



# Microsoft 365 for Education updates

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## Office 365 A1 Plus Retirement

### Frequently Asked Questions

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# QUESTIONS



## Office 365 A1 Plus Retirement – General

### Which Office 365 subscription is retiring?

On August 1, 2024, Microsoft will retire the Office 365 A1 Plus program, a free Office subscription that includes Office desktop apps for qualified schools that purchased Office institution-wide for faculty and staff. This program was introduced in 2015 to ease the provisioning burden for IT of moving users to the cloud. While the intent was to help schools with their transition, it also introduced a level of complexity leading to compliance issues for our customers, with many inadvertently becoming non-compliant. Today, Microsoft 365 A3 and A5 licenses are easier to provision, both addressing our customer requirements and the need for a transitional program. All existing Office 365 A1 Plus licenses will expire as of August 1, 2024.

### Why is Microsoft retiring Office 365 A1 Plus?

Microsoft Office 365 A1 Plus program was introduced in 2015 to ease the provisioning burden for IT of moving users to the Cloud. While the intent was to help education customers with their transition, it also introduced a level of complexity leading to compliance issues for our customers, with many inadvertently becoming non-compliant. Today, Microsoft 365 A3 and Microsoft 365 A5 licenses are easier to provision, both addressing customer requirements and eliminating the need for a transitional program. As a result, all existing Office 365 A1 Plus licenses will expire as of August 1, 2024.

### Is Microsoft still offering Office 365 self-sign up for students and faculty?

Yes, if a school has an Office 365 A1 subscription, then students and faculty can go to our website ([Free Microsoft Office 365 for Schools & Students | Microsoft Education](#)) to sign up for Office 365 A1 licenses at no cost. If the school does not already have an Office 365 A1 subscription, the IT Admin can acquire one through the Microsoft 365 Admin Center (MAC). Once the subscription has been acquired, IT Admins can assign the Office 365 A1 licenses through the MAC or students and faculty can use the self-sign up to get the license assigned themselves.

### How can I see how many Office 365 A1 Plus users I have?

You can check to see how many Office 365 A1 Plus Licenses you have assigned in the Microsoft 365 Admin portal as following:

1. Navigate to the Microsoft 365 Admin Portal <https://admin.microsoft.com>
2. On the left-hand navigation menu, go to **Billing > Your Products**
3. Look for **Office 365 A1 Plus for Faculty** and **Office 365 A1 Plus for Student** assigned licenses

Alternatively, you can use PowerShell to run a report:

1. Run a Report for Microsoft 365 Users with Office 365 A1 Plus Licenses Assigned
2. Open PowerShell
3. Run the cmd: **Connect-MsolService**
4. Run the cmd: **Get-MsolUser -All | Where-Object {(\$\_.licenses).AccountSkuld -match "STANDARDWOFFPACK\_IW"} | select userprincipalname | export-csv C:\temp\A1\_users.csv -notype**
5. Open the CSV File Export and filter Column B to users with just STANDARDWOFFPACK\_IW\_FACULTY or STANDARDWOFFPACK\_IW\_STUDENT
6. The filtered user list in Column B step 4 is the Office 365 A1 Plus user list who must be updated to another SKU. Any of these users not updated by IT admins will be auto migrated to an Office 365 A1 subscription on August 1, 2024

## What actions do I take if I have Office 365 A1 Plus users and already have paid licenses?

The following chart provides the scenarios for what IT needs to do to migrate users and the corresponding impact on the end users.

Customer Has	Scenario Description	IT Action	End User Experience
A1 Plus User assigned paid A3/5 license	A1 Plus user assigned dual paid license (A1 + /A3, A5)	<b>No Action:</b> User defaults to A3/5 when A1 Plus goes away (Admin can choose to remove A1 Plus or take no action)	<b>No end-user impact (A3/5)</b>
A1 Plus Covered by A3/5 licenses	A1 Plus user with available A3/A5 provisioned licenses	<b>Migrate to existing:</b> Admin needs to take an action to move the users via Group Based Licensing or PowerShell	<b>No end-user impact (A3/5)</b>
A1 Plus Entitled to paid/Student Use Benefit	A1 Plus user eligible for A3/A5, but license is not provisioned in their tenant	<b>Acquire eligible licenses:</b> Admin needs to acquire eligible / entitled SUB licenses to provision and assign to end users	<b>No end-user impact (A3/5)</b>
A1 Plus Assigned A1 free license	A1 Plus user assigned dual A1 license (A1 + /A1)	<b>Communicate to end users:</b> User defaults to A1 when A1 Plus goes away. IT needs to communicate guidance to end users on impact and changes to expect	<b>Downgraded to A1</b> – end user can no longer use the desktop apps, but will be able to use online web apps in Office 365 A1
A1 Plus Uncovered by another license	A1 Plus with no additional licenses assigned or available	<b>Acquire paid licenses OR transition to A1:</b> Admin needs to acquire paid licenses, then move the users OR they will be automatically moved to Office 365 A1 free SKU on Aug 1, 2024. IT will need to take an action to communicate the changes to end users	<b>No end-user impact (A3/5)</b> <b>Downgraded to A1</b> – end user can no longer use the desktop apps, but will be able to use online web apps in Office 365 A1

## What options do I have for my Office 365 A1 Plus users?

We recommend the following SKUs (download the [Microsoft 365 Education infographic](#) to see what version is best for your school):

- **Office 365 A1:** Free online Office productivity and learning tools. Includes online web versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Microsoft Teams, and additional classroom tools.
- **Microsoft 365 A3:** A comprehensive platform for learning and work with integrated security and management. A3 includes premium tools for learning and skill building, increased security, AI-infused productivity tools, and device controls for management and student safety.
- **Microsoft 365 A5:** Microsoft 365 A5 provides the most comprehensive platform for teaching, learning, and work on the market including a suite of integrated security products, combining best in class solutions. Microsoft 365 A5 is for institutions who want a single productivity, communications and collaboration platform for work and learning with the most advanced security. Microsoft 365 A5 provides a unified enterprise defense suite that natively coordinates and automates detection, prevention, investigation, and response across endpoints, identities, email, and applications for integrated protection on devices and platforms. It also provides advanced compliance capabilities, powerful analytics tools, audio conferencing and calling all in one platform.
- For customers who have additional light users or want to use desktop apps, there is an option to purchase the Office desktop apps add-on or Office 365 A3 licenses.

*Note: all of the subscriptions mentioned above will offer at least the same feature set as Office 365 A1 Plus with the exception of Office 365 A1, which does not include the desktop apps. However, it does include the online web versions.*

## Will my users lose their data or files when Office 365 A1 Plus is retired?

No, users will not lose any data when Office 365 A1 Plus retires. If IT takes no action, Office 365 A1 Plus users will be automatically downgraded to Office 365 A1. The user experience will change as they will no longer have access to the desktop apps but will instead have the online Office web apps for use. For example, Outlook desktop will no longer work, however, users can get all the same mail at Outlook on the web which provides a browser-based way to access your Microsoft Outlook email account from a web browser. It allows you to keep your email, calendar, and contacts right at your fingertips.

## Do I need to purchase new licenses for all my Office 365 A1 Plus users?

No, you can mix Microsoft 365 A3 and A5 licenses with free Office 365 A1 licenses - for example casual staff may need web-only functionality. Students may be eligible for free licenses through the [Student Use Benefit](#). However, if you are on an EES agreement, you will still need to cover all your Education Qualified Users\* (EQUs) with a paid platform product. (\*Education Qualified User means an employee or contractor who accesses or uses an Education Platform Product for the benefit of the Institution.)

## Can Microsoft just migrate my users to new licenses for me?

No, because stepping up from your current Office 365 A1 Plus to a Microsoft 365 A3 license can involve you fine-tuning the services you need. However, there are group-based licensing tools that schools can leverage to transition to the new license.

## What happens if I do nothing (don't act)?

On the transition date (Aug 1, 2024), Office 365 A1 Plus licenses will expire. If you do nothing, Office 365 A1 Plus users will automatically be transitioned to Office 365 A1. However, Microsoft recommends transitioning users earlier and providing them with [guidance](#) on what to expect if they are downgrading to Office 365 A1. We are providing twelve months to transition so users can become accustomed to using the new web-based tools.

IT admins should uninstall the client applications to ensure there is less confusion for the users. Get the [Office 365 A1 end user guidance](#) to customize and send to your users.

## Will my costs increase?

Schools qualified for Office 365 A1 Plus when they licensed Office institution-wide for faculty and staff through Enrollment for Education Solutions (EES), Open Value Subscription Education Solutions (OVS-ES), Cloud Solution Provider (CSP), or a school contract. Most schools have enough paid licenses to cover their Office 365 A1 plus users and provision those licenses. In the case that a school is non-compliant, the school may need to purchase additional licenses to cover faculty and staff or to ensure the 1:40 faculty/student ratio to be eligible for Student Use Benefits.

## What if I need more time transition or to budget for the increased cost?

We are giving schools a full year (until August 2024) to migrate users before Office 365 A1 Plus licenses will expire. For help with the transition, we recommend schools reach out to your partner of record for assistance.

## I've been using Office 365 A1 Plus for my casual staff/light users. Can I continue doing this?

No, Office 365 A1 Plus will retire on August 1, 2024. For customers who have additional light users or want to use enterprise desktop apps, there is an Office desktop apps add-on SKU, Microsoft 365 Apps for Enterprise, or you can purchase Office 365 A3 licenses. Alternatively, these users can use Office 365 A1 at no cost, which offers similar functionality with the exception of the desktop apps.



## Office 365 A1 Plus Retirement – Program-Specific

### Can I continue to use the Student Use Benefit (SUB)?

There are no changes to the Student Use Benefit (SUB) at this time. The SUB is a program that entitles Students to free copies of software after paid versions of qualified products are purchased for faculty. The qualifying products and quantity of free student licenses vary by program. Learn more: [Student Use Benefits and Academic Programs](#).

### Will this change impact my Enrollment for Education Solutions (EES) contract?

No. The Office 365 A1 Plus licenses are not tied to your EES contract. However, if you would like to make any changes to the type and quantity of licenses that you purchase, you will need to make sure that you still meet the minimum requirements for EES. Please review the [EES Licensing Guide](#) for more details.

### Our school purchases on-premises Office software through Open Value Subscription Education Solutions (OVS-ES) and our faculty and students use Office 365 A1 Plus. How can we get the same services after Office 365 A1 Plus is retired?

When Office 365 A1 Plus is retired, Microsoft recommends Microsoft 365 A3 or A5 subscriptions which provide 50GB or 100GB of free storage per paid user respectively. Schools can deploy Student Use Benefits (SUB) to their students. Schools will still have access to Office 365 A1 for free, which provides the online web version of our Office 365 Apps (Compare web and desktop versions of Outlook on [this site](#). For a complete side-by-side comparison of the web versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, use [this link](#).). To maintain the same desktop app services and features schools can also consider purchasing Microsoft 365 Apps for Enterprise or Office 365 A3.



## Office 365 A1 Plus Retirement – Transition to Office 365 A1 (free)

### What do I need to do if I want to stay on a free offering?

To remain on a free offering from Microsoft, we recommend that schools migrate users from Office 365 A1 Plus to free Office 365 A1 and delete all Office 365 A1 Plus licenses. IT will need to provide [guidance](#) to end users about the change in experience and what they need to do to access the online web apps.



## Does Office 365 A1 come with storage?

Office 365 A1 is a free SKU that does not add to the pooled storage allotment but does consume from pooled storage. Microsoft has set a maximum limit of 100GB for free Office 365 A1 users beginning in February 2024. Free Office 365 A1 users consume against the total pooled storage for a tenant and IT Admins have the flexibility to set a lower limit to better manage pooled storage across users. See the [FAQ for storage](#) for additional information.

## How will using Office 365 A1 impact my user experience?

The feature comparison between Office 365 A1 Plus and Office 365 A1 is now very similar, except that Office 365 A1 includes the Office online web apps instead of the desktop apps. Compare web and desktop versions of Outlook on [this site](#). For a complete side-by-side comparison of the web versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, use [this link](#).

## How do end users access their Microsoft 365 web apps when Office 365 A1 plus goes away?

Open Microsoft Edge or the browser of your choice, navigate to Office.com, sign in and select the apps you want to use. Microsoft has guidance you can customize with your school's branding to provide your students and faculty. Get the end user [guidance](#).

## Why should I consider upgrading/moving to a paid license?

There are many benefits to moving to Microsoft 365 A3 or A5. To learn more about the subscription options, get the [Microsoft 365 for Education infographic](#).



## Office 365 A1 Plus Retirement – Migrate Users to Paid Licenses

### I'm already paying for Office licenses for some or all users, why do I need to migrate these users to another license?

Many schools paid for Microsoft 365 A3 or A5 licenses but chose to use Office 365 A1 Plus out of convenience. Some Office 365 A1 Plus users will have both an Office 365 A1 Plus license assigned to them *and* a Microsoft 365 A3 or A5 license assigned. When Office 365 A1 Plus is retired, these users will not have any changes to their experience, and the IT Admin does not need to take an action.

However, some schools paid for Microsoft 365 A3 and A5, but never assigned them to users or provisioned them. The IT Admin will need to take action to assign these paid Microsoft 365 A3 and A5 licenses to their Office 365 A1 Plus users. If they don't act, these users will no longer be able to access the Office 365 desktop apps, however, they will still be able to use the online version of these apps through a free Office 365 A1 license.

## How can I manage this migration?

Group Based Licensing (GBL) is the best way to manage this for paid subscriptions. GBL is available in the following subscriptions: Microsoft 365 A3 and MA5. [Learn more](#)

Requires:

- Azure Active Directory Premium 1 (AADP1) – Included within Microsoft 365 A3 and A5
- Choose an AAD Security Group and Assign a license
- Each user's license dynamically updates based on the AAD Group membership

There are several other tools available in Microsoft 365 for migrating Office 365 A1 Plus users to other licenses:

User Management in Microsoft 365 Admin Portal (best for small numbers of users)

- Filter to Office 365 A1 Plus Users
- Multi-select and assign up to 40 licenses at once
- Update License per user

PowerShell

- Update all users with Office 365 A1 Plus
- Where statement to filter by attribute
- For each loop to update users in a group
- [Assign Microsoft 365 licenses to user accounts with PowerShell](#)

## What will happen to my files / data if I move over to Microsoft 365 A3 or A5?

Nothing – the user accounts will remain unchanged.

## Do my allotments for Microsoft 365 A3 and A5 licenses span multiple tenants?

A license is only valid within the tenant it's purchased for and can only be assigned to the users within that tenant.



## Office 365 A1 Plus Retirement – Purchase New Licenses

### Who do I speak to about procuring new or additional licenses?

Microsoft has multiple routes to market for software licensing. We have LSP partners and CSP partners, both of whom can help you with licenses.

Visit [https://aka.ms/O365\\_A1plusretirement](https://aka.ms/O365_A1plusretirement) to learn more