

Windows 10 qualifying operating system requirements

This brief applies to all Microsoft Licensing programs.

Contents

Summary	1
Details	2
Qualifying Operating Systems for Windows local use	2
Qualifying operating system for Per User Licenses and Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) Per Device/User licenses	2
Qualifying operating system for Per Device Licenses (Excluding Virtual Desktop Access licenses)	2
Qualifying operating systems when virtualizing Windows	4
Frequently asked questions.....	4

Summary

This licensing brief explains the qualifying operating system license requirements for Windows 10 upgrade licenses when purchased through Commercial Licensing programs. Windows 10 upgrade licenses available through Commercial Licensing programs include,

- Windows 10 Pro
- Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC
- Windows 10 Enterprise E3/E5/per device
- Windows 10 Education A3/A5/E3/E5
- Windows VDA per device
- Windows VDA E3/E5

Details

Qualifying Operating Systems for Windows local use

Windows 10 licenses acquired through a Microsoft Commercial Licensing program are upgrade licenses. You cannot acquire full Windows operating system licenses for desktop PCs through Microsoft Commercial Licensing programs. Customers must first have licensed and installed a Qualifying Operating System on a device before the device is eligible for a Windows 10 upgrade license. Full Windows operating system licenses can be acquired for desktop PCs preinstalled on a new PC by an original equipment manufacturer (OEM). Full Packaged Product (FPP – retail) licenses may also be assigned and installed on a desktop PC device as a qualifying license.

Windows 10 upgrade licenses acquired through a Commercial Licensing agreement may only be installed or activated on devices licensed to run one of the Qualifying Operating Systems below:

Qualifying operating system for Per User Licenses and Virtual Desktop Access (VDA) Per Device/User licenses

Qualifying operating systems		Enterprise Agreement, Microsoft Products and Services Agreement, Select, Select Plus	Microsoft Cloud Agreement and Microsoft Customer Agreement
Windows 10	Enterprise, IoT Enterprise, Pro, Pro for Workstations, Pro in S mode	•	•
Windows 7/8/8.1	Enterprise, Pro, Professional, Ultimate, Windows 7 Professional/Ultimate for Embedded Systems, Windows Embedded 8/8.1 Pro, Industry Pro	•	

Qualifying operating system for Per Device Licenses (Excluding Virtual Desktop Access licenses)

Qualifying operating systems	New Enterprise Agreement (EA)/Open Value Company Wide (OV-OW) ¹	Existing Enterprise (EA)/Open Value Company Wide (OV-OW)	Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)/Select Plus/Open	Microsoft Cloud Agreement and Microsoft Customer Agreement	Academic and Charity
Windows 10					
Enterprise, Pro, Pro for Workstations, Pro in S mode	•	•	•	•	•
Education, Home, Home in S mode					•

Qualifying operating systems	New Enterprise Agreement (EA)/Open Value Company Wide (OV-OW) ¹	Existing Enterprise (EA)/Open Value Company Wide (OV-OW)	Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)/Select Plus/Open	Microsoft Cloud Agreement and Microsoft Customer Agreement	Academic and Charity
Windows 8/8.1					
Enterprise, Pro	•	•	•		•
Windows 8/8.1					•
Windows 7					
Enterprise, Professional, Ultimate	•	•	•		•
Home Premium, Home Basic, Starter Edition					•
Windows Vista					
Enterprise, Business, Ultimate	•		•		•
Home Premium, Home Basic, Starter Edition					•
Windows XP					
Professional, Tablet Edition, Pro Blade PC	•		•		•
Home, Starter Edition					•
Apple					
macOS ²	•		•		•
Windows Embedded operating systems					
Windows 10 IoT Enterprise	•	•	•	•	•
Windows 2000 Professional for Embedded Systems	•		•		•
Windows XP Professional for Embedded Systems	•		•		•

Qualifying operating systems	New Enterprise Agreement (EA)/Open Value Company Wide (OV-OW) ¹	Existing Enterprise (EA)/Open Value Company Wide (OV-OW)	Microsoft Products and Services Agreement (MPSA)/Select Plus/Open	Microsoft Cloud Agreement and Microsoft Customer Agreement	Academic and Charity
Windows Vista Business/Ultimate for Embedded Systems	•		•		•
Windows 7 Professional/Ultimate for Embedded Systems	•	•	•		•
Windows Embedded 8/8.1 Pro, Industry Pro	•	•	•		•

¹Also applicable to Qualified Devices acquired through merger or acquisition.

²macOS must be preinstalled by the authorized manufacturer prior to the initial sale of the device.

Qualifying operating systems when virtualizing Windows

When licensed solely for remote virtualization, Windows VDA licenses do not require that users have a device with a Qualifying Operating System. Windows VDA licenses do, however, require a Qualifying Operating System when used to run Windows locally, including local virtualization. All other Windows 10 licenses obtained through Commercial Licensing programs still require Qualifying Operating Systems for remote virtualization scenarios.

For additional details about virtualizing Windows 10, please see the licensing brief, [Windows 10 licensing for Virtual Desktops](#).

Frequently asked questions

Q1: Can a Commercial Licensing customer purchase new a device that does not have an operating system preinstalled, and license the Windows operating system through Volume Licensing?

A: No. All new PCs should be purchased with a Qualifying Operating System preinstalled by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM). Microsoft Commercial Licensing programs are not a source for full licenses for Windows 10. These programs offer only *upgrade* licenses for Windows 10. The only exception to this is that customers can acquire the Windows VDA license to remotely access Windows 10 running in a virtual environment regardless of whether the user’s device has a Qualifying Operating System or not.

Q2: *Scenario: A customer has an older device that came preinstalled with a licensed copy of Windows 7 Professional but was upgraded to Windows 10 Pro using a Windows 10 Pro Upgrade license acquired through their Volume Licensing program. If the customer decides to donate this device to a charity, can they remove the newly installed Windows 10 Pro software from that device and transfer the license to a different device within their organization?*

A: Customers may only reassign Windows 10 per device licenses if they have active Software Assurance for the license. Windows 10 per device licenses acquired through Commercial Licensing may not be reassigned to a new device if the license does not have Software Assurance.

Q3: *Does a device licensed with Windows VDA require a qualifying operating system if the software is not installed locally on the device and the device is only used to remotely access a virtualized instance of Windows 10 ?*

A: No. Since the software is not installed locally on the device itself, Windows VDA licenses do not require a Licensed Device to have a Qualifying Operating System.

© 2020 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This document is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS DOCUMENT. This information is provided to help guide your authorized use of products you license; it is not your agreement. Your use of products licensed under your volume license agreement is governed by the terms and conditions of that agreement. In the case of any conflict between this information and your agreement, the terms and conditions of your agreement control. Prices for licenses acquired through Microsoft resellers are determined by the reseller.