

VISUAL STUDIO SUBSCRIPTIONS ADMIN HANDBOOK

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Editor's note

This guide is designed to help you get started managing subscriptions quickly, while providing a clear explanation of what's in a Visual Studio subscription and why assigning subscriptions is important to your role. It also includes a comprehensive list of resources and support tools in one place to help you do what you need to do.

Visual Studio Subscriptions Admin Handbook

Assigning Visual Studio Subscriptions

Quick start – Getting set up

This section is intended to help you get signed in and quickly begin managing Visual Studio subscriptions in four short steps. There are additional resources available in the helpful links section.

1 Go to the Visual Studio subscriptions administration page at: <https://aka.ms/VSSAdmin>, choose “Admin portal sign-in” and sign in.

2 Bookmark <https://manage.visualstudio.com> for future use to take you directly to the portal.

If you can't sign in, a super admin on your agreement will be able to add you. For information about being added, check out the FAQ section on the Visual Studio subscriptions administration page referenced above.

3 Once in the portal, you will be able to see available and assigned Visual Studio subscriptions for your organization's agreement(s). Portal functionalities depend upon your role, but all roles can:

- Add, edit and delete individual users
- Add or edit multiple subscriptions using a simple Excel template
- Assign Visual Studio subscriptions using Microsoft Entra groups (available for organizations with Enterprise agreements). Read more at: <https://aka.ms/VSSadmin/assignmulti>
- View reporting about Visual Studio subscription assignments and track maximum assignment levels

4 To take a tour of the portal, check out the videos for using the admin portal on the Visual Studio subscriptions administration page at: <https://aka.ms/VSSAdmin>.

You can also read about all the functionalities in our admin docs: <https://aka.ms/AssignVSS>

In addition to assigning Visual Studio subscriptions, super admins have more responsibilities and control over what happens in the Visual Studio Subscriptions Administration Portal. They can:

- Assign other super admins or admins
- Set agreement-level preferences to auto-populate Visual Studio subscription assignment information such as subscription level, external employee access, download access, etc. Read more about how to do this at: <https://aka.ms/VSSAdminPrefs>

To watch how to onboard as a super admin, check out the video for new admins on the Visual Studio subscriptions administration page referenced above. You can also read about it in our admin docs: <https://aka.ms/VSSAdminOnboarding>

Why should I assign Visual Studio subscriptions?

- **Improve productivity** – the benefits and services included in Visual Studio subscriptions provide a comprehensive set of resources to help your developers work faster, smarter and deploy efficiently
- **Foster developer growth** – the technical and professional training included in a subscription enables your developers to learn while Azure dev/test individual credits help them explore and experiment with using Azure
- **Realize your org's investment** – ensure your organization gets the most value out of their investment by assigning Visual Studio subscriptions

Visual Studio helps your developers write code quickly, collaborate, and analyze, test, and deploy their applications. But there is so much more included in a Visual Studio subscription that doesn't come with the Visual Studio license. This guide will explain all the different benefits included in detail.

Why is my role important?

Although your developers may use Visual Studio as a standalone license in your organization, without you to assign subscriptions to them, they won't have access to all the benefits that are available. By assigning a subscription, you're unlocking services and benefits for your developers, allowing them to accelerate their growth, be more productive, and stay up to date with emerging trends and technologies.

Visual Studio subscriptions include so much more beyond the IDE to support developers.”



What's in a subscription?

When people hear the name Visual Studio, they usually think of the Integrated Development Environment, or IDE. But Visual Studio subscriptions include so much more beyond the IDE to support developers.

- **Tools** – Powerful software that enables developers to innovate
- **Azure** – An opportunity to learn and explore cloud possibilities
- **Software Downloads** – Access to thousands of software downloads for development and test
- **Services** – Access to apps and services that support different unique developer scenarios
- **Training** – Resources to help developers improve their technical and professional skills
- **Support** – Help resolving any technical issues along the way

We'll go more in-depth for each of the benefits in the following pages. Depending on which Visual Studio subscription your subscribers have, not all benefits are included. This handbook shares what is in the Visual Studio Enterprise Subscription with GitHub Enterprise because it's the most comprehensive subscription available. But for a comparison of what's included in the other Visual Studio subscription levels, visit the benefits page at: <https://aka.ms/VSSBenefits>

Visual Studio

Visual Studio subscriptions ensure that your developers always have access to the latest version of Visual Studio on PC and Mac, in addition to all the previous versions.

Visual Studio Enterprise and Visual Studio Enterprise for Mac are the tools your developers can use to build applications. Visual Studio is an integrated, end-to-end solution for teams of any size with demanding quality and scale needs. In addition to writing code, Visual Studio enables them to analyze, debug, test, collaborate and deploy.

They can increase their productivity with IntelliTest, Live Unit Testing, and Live Dependency Validation which helps them deliver code with quality, accuracy and speed. This enables them to spend more time writing code by infusing code quality right from the first line.

IntelliTrace, Snapshot Debugger, Code Map, Xamarin Profiler and Xamarin Inspector help your developers understand the root cause of issues quickly. They can fix bugs faster with these advanced debugging and diagnostic tools whether they are working on desktop, web, cloud, or mobile apps.

Visual Studio is cloud-connected helping your developers stay up-to-date and in the know, and more efficiently with built-in and downloaded features. It also enables them to collaborate seamlessly without leaving the development environment with Visual Studio Live Share. Live Share enables your developers to collaboratively edit and debug code in real-time with anyone using their favorite tools. Pair programming, code reviews, and more are made easy with shared servers, terminals, diffs, and comments.

Azure dev/test individual credits

Developers get up to \$150 in dev/test individual credits to use to learn and experiment in Azure. This means they can try running virtual machines, storing data, and developing serverless apps in the cloud with Azure. There's no credit card required, so as an admin, you don't have to worry about unexpected charges going to your purchasing department. When your Visual Studio subscribers reach the monthly cap for their credits, their Azure services will stop until their next monthly credits are added. If you choose to, you can remove the spending cap by adding a credit card.

The \$150 limit resets automatically each month while their Visual Studio subscription is active, so you don't need to do anything to make sure that they get their credits.

Curious to find out how far your subscribers' \$150 will stretch in Azure? There are several different scenarios on our Azure for Visual Studio subscriptions webpage. For each scenario, the pricing calculator auto-populates the cost so your subscribers know exactly how far their credits will go.

To see for yourself, just visit our Azure for Visual Studio subscribers webpage at: <https://aka.ms/VSSAzureScenarios>. Click on "See product and pricing details" for any of the scenarios and scroll to the bottom to see your estimate.

Azure Dev/test Pricing

Your Visual Studio subscribers are eligible to receive discounted rates on Azure to support their ongoing development and testing. They also receive cloud use rights of their subscription software on Azure to help their Azure credits go farther. There are a few dev/test pricing options available depending on your organization.

Enterprise Dev/test

If your organization has an Enterprise agreement with an Azure subscription, you can get discounted pricing on Azure through our Enterprise Dev/test offer. This is a specific Azure subscription type created in your Azure enrollment portal that automatically provides the Azure discounted rates.

Pay-As-You-Go Dev/test

If your organization doesn't have an Azure Enterprise agreement, this is a great way to get discounted Azure Dev/test pricing. You can set this up through your Azure account with credit card billing (invoicing is also available).

The Enterprise Dev/test offer and the Pay-As-You-Go Dev/test offer are designed to meet the non-production needs of teams with Visual Studio subscribers. Your organization essentially receives a discount on Azure for Microsoft products. These offers allow your developers to quickly get their teams up and running with dev/test environments in the cloud using pre-configured virtual machines, including Windows 10, and low rates on Windows Virtual Machines, Cloud Services, SQL Database, HDInsight, App Service and Logic Apps. With Azure you have the added benefits of providing cost allocation to your users, and either to provided isolated environments and subscriptions with separate bills and cost centers, or to simply charge back based on usage.

This offer is targeted at your software developers, and all those involved in the software lifecycle, from admins to end users, and the entitlement stems from their current Visual Studio subscription. Similar to on-prem MSDN, use rights extend to end users for additional usage and testing purposes, and those users do not need additional Visual Studio subscriptions. Your organization will just pay the Linux rate for VMs they run, even those VMs with SQL Server, SharePoint Server, or other software that is normally billed at a higher rate. They can upload their own custom virtual machine images or use one of our pre-configured images from the Azure Gallery. They can also leverage Windows Virtual Desktop to quickly deploy and manage hundreds of VMs for development and testing purposes.

For more details about the offers and how to set them up, visit:

<https://aka.ms/devtestPR>

DevOps

Azure DevOps

Azure DevOps provides developer services to help teams plan work, collaborate on code development, and build and deploy applications. Developers can work in the cloud using Azure DevOps Services or on-premises using Azure DevOps Server. Your subscribers can plan, build, and ship any app, for any platform. They can also use all the Azure DevOps services, including Azure Pipelines, Azure Boards, Azure Repos, Azure Test Plans and Azure Artifacts.

Details about Azure DevOps services and what they can do for your developers are as follows:

- Azure Repos provides Git repositories or Team Foundation Version Control (TFVC) for source control of their code
- Azure Pipelines provides build and release services to support continuous integration and delivery of their apps
- Azure Boards deliver a suite of Agile tools to support planning and tracking work, code defects, and issues using Kanban and Scrum methods
- Azure Test Plans provide several tools to test their apps, including manual/exploratory testing and continuous testing
- Azure Artifacts allow teams to share Maven, npm, and NuGet packages from public and private sources and integrate package sharing into your CI/CD pipelines

GitHub Enterprise

GitHub Enterprise allows your developers to securely bring open source code, community, and best practices to their enterprise projects. It offers flexible security, compliance, and deployment controls making it easy for your team to use GitHub Enterprise wherever they need it.

Your developers can get started faster and easier with built-in GitHub extensions in Visual Studio. GitHub also has native integrations with Azure DevOps allowing your developers to plan smarter and ship faster using collaborative workflows and a set of modern dev services. They can associate bugs and tasks to the code to know when a bug fix is going out in a release, all within Visual Studio. Developers can quickly clone their code from an online repo on GitHub, Azure DevOps, or elsewhere. They can create repositories and manage Git through changes and committed code in the IDE.

Software and downloads

Unlike the standalone Visual Studio product, Visual Studio subscriptions offer your developers the ability to access more than a thousand Microsoft software downloads to use for dev/test purposes. This will give them the opportunity to test their builds, code and more against a huge array of existing software.

The software includes current and past versions of Windows operating systems, servers such as Windows Server, Microsoft SQL Server, R Server, SharePoint, Exchange, Dynamics and more.

Visual Studio Enterprise subscribers also have production use rights for Office 365 ProPlus and Office Professional Plus 2019. Download this Excel file for a full list of downloads: <https://aka.ms/VSSsoftware>

Services

Your developers receive a range of services to help them in their daily work. As long as you've assigned a Visual Studio subscription to your developers, they just need to sign in to the portal at <https://my.visualstudio.com> and activate any of these services to get started. For information on activating Visual Studio subscription benefits, check out <https://aka.ms/VSSDocs>.

Microsoft 365 Developer subscription (E5) – EMS and O365 combined

The Microsoft 365 E5 developer subscription includes an admin plus 24 user licenses for developers to use to build solutions. Your Visual Studio subscribers can develop with Microsoft Graph, SharePoint, Teams, Azure AD, Excel and Outlook.

It also offers expanded access to critical Microsoft 365 workloads and capabilities. Developers with Microsoft 365 E5 sandbox subscriptions can take advantage of:

- Advanced analytics with Power BI
- Enterprise Mobility + Security (EMS) for compliance and information protection
- Office 365 Advanced Threat Protection
- Microsoft Entra for building advanced identity and access management solutions

PowerBI Pro – Analytics for every org

Your developers can connect to all their data (including streaming sources) and transform it into rich, interactive visualizations. They can share dashboards and collaborate with colleagues to easily track KPIs and make data-driven decisions.

Visual Studio App Center – App lifecycle management

Your developers can build, test, deploy and monitor their iOS, Android, Windows and macOS apps. They can ship higher-quality apps faster and with more confidence.

This service allows them to automate the lifecycle of their apps. They can connect to their repo and within minutes build in the cloud, test on thousands of real devices, distribute to beta testers and app stores, and monitor real-world usage with crash and analytics data—all in one place.

Windows Developer Account

This service lets your Visual Studio subscribers submit free and paid apps for all Windows devices to the Windows Store.

WhiteSource Bolt

This helps your developers find and fix open source vulnerabilities and generate comprehensive inventory and license reports of all open source components in their builds.

Training

Developers can take advantage of several training offers to improve their skills and stay up to date on the newest technologies. The various offers provide customized training for specific use-case scenarios and allow your Visual Studio subscribers to learn skills that will help them take their development projects to the next level.

They can access the Visual Studio subscription portal at <https://my.visualstudio.com> to activate the training benefits included with their subscription level, and immediately begin taking courses.

Pluralsight – Cloud, design, security, mobile and data

Advance your subscribers' skills with courses from the Pluralsight catalog. Get expert-authored courses, learning paths, adaptive skill measurement and more.

LinkedIn Learning – Business, technology and creative training

Unlock the power of LinkedIn with access to the people, insights, and skills your developers need to advance their careers.

DataCamp – Data science and AI

DataCamp helps companies and individual learners make better use of data. Your subscribers can build data fluency online while learning from the world's top data scientists.

CODE Magazine

The leading independent software development magazine covers dev technologies across all platforms, and your subscribers can receive it at no charge.

Support

Even seasoned developers need help and support. Your subscribers have several support options available to help them on their development journey when they come up against tough scenarios.

Technical Support

Depending on which Visual Studio subscription your developer has, they will receive up to four Microsoft technical support incidents. These provide help to your subscribers to resolve break-fix issues in non-production environments.

Concierge Chat – 24/7 support

Your subscribers can chat with us for assistance finding technical documentation and product information or using their subscription benefits.

Admin Best Practices

Below are some recommendations to ensure you and your organization are set up for success.

- Be sure to opt-in to the Visual Studio subscriptions admin newsletters to ensure you know when there are new features and changes impacting your role as an admin. Manage your preferences and assignment settings at: <https://aka.ms/VSSAdminProfile> and make sure you check the box for Visual Studio subscriptions.
- If you're a super admin, make sure you have more than one super admin for your organization. This way if you're out of the office, you always have a back-up person to add admins and subscribers. Super admins can manage admins and subscriptions, while admins can only manage subscriptions.
- Encourage your subscribers to take advantage of the benefits included with their Visual Studio subscriptions by activating them and using them. Remind them to opt-in to the subscriber newsletters for product and benefit updates.
- Periodically check the Visual Studio subscriptions admin webpage, as well as the Visual Studio Subscriptions Admin Portal to make sure you don't miss out on any changes or news.

Support tools in one place to help you do what you need to do



Helpful links

For admins:

- Visual Studio subscriptions admin webpage at: **<https://aka.ms/VSSAdmin>**
This page gives you an overview of why you should assign subscriptions, videos showing how to assign subscriptions, an extensive FAQ section to help answer questions as well as updates.
- Visual Studio Subscriptions Admin Portal: **<https://manage.visualstudio.com>**
This is the direct link to sign in to manage subscriptions.
- How-to video playlist for Visual Studio subscriptions admins: **<https://aka.ms/VSSAdminVideos>**
- How-to documentation for Visual Studio subscriptions admins: **<https://aka.ms/VSSAdminDocs>**
- Visual Studio subscriptions support for admins: **<https://aka.ms/VSSAdminSupport>**

For subscribers:

- Visual Studio subscriber portal: **<https://my.visualstudio.com>**
This is the direct link for subscribers to sign into their subscriptions.
- Azure for Visual Studio subscribers: **<https://aka.ms/AzureForVSS>**
This encourages Visual Studio subscribers to use their Azure dev/test individual credits and shows ways to use them and pricing so that they can see how far their credits will go.

About subscriptions:

- Visual Studio subscriptions: **<https://aka.ms/VSSubs>**
This is the general Visual Studio subscriptions overview page.
- Visual Studio Licensing and usage: **<https://aka.ms/VSLicensing>**
This pdf provides information about licensing usage rights and scenarios for Visual Studio subscriptions.
- Visual Studio subscriptions benefit comparison page: **<https://aka.ms/VSSBenefits>**
You can choose a Visual Studio subscription on this page to see what benefits are included in it, along with a short explanation.
- Visual Studio subscriptions pricing page: **<https://aka.ms/VSSPricing>**
This compares all different Visual Studio subscriptions and offers pricing information.