

Core CAL and Enterprise CAL Suites

Licensing guidance

Summary

This licensing guidance explains Microsoft's two Client Access License (CAL) Suites: Core CAL Suite and the Enterprise CAL Suite. Both suites provide access rights to various server products and include a range of features.

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Licensing models

Client Access Licenses (CALs) apply to server products licensed under the Server/CAL and Per Core/CAL licensing models. These models require you to license server software through Server or Core licenses and separately license access through CALs. CALs do not include any software or services; they only grant the right to access server software. CALs come in two types: per user and per device, similar to CAL Suites. User CALs allow the licensed user to access the server software from any device, while Device CALs allow any user to access the server software from the licensed device.

Access rights

Licensing access to features associated with additive CALs

Many components of the Core CAL and Enterprise CAL Suite act as "base CALs," while certain parts of the Enterprise CAL Suite function as "additive CALs." Customers can choose to license the Enterprise CAL Suite upfront or as a step-up from a Core CAL Suite license. Having the Enterprise CAL Suite is like having both the Core CAL Suite and its exclusive additional components since it includes everything in the Core CAL Suite. For more information about base and additive CALs, refer to the <https://aka.ms/Brief-BaseAdditiveCAL>.

Server software version access rights with CAL Suites

When you initially purchase CAL Suites, they come with Software Assurance coverage, which grants the right to access the most recent version of every server software product in the suite. If you choose not to renew your Software Assurance coverage, your perpetual licenses allow you to continue accessing the latest version of the server software available as of the last day of your Software Assurance term. For example, if your Software Assurance coverage for the Core CAL Suite expires on September 1, 2024, you will not have rights to versions of server components released on or after that date, such as Windows Server 2025, or to products added to the CAL Suite after that date. Access rights to Microsoft services components of the suites also expire if Software Assurance lapses.

Additional use rights included in CAL Suites

CAL Suites also provide use rights equivalent to Client Management Licenses or Microsoft Online Services User Subscription Licenses. In all cases, under a CAL Suite, the customer's use rights with respect to a particular product or online service are the same as if that component was licensed separately. The only exception is that both per-user and per-device options are available in CAL Suites even when both options are not available outside the suite. For instance, Microsoft Endpoint Configuration Manager has per device use rights as part of Core CAL Suite and Enterprise CAL Suite, even though it's offered under per user and per-operating system environment individually.

Client Management License use rights

The Core CAL Suite grants rights equivalent to the Microsoft Endpoint Configuration Manager Client Management License. When licensed on a per-device basis, CAL Suites extend these rights to multiple operating system environments deployed on the same device, aligning with Server/CAL per-device licensing.

Microsoft Online Services use rights

A license for the Enterprise CAL Suite with active Software Assurance coverage includes the rights to Exchange Online Archiving for Exchange Server, Purview Data Loss Prevention, and Exchange Online Protection.

Comparison of CAL Suites

The table below compares what each CAL Suite includes. This information, along with the CAL and ML equivalent rights included in Online Service subscriptions [CAL and ML Equivalency section of the Product Terms](#).

CAL/ML	Core CAL Suite	Enterprise CAL (ECAL) Suite
Exchange Server 2019 Standard (Base) CAL	✓	✓
Exchange Server 2019 Standard (Additive) CAL		✓
Exchange Server 2019 Enterprise (Base) CAL	✓	✓
Exchange Server 2019 Enterprise (Additive) CAL		✓
SharePoint Server Subscription Edition Base CAL	✓	✓
SharePoint Server Subscription Edition Additive CAL		✓
Microsoft Audit and Control Management Server 2013 Base CAL		✓
Skype for Business Server 2019 Base CAL	✓	✓
Skype for Business Server 2019 Additive CAL		✓
Windows Server 2025 Standard Base CAL	✓	✓
Windows Server 2025 Standard Additive CAL (RMS)		✓
Windows Server 2025 Datacenter Base CAL	✓	✓
Windows Server 2025 Datacenter Additive CAL (RMS)		✓
Windows MultiPoint Server 2016 Premium Base CAL (Academic only)	✓	✓
Windows MultiPoint Server 2016 Premium Additive CAL (RMS) (Academic only)		✓
Advanced Threat Analytics 2016 ML		✓
Microsoft Endpoint Configuration Manager ML	✓	✓
System Center Endpoint Protection 1606 ML	✓	✓

Frequently asked questions

1. What server editions do CAL suites provide access to? For instance, does the Enterprise CAL Suite provide access to Exchange Server Standard Edition or Exchange Server Enterprise Edition?

The Enterprise CAL Suite and Core CAL Suite licenses, like other CALs, work with any server edition that requires a CAL. These licenses grant access to both Exchange Server Standard Edition and Exchange Server Enterprise Edition.

2. Do CALs include Microsoft Server licenses?

No. CALs only grant the right to access server software. You must license the server software separately.

3. Are downgrade rights provided for the equivalent components of the Core CAL Suite and Enterprise CAL Suite?

Yes. Unlike use rights for most product suites, the use rights for the Core CAL Suite and Enterprise CAL Suite are designed to permit individual components to be downgraded. The downgrade rights for the components of the Core CAL Suite and Enterprise CAL Suite are aligned with those of the individual components. For instance, with an Enterprise CAL Suite license, Exchange Server 2016 may be accessed.

4. Can I license the Enterprise CAL Suite's components individually?

Yes. Enterprise CAL Suite components are available for individual purchase.

5. Does the Enterprise CAL Suite include rights to access Microsoft SQL Server?

No. You must acquire SQL Server CALs separately.

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Publication date: April 2025