft Workplace Discount Program offer?**

For employees to use the Microsoft Workplace Discount Program discount, they need a valid corporate email address and an active Microsoft account, and the organization must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have active Software Assurance for qualifying Office applications.
- Have Office 365 or Microsoft 365 E3 or E5 from Software Assurance.
- Be a commercial or government organization that has purchased 2,000 or more licenses of Office 365 E3 or E5 and/or Microsoft 365 E3 or E5 (or a mix of these).
- Be an education or nonprofit organization.

Eligibility for the Visio Professional 2019 Software Offer:

- Customers with active Software Assurance on Visio Standard or Visio Professional. Employees of these customers who use the Qualifying Office Applications at work are eligible to purchase the Microsoft Workplace Discount Program software for use on a personal device during the term of their employment.
- Customers with Microsoft 365 E3/E5 From SA and/or Office 365 E1/E3/E5 From SA subscriptions.

**In which markets is the Office 365 Subscription offer available to eligible organizations?**

This offer is available to employees of eligible organizations worldwide. Administrators can see and manage their organization's eligible Workplace Discount Program benefits and employees can access the offers at the [Workplace Discount Program](#).

*Exceptions: This offer will not be available in Russia and Venezuela.*

**Can Software Assurance benefit administrators view and manage their Microsoft Workplace Discount Program benefit for Office 365 subscriptions on VLSC?**

No, benefit administrators whose organization qualifies for the Workplace Discount Program discounts can view and manage their benefit only on the [Microsoft Workplace Discount admin site](#).

**The Workplace Discount Program process requires an Azure Active Directory; what is Azure Active Directory?**

[Azure Active Directory](#) is an identity and access management solution. It is an identity service that helps the Microsoft [Workplace Discount Program](#) validate your organization's employee purchase eligibility. Signing up for Azure Active Directory does not require you to move your existing on-premises services to the cloud or purchase additional licenses. For more information, see Azure Active Directory.

**Why do I have to create an Azure Active Directory account to use the Workplace Discount Program?**

We updated the Workplace Discount Program to include a broader range of license and product benefits and changed the way we fulfill Workplace Discount Program orders. The [Microsoft Workplace Discount Program sites](#) used for eligibility validation and to assign Workplace Discount Program benefits, and it relies on Azure Active Directory to connect information from the Volume Licensing Service Center and validate the email domains your organization's employees are on.

**Where do employees go to order using the Workplace Discount Program discount offered on Office 365 Home and Personal subscriptions?**

Employees can check their eligibility and view the available discounts on the [Workplace Discount Program](#).

## License Mobility through Software Assurance

**What is License Mobility?**

With License Mobility through Software Assurance, you can deploy certain application server licenses on-premises or in the cloud in a shared hardware environment and assign your existing licenses to an Authorized Mobility Partner. This lets you choose between deploying on-premises or through any Authorized Mobility Partner's shared data center. By letting the partner use your existing licenses, you can help lower your cloud infrastructure costs.

### **What Microsoft products are eligible for License Mobility?**

Customers who have active Software Assurance coverage on applicable Microsoft products, including Microsoft SharePoint and Microsoft Exchange, are eligible for License Mobility. For specific terms and a complete list of Microsoft products that are eligible for License Mobility, refer to the "[Software Assurance Benefits](#)" section in the [Microsoft Product Terms](#).

For SQL Server customers with core-based licensing and Software Assurance coverage, broader benefits are available under Azure Hybrid Benefit rights. For more information, see [Azure Hybrid Benefit](#). The steps described below under "How do I use this benefit?" do not apply to Azure Hybrid Benefit use.

Note on Windows Server: Because the Authorized Mobility Partner provides Windows Server to you as a part of their infrastructure software, Windows Server is not included in the License Mobility benefit.

### **How do I use the License Mobility benefit?**

To use License Mobility through Software Assurance, you can deploy on [Microsoft Azure](#) or work with any Authorized Mobility Partner. Access this [License Mobility](#) site for more information on this benefit.

## Flexible Virtualization benefit

### **What is the Flexible Virtualization benefit?**

The [Flexible Virtualization benefit](#) expands your outsourcing options for software to include Authorized Outsourcers' shared servers. This benefit is available broadly for software products under your subscription licenses and licenses with Software Assurance.

### **Which products are covered by the Flexible Virtualization benefit?**

The Flexible Virtualization benefit applies to all software products that are available under subscription licenses or licenses with Software Assurance coverage. This includes server products such as Windows Server, SQL Server, Exchange Server, SharePoint Server, System Center, and others. This also includes desktop products such as Windows 10/11, Office desktop applications and Microsoft 365 Apps.

### **How is the Flexible Virtualization benefit different from License Mobility through Software Assurance?**

The Flexible Virtualization benefit is similar to License Mobility through Software Assurance in that it permits deployment to the cloud. However, it is different in that it applies to many products that are not covered by License Mobility through Software Assurance (such as Windows Server and desktop products). It is also available to more customers. The Flexible Virtualization benefit permits customers to use any outsourcer that is an Authorized Outsourcer. License Mobility through Software Assurance requires customers to use Authorized Mobility Partners. Provided the customer has subscription licenses or licenses with Software Assurance, when they deploy under the Flexible Virtualization benefit, customers have the same use rights they have on-premises.

## Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack

### **What is the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack?**

The Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP) is a dynamic desktop solution available to customers who have Windows licenses with Software Assurance coverage. MDOP helps you manage Windows features; virtualize the operating system, applications, and the user experience; and restore user productivity after a system issue. [Learn more about MDOP](#).

## Microsoft Products and Services Agreement

### **What is the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement?**

The [Microsoft Products and Services Agreement](#) is a single purchasing agreement that provides flexible options for your software, online services, and Software Assurance purchases across your organization.

### **Is Software Assurance available through the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement?**

Yes, Software Assurance is an option available through the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement.

### **Are Software Assurance benefits managed differently through the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement?**

With the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement, your Software Assurance benefits are easily managed through the [Microsoft Business Center](#), where you'll find clear, consolidated views of how benefits are earned and straightforward ways to allocate them.

### **Where can I find information about the Software Assurance benefits available through the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement?**

Software Assurance offers tools and resources to help your company deploy, manage, and maximize your Microsoft Products and Services Agreement purchases. For details about the broad range of Software Assurance benefits available through the Microsoft Products and Services Agreement, refer to the Microsoft Product Terms page.

### **How do I activate my Software Assurance benefits?**

If your organization has a Microsoft Products and Services Agreement, go to the [Microsoft Business Center](#) to access and start using your benefits. Your Software Assurance benefits are ready to view and use as soon as you have signed in to the Business Center. The Business Center includes instructions to get started with each benefit and links to more detailed information about each benefit.

## New Version Rights

### **If my organization has Software Assurance, can we upgrade to the new version of any product?**

You can upgrade to the latest version of any underlying licensed product for which you have Software Assurance coverage.

### **What determines eligibility to receive new versions of product releases—the availability of the product on the monthly Price List or availability of the product for download on the Microsoft Volume Licensing Service Center (VLSC)?**

For Software Assurance customers, eligibility to receive new versions of products is the earlier of either:

- the month Microsoft makes licenses for that product available for ordering (on the Price List), or
- the month the product is available for download from the Volume Licensing Service Center (VLSC).

Software Assurance customers have rights to the next version of a product if their Software Assurance coverage continues through the month of the availability of the product. We recommend that you stay in touch with your Microsoft reseller or Microsoft Account Manager for news about new products and their availability.

**What happens if my organization drops Software Assurance in the same month that a new product is made available on the VLSC? Can I still download and use the new product?**

Yes. Active Software Assurance coverage always expires at the end of a month no matter what day within the month your organization originally signed the agreement. For new product version rights, this means that you can still download eligible new products posted to the VLSC during that final month.

## Office Online Server

**What is Office Online Server?**

Office Online Server provides browser-based versions of Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote from on-premises environments. Office Online Server is version-less and provides most of Office Online service features through regular software updates. Office Online Server can be downloaded from the [Volume Licensing Service Center \(VLSC\)](#). [Learn how to deploy Office Online Server.](#)

**Which Office licenses qualify for create/edit/save rights in the new Office Online Server?**

Create/edit/save rights in Office Online Server are included with Software Assurance for Office Standard 2016, Office Professional Plus 216, or Office 2016 for Mac Standard. They are also included with an Office 365 ProPlus subscription.

**Do I need a license for viewing files with Office Online Server?**

View-only rights in Office Online Server are available without any license requirements.

## Problem Resolution Support

**What's changing with the Problem Resolution Support benefit?**

The 24x7 Problem Resolution Support benefit was fully retired for all customers effective February 1, 2023. For support needs without a Unified support contract, Microsoft Professional Support is available as pay-per-incident or a pack of five incidents.

**What's Unified Support?**

Microsoft Unified Support offers comprehensive, 24x7 as-needed break-fix support with a response time of one hour or less for critical issues. With this support experience, customers gain a mix of personalized and on-demand services, including assistance from a designated Customer Success Account Manager (CSAM), access to rich proactive services, and education and IT health assessments through the [Services Hub](#).

### **Where can I go for more help?**

For additional support options outside of the United States and Canada, see [Microsoft International Help and Support](#).

Customers impacted by the retirement of Software Assurance support in February 2023 can reach out to their Account Executive or Customer Success Account Manager (CSAM) for any questions regarding their Premier or Unified Support contract.

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