

# Windows 10 Desktop Operating System

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# Volume Licensing Reference Guide for Windows 10 Desktop Operating System

## Introduction

Windows 10 helps you achieve more and transform your business with the most secure Windows ever.

Microsoft Commercial Licensing solutions provide the most flexible and cost-effective way to give your organization access to the latest Windows Desktop technologies. Whether you want to upgrade your PCs to Windows 10, gain access to exclusive offerings such as Windows 10 Enterprise edition and the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack, or use Windows with greater flexibility, there's a Commercial Licensing option that's right for your organization.

This document provides an overview of the products available through Commercial Licensing, information about the products that are eligible for upgrades, and the key choices you have for using Windows in your organization.

*Content included is for informational purposes only and isn't meant to replace or override other licensing documentation such as the Windows 10 End User License Agreement or [Commercial Licensing Product Terms](#).*

## Windows 10 Editions and Related Products

### Windows 10 Editions

There's an edition of Windows software designed to meet the needs of every organization, from a small, growing business to a multinational enterprise. The following table lists the editions of Windows 10 available through each Microsoft distribution channel.

 Full Packaged Product (Retail)	 Preinstalled on PC (OEM)	 Commercial Licensing
Windows 10 Pro Windows 10 Home	Windows 10 Pro Windows 10 Home*	Windows 10 Pro Windows 10 Enterprise Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC Windows 10 Education

\*In select emerging markets, a local language-only edition of Windows 10 (Windows 10 Single Language) may be available.

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## Windows Desktop Offerings available through Commercial Licensing

The following offerings are available for purchase through [Microsoft Commercial Licensing](#):

Product	Description
Windows 10 Pro Upgrade	Windows 10 Pro is designed for small and medium businesses and enables organizations to manage their devices and apps, protect their business data, facilitate remote and mobile scenarios, and take advantage of the cloud technologies for their organizations. Windows 10 Pro devices are a good choice for organizations that support CYOD programs and “prosumer” customers. The Windows 10 Pro Upgrade in Commercial Licensing upgrades a device from a previous version of Windows Pro.
Windows 10 Enterprise E3	Windows 10 Enterprise E3 builds on Windows 10 Pro by adding more advanced features designed to address the needs of large and mid-size organizations. Examples include advanced protection against modern security threats, the broadest range of options for operating system deployment and update control, and comprehensive device and app management. Windows 10 Enterprise E3 is available per device or per user and includes Software Assurance in some Commercial Licensing programs.
Windows 10 Enterprise E5	Windows 10 Enterprise E5 is for organizations that want to take advantage of everything in Windows 10 Enterprise E3 with the addition of Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (Windows Defender ATP), a new service that helps enterprises detect, investigate, and respond to advanced attacks on their networks. Windows 10 Enterprise E5 is available per device and includes Software Assurance in some Commercial Licensing programs.
Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC	Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC is designed for systems that have strict change management policies with only security and critical bug fixes. By using a Long Term Servicing Channel, you can apply regular Windows 10 security updates for specialized devices while holding back new-feature updates for an extended period of time, up to 10 years.
Windows 10 Education E3	Windows 10 Education E3 offers the benefits of Windows 10 Enterprise to academic institutions, and is designed to address advanced security and comprehensive device control and management needs. Available to staff, administrators, and students through academic Commercial Licensing, it’s built to simplify deployment by allowing in-place upgrades from Windows 10 Home or Pro without needing to wipe and reload the operating system.
Windows 10 Education E5	Windows 10 Education E5 includes all of the benefits of Education E3 with the addition of Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (Windows Defender ATP), which provides a new layer of post-breach security that enables you to detect, investigate, and respond to advanced attacks on your network. Note that WDATP doesn’t come with student use benefits; students must be covered explicitly.
Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) Subscription License	The Windows VDA subscription license provides the right to access virtual Windows desktop environments from devices that aren’t covered by a Commercial Licensing offer that includes VDA rights, such as thin clients. Windows VDA is available on a per device or per user basis.

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## Windows 10 Pro Upgrade License

Windows 10 Pro is designed for small and medium businesses and enables you to manage your devices and apps, protect your business data, facilitate remote and mobile scenarios, and take advantage of the cloud technologies for your organization. Windows 10 Pro has enterprise-grade security to help protect your data, and it's simple to set up and manage for multiple users. It works across your devices so you can stay mobile, and integrates seamlessly with Office 365\*—connecting your team to maximize productivity.

\*Subscription sold separately

The Windows 10 Pro Upgrade license is recommended if you want to:

- Upgrade Windows 7/8/8.1 Pro devices to Windows 10 Pro
- Upgrade Windows XP Pro or earlier [Qualifying Operating Systems](#) to Windows 10 Pro

## Windows 10 Enterprise

There are two core Windows 10 Enterprise offers: Windows 10 Enterprise E3 and Windows 10 Enterprise E5. Each of these can be purchased on a per device or per user basis, and are available only through Commercial Licensing, including the Cloud Solution Provider program.

### Windows 10 Enterprise E3

Windows 10 Enterprise E3 builds on Windows 10 Pro by adding more advanced features designed to address the needs of large and mid-size organizations. Examples include advanced protection against modern security threats, the broadest range of options for operating system deployment and update, and comprehensive device and app management. Customers with devices running Windows 10 Enterprise will be able to take advantage of the latest security and feature updates on an ongoing basis, while having the ability to choose the pace at which they adopt new technology. Windows 10 Enterprise E3 can be licensed per user or per device.

### Windows 10 Enterprise E5

Windows 10 Enterprise E5 is the newest offer for customers who want to take advantage of everything in E3 with the addition of Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (Windows Defender ATP), a new service that helps enterprises detect, investigate, and respond to advanced attacks on their networks.

Building on the existing security defenses in Windows 10, Windows Defender ATP provides a new post-breach layer of protection to the Windows 10 security stack. With a combination of client technology built into Windows 10 and a robust cloud service, it can help detect threats that have made it past other defenses, provide enterprises with information to investigate the breach across endpoints, and offer response recommendations.

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With Windows 10 Enterprise, you can take advantage of the following features and capabilities not available in Windows 10 Pro.

Feature	Description
Device Guard	Device Guard puts you in control of your environment with rigorous access controls that help protect the Windows system core and prevent malware, untrusted apps, and executables from running on your devices.  For more information, see <a href="#">Introduction to Device Guard</a> .
Credential Guard	Credential Guard helps protect user access tokens from being hacked by storing them inside a secure hardware isolated container, defeating a key tactic used to compromise networks.
Windows To Go Creator	Allows the creation of a fully manageable corporate desktop running Windows 10 Enterprise edition on a bootable USB drive.
Start screen control	Enables IT to control the Start screen layout that users will see (but cannot change) through centrally managed Group Policies.
DirectAccess	Allows remote users to seamlessly access resources inside a corporate network without having to launch a separate VPN.
BranchCache	Allows users' PCs to cache files, websites, and other content from central servers, so content isn't repeatedly downloaded across the wide area network (WAN).
AppLocker	AppLocker helps IT pros determine which applications and files users can run on a device (also known as "whitelisting"). The applications and files that can be managed include executable files, scripts, Windows Installer files, dynamic-link libraries (DLLs), packaged apps, and packaged app installers. For more information, see <a href="#">AppLocker</a> .
Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) enhancements**	Enhancements in Microsoft RemoteFX and Windows Server 2019 R2 provide users a rich desktop experience with the ability to have RemoteApps look more like local apps, adjust screen resolution and orientation on demand, and reconnect to your desktop quickly across any type of network (LAN or WAN) for VDI scenarios.  **Requires Software Assurance
Managed User Experience	With the managed user experience capabilities included in Windows 10, you can create a consistent, predictable experience for users across the organization and configure devices for single-purpose scenarios.

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Feature	Description
Application Virtualization (App-V)	This feature makes applications available to end users without installing the applications directly on users' devices. App-V transforms applications into centrally managed services that are never installed and don't conflict with other applications. This feature also helps ensure that applications are kept current with the latest security updates.
Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (WDATP) <sup>NEW</sup>	<p>Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (WDATP) provides a new post-breach layer of protection to the Windows 10 security stack. It gives you the ability to detect, investigate, and remediate advanced attacks and data breaches on their networks.</p> <p>With a combination of client technology built into Windows 10 and a robust cloud service, it helps detect threats that have made it past other defenses, provides enterprises with information to investigate the breach across endpoints, and offers response recommendations.</p> <p>Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection is available only with Windows 10 Enterprise E5 and Windows 10 Education E5.</p>

Learn more about [Windows 10 Enterprise](#).

## Windows 10 Education

Windows 10 Education builds on Windows 10 Enterprise adding enterprise-grade features to address the advanced security and comprehensive device control and management needs of today's educational institutions.

### Windows 10 Education E3

Windows 10 Education E3 (formerly Windows 10 Education) is Microsoft's best offering for Academic institutions and includes all of the functionality of Windows 10 Enterprise E3 while allowing in-place upgrades from Windows Home edition. Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP) is included as a standard component of Education E3 to help administrators manage their IT environments. (MDOP access isn't included as part of the student use benefit.)

### Windows 10 Education E5

Windows 10 Education E5 is a new offering for academic institutions. It includes all of the benefits of Windows 10 Education E3, with the addition of Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (WDATP). WDATP provides a new layer of post-breach security that enables you to detect, investigate, and respond to advanced attacks on your network.

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## Qualifying Operating Systems

Windows licenses available through Commercial Licensing are upgrade-only licenses (except for VDA licenses). They don't replace the base "qualifying" licenses for operating system software that comes preinstalled on new PCs. Each PC that runs the Windows 10 Pro or Enterprise upgrade must first be licensed to run one of the qualifying operating systems identified below—otherwise the PC won't have a valid, legal Windows license. If you don't have a preexisting license for a genuine, qualifying operating system on your PC, see the [Get Genuine options](#) section in this guide.

**User licenses** may only be assigned to users that are the primary user of at least one device with a Qualifying Operating System.

**Device licenses** may only be assigned to devices with a Qualifying Operating System

**VDA licenses (user or device)** may be assigned to any user or device. VDA licenses do not require Qualifying Operating Systems.

<u>Per User Qualifying Operating Systems</u> Qualifying Operating Systems	Enterprise Agreement, Microsoft Products and Services Agreement, Select, Select Plus	Microsoft Cloud Agreement
<b>Windows 10</b>		
Enterprise, IoT Enterprise, Pro, Pro for Workstations, Pro in S mode	X	X
<b>Windows 7 / 8 / 8.1</b>		
Enterprise, Pro, Professional, Ultimate, Windows 7 Professional/Ultimate for Embedded Systems, Windows Embedded 8/8.1 Pro, Industry Pro	X	

## Per Device Qualifying Operating Systems

Qualifying Operating Systems	New Enterprise Agreement (EA)/Open Value Company-Wide (OV-CW) <sup>2</sup>	Existing EA/ OV-CW <sup>3</sup>	Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)/Select Plus <sup>4</sup> /Open <sup>5</sup>	Microsoft Cloud Agreement	Academic and Charity <sup>6</sup>
<b>Windows 10</b>					
Enterprise, Pro, Pro for Workstations, Pro in S mode	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Education, Home, Home in S mode					☑
<b>Windows 8/8.1</b>					
Enterprise, Pro	☑	☑	☑		☑
Windows 8/8.1					☑
<b>Windows 7</b>					
Enterprise, Professional, Ultimate	☑	☑	☑		☑
Home Premium, Home Basic, Starter Edition					☑
<b>Windows Vista</b>					
Enterprise, Business, Ultimate	☑		☑		☑
Home Premium, Home Basic, Starter Edition					☑
<b>Windows XP</b>					

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Qualifying Operating Systems	New Enterprise Agreement (EA)/Open Value Company-Wide (OV-CW) <sup>2</sup>	Existing EA/ OV-CW <sup>3</sup>	Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)/Select Plus <sup>4</sup> /Open <sup>5</sup>	Microsoft Cloud Agreement	Academic and Charity <sup>6</sup>
Professional, Tablet Edition, Pro Blade PC	☑		☑		☑
Home, Starter Edition					☑
Apple					
macOS	☑		☑		☑

Qualifying Operating Systems <sup>1</sup>	New Enterprise Agreement (EA)/Open Value Company-Wide (OV-CW) <sup>2</sup>	Existing EA/ OV-CW <sup>3</sup>	Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)/Select Plus <sup>4</sup> /Open <sup>5</sup>	Microsoft Cloud Agreement	Academic and Charity <sup>6</sup>
Windows Embedded Operating Systems					
Windows 10 IoT Enterprise	X	X	X	X	X
Windows 2000 Professional for Embedded Systems	X		X		X
Windows XP Professional for Embedded Systems	X		X		X
Windows Vista Business/Ultimate for Embedded Systems	X		X		X
Windows 7 Professional/Ultimate for Embedded Systems	X	X	X		X
Windows Embedded 8/8.1 Pro, Industry Pro	X	X	X		X
Windows 10 IoT Enterprise for Retail or Thin Clients	X		X		X
Windows Embedded 8 and 8.1 Industry Retail <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded POSReady 7 Pro <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded for Point of Service <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded POSReady 2009 <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded POSReady 7 <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows XP Embedded <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded Standard 7 <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded Standard 2009 <sup>1</sup>			X		X
Windows Embedded 8 Standard <sup>1</sup>			X		X

<sup>1</sup>Use restrictions apply. Refer to the [Commercial Licensing Product Terms](#) for details.

## Software Assurance and Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA)

Software Assurance includes a core set of benefits to help improve workforce productivity, streamline software deployment, and reduce costs. It also provides the greatest flexibility for how you use Windows because it includes access to enterprise offerings and use rights that aren't available through other licensing programs. Software Assurance is the path to supporting users' flexible work styles by providing access to Windows in a variety of ways across devices. It's available with Windows 10 Enterprise through Commercial Licensing but isn't offered with the Cloud Solution Provider program.



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For devices or users that don't qualify for Windows 10 Enterprise offers, you can license Windows VDA for access to the benefits of Software Assurance. With Software Assurance and Windows VDA, you get flexible access to Windows Enterprise, Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP), and a number of additional benefits, which are described in the following table.

## Benefits of Software Assurance or Windows VDA

Whether you license Software Assurance or Windows VDA on a per device or per user basis, you receive a number of benefits specific to Windows. See below for an overview of the benefits.

**Note:** "Licensed device" refers to any device covered by either Software Assurance or a Windows VDA on a per device basis. "Licensed user" refers to any user covered by either Software Assurance or a Windows VDA on a per user basis.

Benefit	Description
New Version Rights	With New Version Rights, you have access to new releases of Windows on any licensed device or by any licensed user as soon as they're released for no additional cost. With the launch of Windows 10, this will include future LTSCs, as well as the Current Channel and Current Channel for Business for Enterprise (or Education) edition.
Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP)	MDOP enables businesses to virtualize the operating system applications and the user experience, manage Windows features, and restore user productivity after a system issue. See the <a href="#">Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack</a> section of this document for more details.
Windows Thin PC	Windows Thin PC is a smaller footprint version of Windows 7 that enables organizations to repurpose existing PCs as thin clients, thereby reducing the need for new thin client hardware. This benefit applies only to devices or users licensed with Software Assurance (and not VDA).
Windows Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) Rights	Windows VDA Rights enable users to access virtual instances of Windows in a variety of user scenarios.
Windows To Go Use Rights	Windows To Go is a fully manageable corporate desktop running Windows 10 Enterprise edition on a bootable USB stick. This use right allows Windows To Go to be run on any licensed device or by any licensed user. See the <a href="#">Windows To Go</a> section of this document for more details.
Long Term Servicing Channel Support	Get security updates regularly, without new features, for the duration of the five-year mainstream support period plus an additional five-year extended support period.

With Software Assurance or Windows VDA, you also have access to the following benefits:

- **Extended Hotfix support:** Provides specific product fixes on a per customer incident basis, beyond the standard product support.
- **24x7 Problem Resolution Support:** Provides around-the-clock phone support for business-critical issues or business hours phone support for non-critical issues. Unlimited email support can be used for non-critical

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problems. The number of support incidences and type (phone and web) for which you're eligible is based on the type of Commercial Licensing agreement and qualifying products.

- **Enterprise Source Licensing Program:** Provides access to Windows source code for internal development and support.
- **Training Vouchers:** Provides in-depth technical classroom training for IT professionals and developers.
- **E-Learning:** Offers self-paced interactive training for end users and IT professionals; delivered over the Internet or an intranet.
- **Spread Payments:** Payment for licenses and Software Assurance may be spread across three equal, annual sums.

## Notes:

- The rights above apply only to Windows, and license requirements for other software still apply.
- Benefit eligibility varies by Commercial Licensing program and products. Refer to the [Microsoft Commercial Licensing Product Terms](#) to verify eligibility by program and products.

## Licensing Windows 10 Enterprise or Windows VDA on a per device basis

You can license Windows on a per device basis in the following ways:

- When purchasing Windows 10 Enterprise E3 (or Windows 10 Education E3), Software Assurance is included in some Commercial Licensing programs such as Enterprise Agreement, Enterprise Subscription Agreement, Open Value, Open Value Subscription, and Enrollment for Education Solutions.
- If you have devices that don't have or aren't eligible for Windows 10 Enterprise (such as thin clients), you can access many of the benefits of Software Assurance by licensing those devices with a Windows VDA subscription.

## Licensing Windows 10 Enterprise or Windows VDA on a per user basis

You can license Windows 10 Enterprise and Windows VDA on a per user basis. With per user licensing, you license an individual instead of a device, and that individual receives use rights for any device. This puts your users at the center of your Windows licensing solution, gives you flexible options for how you deploy and access Windows across devices, and simplifies Windows licensing and management.

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There are three different options for how you license access to Windows on a per user basis: **Windows 10 Enterprise per User**, **Windows VDA per User**, and **Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on**.

Here's a comparison of the three options:

**Note:** "Primary user's primary device" means the user is the primary user of a device AND that device is that user's primary work device.

	Windows 10 Enterprise per User	Windows VDA per User	Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on: When added to Windows 10 Enterprise per Device	Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on: When added to Windows VDA per Device
Licensing requirements	Primary user's primary device must be licensed for Windows 7/8/8.1/10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education	No device requirements; may be assigned to any user	Primary user's primary device must already be covered by Windows 10 Enterprise per Device	Primary user's primary device must already be covered by Windows VDA
License Model	Per user; no device limits	Per user; no device limits	Per user; no device limits	Per user; no device limits
Local install of Windows Enterprise	On any Windows 7/8/8.1/10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education device or Windows tablet ≤ 10.1 inches	On any Windows 7/8/8.1/10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education device or Windows tablet ≤ 10.1 inches	On any Windows 7/8/8.1/10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education device or Windows tablet ≤ 10.1 inches	On any Windows 7/8/8.1/10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education device or Windows tablet ≤ 10.1 inches
VDI Access and Windows To Go	Any device	Any device	Any device	Any device

Here's how to choose the right option:

## Windows 10 Enterprise per User

Windows 10 Enterprise per User is the right option if ALL of the following apply:

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- The user is the primary user of at least one device licensed for Windows 10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education; Windows 8/8.1 Pro or Enterprise; or Windows 7 Professional or Enterprise  
AND
- The device is the user’s primary work device  
AND
- The device isn’t already covered by Windows 10 Enterprise or Windows VDA.

## Windows VDA per User

Windows VDA per User is the right option if either one of the following applies:

- The user isn’t the primary user of at least one device licensed for Windows 10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education; Windows 8/8.1 Pro or Enterprise; or Windows 7 Professional or Enterprise  
OR
- The user uses a device licensed for Windows 10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education; Windows 8/8.1 Pro or Enterprise, or Windows 7 Professional or Enterprise, but that device isn’t the user’s primary work device.

**Note:** Because there’s no requirement that the user is the primary user of a primary device licensed for Windows 10 Pro, Enterprise, or Education, Windows 8/8.1 Pro or Enterprise, or Windows 7 Professional or Enterprise, Windows VDA per User is the least restrictive option. If you were to license every user with Windows VDA per User, every user would have access to Windows Enterprise without the need to track the operating system license(s) on the user’s device(s) (except for devices on which you install the software locally).

## Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on

Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on is the right option if either *one* of the following applies:

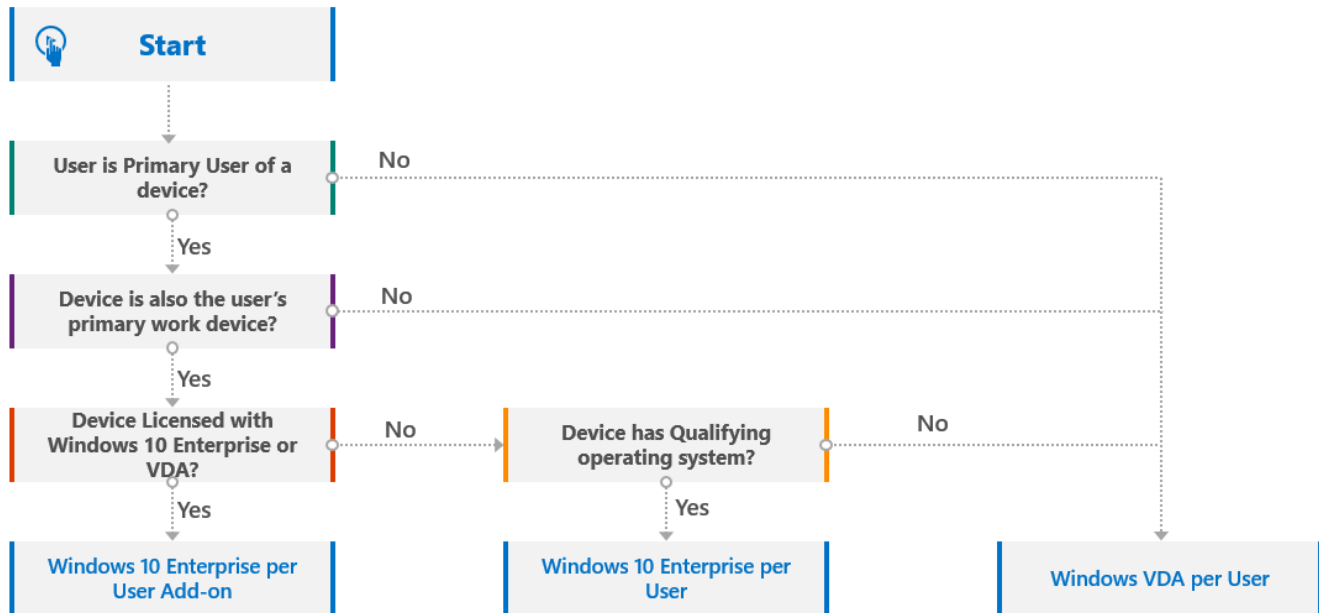
- The user is the primary user of a primary device with active Windows 10 Enterprise coverage  
*or*
- The user is the primary user of a primary device with active Windows VDA coverage.

With the Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on, you get all of the benefits of Windows 10 Enterprise Per User or Windows VDA per User at a price that recognizes your existing investment. When you license the primary user of a primary device that’s already covered with Windows 10 Enterprise, the Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on grants the licensed user with all of the benefits of Windows 10 Enterprise per User. When you license the primary user of a primary device that’s already covered with Windows VDA, the Windows 10 Enterprise per User Add-on grants the licensed user with all of the benefits of Windows VDA per User.

	Underlying device license:	Underlying device license:
	Windows 10 Enterprise	Windows VDA
Add-on license	Windows 10 Enterprise Per User Add-on	Windows 10 Enterprise Per User Add-on
Use Rights granted by Add-on	Windows 10 Enterprise per User	Windows VDA per User

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Use this flow chart to help you choose the right per user option:



## Perpetual Use Rights for Windows Enterprise

The use rights for Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC are perpetual for the licensed device at the point that Windows 10 Enterprise coverage ends (unless the Windows 10 Enterprise upgrade is acquired under a subscription license).

If Windows 10 Enterprise expires, the perpetual use rights will be for the LTSC that was current at the time that the Software Assurance coverage expired, as well as any past LTSCs.

Windows 10 Enterprise per User doesn't have an underlying Windows Enterprise upgrade license with Software Assurance, therefore perpetual use rights aren't granted.

## Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack

Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack (MDOP) is a suite of technologies that helps enterprise customers take advantage of desktop virtualization, better manage Windows devices, and deliver advanced system restore capabilities. It's a benefit of Software Assurance and Windows VDA subscription.

**Note:** Customers with Windows VDA subscription without MDOP prior to August 1, 2015, will receive entitlement to MDOP at their next renewal.

If you license Software Assurance or Windows VDA on a per device basis, then your MDOP subscription is also licensed on a per device basis, and it covers each specific licensed device. If you license Software Assurance or Windows VDA on a per user basis or you have the Windows per User Add-on, then your MDOP subscription is also licensed on a per user basis, so it covers all of each licensed user's devices. [Learn more about MDOP.](#)

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## Windows To Go Rights

By using Windows To Go, users can travel light without sacrificing productivity, organizations can enable new “Bring Your Own PC” scenarios, and contingent staff can get up and running faster with more security.



Windows To Go enables IT administrators to provide users with a corporate Windows image that can include line-of-business apps, settings, and corporate data on a compatible USB storage device. Users can boot and operate Windows To Go from any supported corporate or personal PC (Windows 7, Windows 8/8.1, or Windows 10 logo-certified) and continue to enjoy a rich and consistent Windows 10 experience.

Windows To Go Rights
Any supported device covered by either Software Assurance or Windows VDA subscription is licensed to run Windows To Go.
The primary user of any device licensed at work with Software Assurance or Windows VDA can run Windows To Go while at home or on the road from a supported non-corporate PC (for example, personally owned or hotel business center PCs) under Roaming Use Rights.
A user licensed with Software Assurance per User or Windows VDA per User is licensed to run Windows To Go for their exclusive use on any supported device.

**Note:** Windows To Go requires volume activation, either by using the [Key Management Service](#) (KMS) server in your organization or by using [Active Directory](#)-based volume activation. See the [Volume activation](#) section of this document for more details.

## Windows 10 Downgrade Rights

Your rights to use prior versions of Windows in place of Windows 10 (“downgrade rights”) depend on how the license was acquired.

 Preinstalled on PC (OEM)	 Commercial Licensing
OEM downgrade rights are limited to the equivalent edition for Windows 8.1 and Windows 7.	Commercial Licensing downgrade rights provide the greatest flexibility, with downgrades to any prior version.

Version Downgrade to	OEM preinstall	Commercial Licensing	Commercial Licensing	Commercial Licensing
	Windows 10 Pro	Windows 10 Pro	Windows 10 Enterprise	Windows 10 Education
Windows 8/8.1 Enterprise			✔	✔
Windows 8.1 Pro	✔	✔	✔	✔

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Windows 7 Enterprise			✓	✓
Windows 7 Professional	✓	✓	✓	✓
Windows Vista Enterprise			✓	✓
Windows Vista Business		✓	✓	✓
Windows XP Pro		✓	✓	✓
Windows 2000 Professional		✓	✓	✓
Windows 95/98/NT		✓	✓	✓

PCs purchased with Windows 10 Pro preinstalled by an OEM will have the option to downgrade to either Windows 8.1 Pro or Windows 7 Professional. For circumstances requiring Windows Vista, Windows XP, or other prior versions, the rights to downgrade to these versions are available only through Commercial Licensing, not the OEM preinstall license.

**Note:** There are no downgrade rights to Windows 7 Ultimate.

## Volume activation

Windows product activation is a set of technologies that enables customers to confirm that their copy of Windows is properly licensed. Product activation is required for all editions of Windows 10.

Volume activation applies to computers that are covered under a Commercial Licensing program and allows enterprise customers to automate the activation process, making it transparent to users. It's used strictly as a tool for activation, and isn't used for license invoicing or billing.

## Activation through Key Management Service and Multiple Activation Key

Key Management Service (KMS) allows organizations to activate computers within customer environment through an internally hosted service (KMS), and Multiple Activation Key (MAK) activates computers on a one-time basis by using the hosted activation services provided by Microsoft. You can use either or both key types to activate computers in your environments, but each device that hasn't activated by a KMS must use a MAK.

## Activation through Microsoft Active Directory

During Active Directory-based activation, any Windows 10 or Windows Server 2019 computers connected to the domain will activate automatically and transparently during computer setup. These clients stay activated as long as they remain members of the domain and maintain periodic contact with a domain controller.

[Learn more about volume activation.](#)

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## Windows 10 Education Activation

Windows 10 Enterprise is configured for use by commercial customers. We recommend Windows 10 Education for all K-12 customers, as it includes the data configuration designed for students and provides the most complete and secure edition for education environments. Depending upon your license, you can either directly deploy Windows 10 Education, or configure Windows 10 Enterprise so that it mirrors the data configuration for students of Windows 10 Education. As described below, all of our Windows commercial editions can be configured to support the needs of schools, through group policies, domain join, and more.

**Availability of Windows 10 Education through Microsoft Volume Licensing.** Windows 10 Education is only available through Microsoft Volume Licensing. Customers who are using Multi Activation Keys (MAK) or Key Management Service (KMS) for activations have the option to deploy either Windows 10 Enterprise or Windows 10 Education editions. As noted above, we recommend Windows 10 Education to all K-12 customers. If you don't have access to Windows 10 Education, contact your Microsoft representative or see more information [here](#).

**Configuring Windows 10 Enterprise for K-12.** Customers who deploy Windows 10 Enterprise can configure the product to have similar settings to Windows 10 Education by using Intune for Education, other MDM tools or Group Policy. More detailed information on these policies and the configuration steps required is available in [Manage Windows 10 and Microsoft Store tips, tricks, and suggestions](#). We recommend that K-12 customers using commercial Windows 10 Enterprise read the [document](#) and apply desired settings for your environment.

Schools also have the option to use AAD to upgrade Windows 10 Pro\* devices to Windows 10 Enterprise. In that case we recommend using Intune for Education, or other MDM tools, or Group Policy to configure the product to have similar settings to Windows 10 Education. More detailed information on these policies and the configuration steps required is available in [Manage Windows 10 and Microsoft Store tips, tricks, and suggestions](#)

\*Customers who have purchased devices running Windows 10 Pro Education (Shape the Future program) can upgrade to Windows 10 Education or Windows 10 Enterprise edition by using MAK/KMS activation only, for the time being.

## Get Genuine Windows Agreement

The best and most cost-effective way to acquire full Windows licenses is through preinstalled licenses on a new PC. However, if you discover counterfeit software or have applied a Commercial Licensing Windows upgrade license without a qualified base operating system on your computers, there are solutions available through Commercial Licensing that can help remedy this noncompliant situation.

To purchase the correct Windows 10 Pro licenses through Commercial Licensing, the Get Genuine Windows Agreement (GGWA) has two options: GGWA for Small and Medium Organizations and GGWA for Large Organizations. Academic customers can purchase Windows 10 Home licenses via GGWA for Academic Organizations. [Learn more about Get Genuine options.](#)



# Volume Licensing Reference Guide for Windows 10 Desktop Operating System

	GGWA for Small and Medium Organizations	GGWA for Large Organizations	GGWA for Academic Organizations
Audience	Small Business, Mid-market, Commercial, and Government customers	Mid-market, Large Commercial, and Government customers with a large installed base of PCs	Academic institution customers
Channel	Sold through Microsoft Resellers	Sold through Microsoft Licensing Solution Providers or direct from Microsoft	Sold through Microsoft Academic Resellers
Details	<p>Non-signed commitment to buy legal going forward</p> <p>No transferability of license</p> <p>Commercial Licensing downgrade rights available</p> <p>Support is available for purchase from a Microsoft Reseller</p>	<p>Pre-signed agreement that includes an audit clause</p> <p>Commitment that future Windows software acquisitions will contain legal software</p> <p>Placement of a one-time-only order</p> <p>No transferability of license</p> <p>A Master Business and Services Agreement must be in place or one must be set up</p> <p>Commercial Licensing downgrade rights available</p> <p>Support is available for purchase from either Microsoft or Microsoft Licensing Solutions Provider</p>	<p>Non-signed commitment to buy legal going forward</p> <p>No transferability of license</p> <p>Needs to be combined with Academic Windows Upgrade Volume License</p> <p>Downgrade rights not available; available only with Academic Volume License</p> <p>No media or bits available for either download or purchase</p> <p>Support is available for purchase from a Microsoft Reseller</p>

## Windows Offerings by Commercial Licensing program

Microsoft Commercial Licensing offers customized programs that help organizations purchase software licenses. Tailored for different organization type, size, and purchasing preferences, Microsoft Commercial Licensing programs provide flexible and affordable solutions designed to help you manage your licenses with ease. Whether you have five or thousands of desktop PCs, there's a Microsoft Commercial Licensing program for you.

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## Windows Desktop Products available for purchase by Commercial Licensing program

Offering	Open License	Open Value and Subscription	Select Plus <sup>1</sup> and Microsoft Products and Services Agreement	Enterprise Agreement and Subscription	Enrollment for Education Solutions (Under a Campus and School Agreement)	School Enrollment	Cloud Solution Provider (CSP)
Windows 10 Pro Upgrade	✓		✓				
Windows 10 Enterprise (per device)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Windows 10 Enterprise E3			✓	✓			✓
Windows 10 Enterprise E5			✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓			✓
Windows 10 Education A3					✓		✓
Windows 10 Education A5					✓		✓
Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC	✓		✓				
Windows VDA E3			✓	✓			✓
Windows VDA E5			✓	✓			
Windows VDA per device			✓	✓	✓		

<sup>1</sup> 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 doesn't apply to government and academic Select Plus agreements. [Learn more.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Windows 10 Enterprise E5 isn't available in Select Plus.

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## How to acquire Licenses through Commercial Licensing

To acquire the latest Microsoft technology at a significant cost savings over full packaged products through Microsoft Commercial Licensing, contact your Microsoft representative or Microsoft Reseller Partner.

Your preferred Microsoft Commercial Licensing reseller can help you acquire Windows 10 Enterprise, which can be ordered through any Microsoft Commercial Licensing program. To find a Microsoft Commercial Licensing reseller:

- In the United States, call (800) 426-9400 or visit [Microsoft partners](#).
- In Canada, contact the Microsoft Resource Centre at (877) 568-2495.
- Outside the United States or Canada, contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To locate licensing information for your local subsidiary, visit [Microsoft Licensing worldwide](#).

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