

Licensing Microsoft 365 Apps in Commercial Licensing

This brief applies to all Microsoft Licensing programs.

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Summary

This licensing brief addresses commonly asked questions about licensing Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise through Microsoft Commercial Licensing programs. This brief will help clarify the differences between use rights for Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise acquired as a subscription service and Office acquired as a software product (Office 2019) under a desktop application license (typically, a perpetual one-time purchase license).

This brief only addresses questions about Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise use rights. For more information on desktop application licenses for Office, see the ["Licensing Microsoft Office Software in Commercial Licensing"](#) brief.

Details

Microsoft 365 Apps Licensing

Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise is productivity software (including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, Access, and Audio Services) that is licensed as a subscription service under the online services licensing model. It can be licensed on a per user or per device basis. This differs from Office Standard/Professional Plus 2019 licenses which are tied to Licensed Devices and licensed as a one-time purchase.

The Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise *per user* license also allows Licensed Users to access Office experiences on PCs, Macs and mobile devices. The Licensed User may activate the software for local or remote use on up to five concurrent operating system environments (OSEs). Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise licensing treats physical and virtual OSEs the same, so the five concurrent activations may be on five different devices or multiple OSEs on one device. These devices may include company managed device and employee personal devices. The Licensed User may also use the software activated by another user under a different User SL.

Each Licensed User may also access Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise remotely from any device, including third-party devices. This includes situations where you activate one of five copies of the software on a network server or a server hosted by a third party. See *Remote Access* below for additional details.

Per device licenses allow one installation of the software on the Licensed Device. Users of the Licensed Device may also use the device to remotely access the software on a network server or server hosted by a third party. See *Remote Access* below for additional details.

Microsoft 365 Apps activation options

Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise primarily uses click-to-run deployment technology to activate the software. Shared computer activation is another activation mode for Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise and integrates with RDS virtualization technologies.

- **Click-to-run** deployment technology integrates with user-dedicated virtualization technologies. Click-to-run supports the full client installation on physical PCs as well as dedicated virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) deployment on user-dedicated Windows 10 and Windows Server virtual machines without Remote Desktop Service (RDS) role enabled*.

**Additional licenses are required to enable virtualization deployments on a network server. Please consult a Volume Licensing Partner to determine your license needs.*

- **Shared computer activation** is another activation mode for Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise and integrates with RDS virtualization technologies. Examples of virtualization scenarios using the RDS role include Remote Desktop Session Host and Pooled VDI (using RDS). When Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise is deployed on a network server with RDS role enabled, each Licensed User may sign in with their subscription account to temporarily activate Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise via shared computer activation*. Shared computer activation also enables use of Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise on shared devices such as those on a factory floor or those used by medical personnel in a hospital. Deploying Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise using shared computer activation does not count against a user's five desktop installations of Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise. Shared computer activation may also be used when deploying Microsoft 365 Apps for business only when Microsoft 365 Apps for business is licensed as a component of Microsoft 365 Business Premium.

**Additional licenses are required to enable virtualization deployments on a network server. Please consult a Volume Licensing Partner to determine your license needs.*

Remote Access for Microsoft 365 Apps

Customers may choose to deploy the Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise software for remote access by their users or devices licensed for Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise. This can be done on servers dedicated to the customer or in shared server environments. Per user licenses entitle the Licensed User to remotely access the software. Per device licenses allow users to remotely access the software through the Licensed Device.

- **Dedicated** server scenarios include deploying on the customer's own servers or using a third party to host a dedicated server. If the customer chooses to use a third party, this is often referred to as "Outsourcing Software Management" and requires the third party to be an Authorized Outsourcer. The hosted environment must be on servers dedicated to the customer. An Authorized Outsourcer is any outsourcer that is not a Listed Provider and not using a Listed Provider as a datacenter provider. A list of Listed Providers can be found at <https://aka.ms/ListedProviders>. See Microsoft's Product Terms for details.
- **Shared** server scenarios include using Microsoft Azure or a third-party service provider that is a Qualified Multitenant Hosting Partner (QMTH). A list of QMTH Partners and additional deployment requirements are available at <https://www.office.com/sca>. If the customer chooses to use a QMTH, the QMTH may not be a Listed Provider or be using a Listed Provider as a data center provider. A list of Listed Providers can be found at <https://aka.ms/ListedProviders>. See Microsoft's Product Terms for details.

Licensing Office Online Server

Microsoft Office Online Server offers everyone view-only access to Office Online documents.

For editing of Office Online documents, you need an Office license acquired through Volume Licensing. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise provides licensing rights to use Microsoft Office Online when Microsoft Office Online Server is deployed on-premises. The Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise Licensed User can edit documents using Office Online Server from any device, including those not licensed for Office. External Users* don't need an Office license to view or edit Office Online documents. All Microsoft 365/Office 365 plans that include Microsoft SharePoint Online include Office Online as a hosted service.

See descriptions of M365 plans at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/business/compare-all-microsoft-365-business-products>.

For customers that qualify for Office Online Server but don't have access to the Volume License Servicing Center to download a copy, the following actions are possible:

- VL or Open customers can contact their [Support Center](#).
- Direct customers can submit a request from their O365 admin center or [contact support](#).

**External Users are those users that are not either your or your affiliates' employees or your or your affiliates' on-site contractors or on-site agents.*

Licensing Microsoft 365 for enterprise for use with Windows To Go

Licensed Users can use Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise installed on a USB drive with Windows To Go when you license the work device for the following:

- Windows 10 with Software Assurance, Windows E3/E5,, Microsoft 365 F3/E3/E5 or Windows Virtual Desktop Access subscription license; and
- Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise*

**Shared computer activation may be required.*

As a result, a Licensed User can use a USB drive to run Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise on any licensed work device whether on company premises or outside of the workplace.

Acquiring Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise in Commercial Licensing

Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise available through the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, Microsoft Enterprise Subscription Agreement, Microsoft Online Subscription Agreement, Microsoft Cloud Agreement, MPSA, Open programs, and Microsoft Enrollment for Education Solutions (under the Campus and School Agreement).

Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise is available as a stand-alone User SL and is also included as a component of certain Office 365 and Microsoft 365 plans. Users who are licensed for any of the following are licensed for Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise:

- Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise, **or**
- Office 365 E3/E5, **or**
- Microsoft 365 E3/E5

Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise may also be acquired under Government and Education offerings. You can compare Microsoft 365 plans at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/business/compare-all-microsoft-365-business-products>.

Online Services downgrade rights

Microsoft 365 customers have access to the latest technology with the newest features and releases. As with all Subscription Services, Microsoft generally offers only the latest version of the service at a time. Therefore, downgrade rights aren't available with Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise licenses.

Frequently asked questions

Q1: *What is the difference between Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise and Office Professional Plus 2019?*

A: Both Office Professional Plus 2019 and Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise deliver the same productivity software and application experiences. However, Office Professional Plus 2019 is a one-time purchase license that is tied to the computers it is installed on, and it is available through Volume Licensing only. Microsoft 365

Apps for enterprise is available as a per user and per device subscription. See the comparison of the two licensing models for Office in the [Appendix section](#) of this document.

Q2: Which Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise subscriptions include shared computer activation?

A: Any license that contains Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise is eligible for shared computer activation. This includes the following licenses:

- Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise Office 365 E3/E5
- Microsoft 365 E3/E5

All equivalent Government and Education SKUs are also included. Project Online and Visio Online also include shared computer activation.

Q3: How many machines can be activated via shared computer activation?

A: Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise per user licenses allows a user to activate up to five desktop PCs/Macs in non-shared environment. When a user signs into Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise via shared computer activation it will not count against a user's five total desktop installations and thus will not show up on the user account management page.

Q4: Which devices can be used to access Office deployment on a network server?

A: Unlike Office Professional Plus 2019 per device licenses, with a Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise per user license you may access your Apps deployment on a network server from any device. You may also access Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise from your mobile devices, such as tablets.

Q5: Can I run Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise on my personal device to work from home?

A: Yes. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise per user licenses may be installed on up to five devices at a time (for use by the licensed user only).

Q6: Can I bring my personal device to work and use it with Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise?

A: Yes. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise per user licenses may be installed on up to five devices at a time and be used by the licensed user anywhere, at work or at home. Per device licenses entitle only one device to run Apps and can be either a personal device or a work device.

Q7: Can I run Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise on my Mac?

A: Yes. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise is available for MacOS.

Q8: Can I use Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise with a partner-hosted solution?

A: No. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise is not sold under our service provider hoster channel (or SPLA partners). Customers may continue to purchase Subscriber Access License (SAL) for Office Professional Plus hosted desktop solutions provided by Microsoft Partners.

Q9: Can I deploy Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise on shared public cloud environments?

A: Yes. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise may be deployed on shared servers using shared computer activation on Microsoft Azure or a Qualified Multitenant Hosting Partner (QMTH). A list of QMTH partners and additional deployment requirements are available at www.office.com/sca.

Q10: Can I deploy Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise on Azure?

A: Yes. Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise may be deployed on Azure with shared computer activation.

Appendix: Microsoft Office software vs. Microsoft 365 Apps

Customers may license Office as a software product or Microsoft 365 Apps as a subscription service.. See the main differences between the two offerings below:

	Microsoft Office as a software product	Microsoft 365 Apps as a subscription service
Licensing Model	Per device one-time purchase license	Per user or per device subscription license
Product Editions	Office Standard, Office Professional Plus	Microsoft 365 Apps for enterprise, Microsoft 365 Apps for business
Downgrade	User may downgrade to earlier version of same Microsoft Office edition licensed for device.	NA
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"> • Licensed Users may install one copy of the software on up to five devices and use Microsoft 365 Apps 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 for Licensed Users, or remote use from the Licensed Device for per device licenses • Licensed Users may install and use of M365 Apps 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, up to five devices per user license. • Installation and use of Office from a USB device**

***Requires Windows To Go, which is available as a benefit of Software Assurance for the Windows 10 Enterprise per device/E3/E5 license , or Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) subscription license.*

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