

Licensing Microsoft Office software in Volume Licensing

This brief applies to all Volume Licensing programs.

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Summary

This licensing brief addresses the commonly asked questions about licensing Microsoft Office suites in Microsoft Volume Licensing programs.

This brief only addresses questions about use rights for Microsoft Office for the Windows operating system acquired as a software product under a desktop application license (typically, a perpetual license). For more information about use rights for Microsoft Office acquired as a subscription service as part of Microsoft Office Professional Plus for Office 365, see the "[Licensing Microsoft Office Professional Plus for Office 365](#)" brief. To learn more about licensing Microsoft Office for Mac, see the "[Licensing Windows and Microsoft Office for use on the Macintosh](#)" brief.

What's new in this brief

This brief replaces a previous version published in June 2016. It was updated to reflect details about the launch of Office 2019.

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Details

Per Device Microsoft Office Licensing

Microsoft Office as a software offering under the desktop applications licensing model is licensed on a “per device” basis. Users must assign each Microsoft Office license to a single physical hardware system (“licensed device”). The license permits use of the software on the licensed device.

Volume Licensing customers have the right to install and use any number of copies of the software on the licensed device on physical and/or virtual machines.

Customers may access Microsoft Office remotely, but one license is required for each physical device running or accessing the application. This includes situations where you run the software on your local device or access the software installed on another device like a server. See more detail in the [Remote Access for Microsoft Office section](#).

Remote Access for Microsoft Office

With Remote Use Rights, a company may install Microsoft Office on a single device such as a server and then allow users to access Microsoft Office remotely from licensed desktops (or as the primary user of the licensed device hosting the session) as if the desktop application was installed locally on their desktops. Remote Use Rights are granted under desktop application licenses for Microsoft Office acquired through Microsoft Volume Licensing.

When a copy of Microsoft Office software is installed on a server, users may remotely access and use the copy of Microsoft Office from any licensed device. When a copy of Microsoft Office is installed on a desktop, the primary user of the desktop may remotely access and use the software from any other device. Other users in the organization may also access and use the copy of software installed on a desktop from other separately licensed devices.

Examples of remote access technology used with Microsoft Office licensed as a desktop application include Remote Desktop Services (RDS) as part of Microsoft Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) solution. Using any component of this technology requires an RDS CAL license for each user or device used to access the server remotely.

Components of a Microsoft Office suite may vary per software product edition. Under Remote Use Rights, a customer may only access a copy of the same edition of Microsoft Office as its copy on their individual licensed device. For example, if a customer is using a device licensed for Microsoft Office Standard 2019, they may access Office Standard 2019 running on a server. The device may not use Remote Use Rights to use components of Office Professional Plus 2019.

Licensing Microsoft Office Home & Student 2013 RT for commercial use

Microsoft Office provides the best Office experience across devices. The Windows RT operating system and Surface software and touch computing platform tablets come preinstalled with Office Home & Student 2013 RT software on the device for noncommercial use.

If you're the primary user of a device licensed with Office Professional Plus 2019/2016 or Office Standard 2016, then you can use Office Home & Student 2013 RT for commercial use. The primary user of a device licensed for Office for Mac Standard 2019/2016 also has Commercial Use Rights for Office Home & Student 2013 RT. You don't need active Software Assurance for Office to receive this

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benefit. If you use a Windows RT or Surface tablet to access Office Professional Plus 2019/2016 or Office Standard 2019/2016 software running remotely in a data center, the Windows RT or Surface device must be separately licensed for the corresponding Office suite.

Licensing Office for use with Windows To Go

You can use Office installed on a USB drive with Windows To Go when you license the work device for the following:

- Windows 10 with Software Assurance for the Windows desktop operating system or Windows Virtual Desktop Access subscription license, and
- Office Professional Plus 2019/2016 or Office Standard 2019/2016

As a result, a user can use a USB drive to run Office on any licensed work device while on company premises. If you also have active Software Assurance for your Office suite license, the primary user of the licensed device can use the USB drive to run Office on devices outside of the workplace through the Office Roaming Rights benefits.

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Office Suites available through Volume Licensing

Office Standard 2019, Office Professional Plus 2019, and Office for Mac 2019 are available as software products under desktop application licenses through Microsoft Volume Licensing.

		Office Standard 2019	Office Professional Plus 2019	Office for Mac 2019
Applications	Word	•	•	•
	Excel	•	•	•
	PowerPoint	•	•	•
	OneNote	•	•	•
	Outlook	•	•	•
	Publisher	•	•	
	Access		•	
	Skype for Business		•	
Premium Value	Volume Activation	•	•	•
	Group Policy ¹	•	•	
	App Telemetry	•	•	•
	Update Controls	•	•	•
	Apply Personal Retention Policies ²		•	
	Access Site Mailboxes ²		•	
	Access In-Place Archive Folder ^{2,3}		•	•
	Spreadsheet Compare & Inquire		•	
	Business Intelligence		•	
	Create IRM ²		•	•
	Data Loss Prevention ²		•	

Acquiring Microsoft Office Licenses in Volume Licensing

Volume Licensing programs where different editions of Microsoft Office are available as a software product under desktop application licenses vary (as shown in the following table).

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Volume Licensing program	Office Standard 2019	Office Professional Plus 2019	Office for Mac 2019
Open	•	•	•
Open Value*	•	•	•
Open Value Subscription**	•	•	•
Select Plus	•	•	•
Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)	•	•	•
School Enrollment		•	
Enrollment for Education Solutions**		•	
Enterprise Agreement**		•	
Enterprise Subscription Agreement**		•	

*Office Professional Plus may be licensed as an enterprise product.

**Office Professional Plus must be licensed as an enterprise product.

Microsoft Office Downgrade Rights

Some customers who have rights to more recent versions of Microsoft Office suites might want to continue using prior versions of those suites. This is permitted for Microsoft Office under desktop application licenses and is known as a “downgrade right.” Customers may downgrade to earlier versions of the Microsoft Office software products, but only to the same edition of software product for which their device is licensed. That is, a customer may not downgrade from Office Standard 2019 to Office Professional Plus 2016.

The following shows the downgrade rights for the most recent Microsoft Office version:

Microsoft Office license	Downgrade rights
Office Standard 2019	Office Standard 2016
Office Professional Plus 2019	Office Professional Plus 2016
Office for Mac 2019	Office for Mac 2016

Software Assurance benefits for Microsoft Office

The Microsoft Software Assurance benefits vary by product and product pool. The following are key Software Assurance benefits applicable to Microsoft Office acquired as a software product under desktop application licenses.

New Version Rights

With Software Assurance, customers are eligible to upgrade to new versions of licensed software. New Version Rights means the right to upgrade to the latest version of that software product that we make available during the Software Assurance covered period. Customers may run the new version of

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software in place of the licensed product. For example, if a new version of Microsoft Office is made available during the term of your coverage, your licenses will be automatically upgraded to the new version (for example, from Office Standard 2016 to Office Standard 2019 or from Office Professional Plus 2016 to Office Professional Plus 2019).

Customers who acquired perpetual licenses through Software Assurance can deploy the upgrades after their coverage has expired. This is the case in Open, Open Value, Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA), and Enterprise Agreements, but not applicable to Microsoft subscription programs, like Open Value Subscription and Enterprise Subscription Agreements. When the subscription expires, so do the rights to use Microsoft Office software products and to upgrade to the new version of the software product.

Roaming Use Rights

Customers with active Software Assurance for Microsoft Office software products are eligible to use roaming rights benefits. The single primary user of the licensed device may remotely access the software running on servers (for example, in your data center) from a qualifying third-party device or run the software in a virtual Operating System Environment (OSE) on a qualifying third-party device. Additionally, if the device is also licensed for Software Assurance for the Windows desktop operating system, you may run Office from a USB device with Windows To Go.

A qualifying third-party device is a device that's not controlled, directly or indirectly, by you or your affiliates (for example, a third party's public kiosk). When the primary user is on your or your affiliates' premises, Roaming Use Rights aren't applicable. For example, an employee may not use their personal devices on premises and exercise their roaming rights benefits. This same user may access Microsoft Office from this personal device when at home.

Modern Home Use Program

Under the Modern Home Use Program, customers' employees may acquire Office 365 subscriptions for their personal use at a discount off the retail price. The Modern Home Use Program provides customers' employees access to license needs to be the corresponding Microsoft Office software product licensed on the work device. In addition, the license terms for that software permit the primary user of the home computer to install and use another copy on a portable device.

Modern Home Use Program replaces the Home Use Program, and unlike the Home Use Program where a customer's employees license to Office expired when the customer's Software Assurance coverage ended or the employee's employment terminated, the employee may continue their Office 365 subscriptions regardless of the customer's Software Assurance coverage status or the employees' employment status.

Office Online Server and Office Online Service

Microsoft Office Online Server offers view-only access to Office documents on an Internet browser. For editing of Office documents, you need Software Assurance for an Office suite license acquired through Volume Licensing. The single primary user* of an Office licensed device can edit documents using Office Online Server from any device, including those not licensed for Office. External users** don't need an Office suite license to view or edit Office documents on an Internet browser.

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Primary user of an Office licensed device with active Software Assurance may also access Office Online^{***} service to view and edit Office documents.

[Find more information about Office Online Server.](#)

*The primary user is the user who uses the licensed device more than 50 percent of the time in any 90-day period.

**External users are those users that are neither your or your affiliates' employees, nor your or your affiliates' on-site contractors or on-site agents.

***Users must also be licensed for SharePoint Online or OneDrive for Business plans to access Office Online service.

Frequently asked questions

1. **I have an employee from our marketing organization that only needs to use Microsoft PowerPoint. Can an employee from our finance organization that doesn't need PowerPoint share their Microsoft Office suite with the marketing organization user?**

Office Standard and Office Professional Plus are Microsoft Office suites which consist of more than one software product offered under a single license. Users may not separate the software for use on more than one computer. If you have employees that only need to use a single Microsoft Office application, all of Microsoft Office application licenses are available for purchase on a stand-alone basis in Open and Select programs.

2. **Our company has a mixed deployment with both Office Standard 2019 and Office Professional Plus 2019. What Microsoft Office licenses do I need if my users access Microsoft Office remotely from a server?**

Customers must license all devices accessing a server for the same Microsoft Office suite installed on their licensed devices. The organization may accomplish this by: 1) deploying a single Microsoft Office edition company-wide; 2) maintaining separate servers for each Microsoft Office edition.

3. **Our company has a mixed deployment with both Office Professional Plus 2019 in German language and English language. What Microsoft Office licenses do I need?**

Microsoft Office 2019 licenses include the Multi-Language Pack and proofing tools. The ability to change languages or use multiple languages is included with all Office 2019 suites and applications' software (such as Excel). For Office 2019, the Office Multi-Language Pack is now included as part of the product. Customers with prior versions covered with Software Assurance will continue to receive this right as part of their Software Assurance coverage.

4. **I have a personal laptop device I like using at work for meetings. May I access a Microsoft Office copy remotely that is deployed on a company server using Remote Desktop Services?**

Depending on your company's policies, you might be allowed to access Office through your personal device if you or your device is licensed properly for RDS CAL and the Office running on company server is licensed properly too. However, Office Roaming Rights wouldn't be applicable here. Users may not benefit from Office Roaming Rights when accessing Microsoft Office within a corporate network. Only third-party qualified desktops used outside of company premises may exercise Office Roaming Rights. Some examples include home and airport kiosk devices.

5. **How can I be licensed for access to the Office Online Server for editing?**

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Office suite licenses with Software Assurance allow you to edit Office files using the Office Online Server from the licensed device. Users licensed for Office 365 ProPlus can also edit files using Office Online Server.

6. **When licensed with Office Professional Plus 2019, Office Standard 2019, or Office for Mac 2019 are Office Online applications licensed on a per device or per user basis?**

Office client suites are licensed per device. The primary user of a device licensed for this Office software with active Software Assurance is licensed for access to the online companion Office Online applications from any device. In these situations, the primary user is enabled for remote online access through Office Online Server.

7. **What licenses are required for external users collaborating with licensed employees?**

External users accessing Office Online documents for viewing or editing aren't required to license the new Office suites. External users are those users who aren't either your or your affiliates' employees or your or your affiliates' on-site contractors or on-site agents.

8. **Do my employees need an Office Professional Plus 2019, Office Standard 2019, or Office for Mac 2019 license for viewing only Office Online documents?**

No. Office suite licenses with Software Assurance are only required for those employees editing Office Online Server documents.

9. **What's included in 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.

10. **Can I install a copy of Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 on a USB drive with my Windows To Go rights?**

Yes. You can install a copy of Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 on a USB drive and use Office on any licensed work device. Those rights only apply for using a copy of Office on a USB drive on company premises. Note that you must have active Software Assurance for Windows to be licensed for Windows To Go rights.

11. **Can I use a copy of Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 on a USB drive outside of the workplace?**

You can use a USB drive with Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 outside of the workplace only if you have active Software Assurance with your Office suite license.

12. **How can I license Office Home & Student 2013 RT for use on my tablet at work?**

Commercial Use Rights for Office Home & Student 2013 RT are included with your Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 license for the primary user of the licensed device. The primary user of a device licensed for Office for Mac Standard 2019 also has Commercial Use Rights for Office Home & Student 2013 RT. You don't need active Software Assurance for Office to receive this benefit. You can also purchase a perpetual per device license for Commercial Use

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Rights for Office Home & Student 2013 RT on a stand-alone basis through an Open or Select Plus Volume Licensing Agreement*.

13. What licenses are required to access Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 remotely from my Windows RT or Surface tablet?

Office Professional Plus 2019 and Office Standard 2019 are licensed on a per device basis. Users can only remotely access a copy of Office Professional Plus 2019 or Office Standard 2019 running on a network server from a licensed device. Therefore, your Windows RT or Surface tablet would need the latest Office suite license assigned to the device for this use.

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Appendix: Microsoft Office as a software product

Customers may license Office Professional Plus as a software product or a subscription service. Those are two different Microsoft Office offerings with similar functionality. See below for the main differences between the two offerings.

	Microsoft Office as a software product	Microsoft Office as a subscription service
Licensing Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per device 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per user, one copy on up to five devices at a time.
Product Editions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office Standard, Office Professional Plus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office 365 ProPlus, Office 365 Business
Licensing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Volume Licensing programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Volume Licensing programs, except Select Plus* Microsoft Online Services Agreement
Downgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User may downgrade to earlier version of same Microsoft Office edition licensed for device. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downgrade rights aren't applicable.
Office Home and Student 2013 RT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Use Rights for Office Home and Student 2013 RT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Use Rights for Office Home and Student 2013 RT
Remote Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software Assurance Roaming Use Rights Remote Use Rights permitted including via Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) or Remote Desktop Services (RDS) Installation and use of Office from a USB device** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users may install one copy of the software on up to five devices and use Microsoft Office locally on those devices from anywhere. Remote Use Rights permitted including via Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) or Remote Desktop Services with shared computer activation enabled Installation and use of Office from a USB device**
Home Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work At Home (WAH) licenses Software Assurance Home Use Program (HUP) Software Assurance Roaming Use Rights Installation and use of Office from a USB device** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users may install one or more copies on home devices on up to five devices per user license. Subscription Services licenses allow using Microsoft Office from anywhere. Installation and use of Office from a USB device**
Multi-Language Pack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Language Pack is included with Office 2016 licenses. Multi-Language Pack 2013 license may be acquired in Open or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Language Pack is included with Office Professional Plus for Office 365 (USLs).

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Select Volume Licensing programs.

*Office 365 Business is only available in Open, Open Value and Open Value Subscription programs. Effective July 1, 2016, in markets where the MPSA is available, Microsoft will stop accepting new orders and Software Assurance renewals through existing commercial Select Plus agreements at your next agreement anniversary date. This retirement does not apply to government and academic Select Plus agreements. More information is at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/licensing/licensing-programs/select.aspx>.

**Requires Windows To Go, which is available as a benefit of Software Assurance for the Windows desktop operating system or Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) subscription.

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