

Frequently Asked Questions on Microsoft Office 365

Q: What is Office 365?

A: Office 365 is a flexible, subscription-based solution from Microsoft that includes many cloud-based features such as document, screen, and calendar sharing, plus cloud storage, kiosk access (on certain applications), and multi-user collaboration. An Office 365 subscription is completely customizable with virtually limitless options, and a standard configuration will also include access to the Microsoft Office 2013 or 2016 Suite of programs.

Q: What is the primary difference between the Office Suite I can get via Office 365, and the Retail version?

A: In the same sense that you can choose to rent or buy a car, that option also exists for software. Typical retail-boxed versions of Office will contain a disc to install from, and you pay the entire license cost up front to own that particular version year of the software forever. The versions obtained through Office 365 are entirely subscription based, meaning that you not only get to decide how long the subscription lasts, you will also have the option to be upgraded to any newer version when it becomes available, so long as you continue to be a subscriber. There are many different packages, rates, and durations, but when they expire, so then does your access to all of the programs and features. Please note that Office 2016 is not available in a retail boxed version with an install CD/DVD, however you can still purchase a “PC Key Card” allowing you to download just the Office software itself and own a single user copy of the software that never expires and does not require a subscription.

Q: Is Office 365 the predecessor to Office 2013?

A: The short answer is no. Think of Office 365 as a companion program to Office 2013 or 2016 that contains features above and beyond the individual capabilities of the Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Access (or any other core programs that may come with a particular subscription model).

Q: Is the Office 2013 Suite I can obtain with an Office 365 subscription compatible with Certiport’s Console 8 software for the delivery of Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) 2013 or 2016 exams?

A: Yes, however certain Office applications are also available in “Office Online” which is a SaaS (software as a service) product that comes with most Office 365 subscriptions along with the locally installed versions. Office Online allows you to run the applications within a browser but are never installed on your local hard drive. Certiport’s Console 8 software is only compatible with the locally installed, or “Click-to-Run” versions, because our MOS examinations are “Live-in-the-Application”, which means they require access to a locally installed version. As of November 2014, all versions that you install locally via an Office 365 subscription are the “Click-to-Run” versions and therefore compatible with Console 8, as long as there is only one version year of those Office programs installed on the computer. See our full [Technical Requirements page](#).

Q: What exactly does “Click-to-run” mean?

A: Click-to-run is Microsoft’s description of how a typical piece of large software purchased online will behave. Since the download size of Office is significant, Microsoft has prioritized the download to install the front-end program files first, so that you can actually start using the basic features of the Office Suite long before the entire program has finished downloading and installing.

Q: Was Office 2010 ever available via an Office 365 subscription?

A: No. Although the service has progressed with its offerings over time, the software service began with Office 2013 and saw its first ever update to the Windows-based Suite back on September 22nd, 2015 with the introduction of Office 2016. The Office 2016 software suite is now fully available from an Office 365 subscription.

Q: What will happen to our Office 2013 software when Office 2016 is released?

A: *This depends on your local or group policy settings. You can configure Office 365 to automatically update, or it can be configured with Group Policies and set to automatically update via the Office Deployment Tool (with the Enterprise versions of the software). In either case, this setting must be turned off individually or globally in order to avoid updating to Office 2016 if you are testing MOS 2013, as it will disrupt your exam delivery.*

Q: Why will upgrading to Office 2016 disrupt our MOS 2013 exam delivery?

A: *Because the MOS 2013 exams delivered via Console 8 rely on the locally installed version of the software. If, for example, you launch a MOS Word 2013 exam and it can no longer locate the files because Word 2016 has replaced it, Console 8 will not function as designed.*

Q: If we accidentally upgrade to 2016, can we rollback to Office 2013?

A: *Yes. However, the installed Office 2016 software will replace and not append the Office 2013 software, as you cannot have side-by-side versions of Office obtained via 365 on the same computer at the same time. So in order to accomplish this, you would need to uninstall Office 2016 completely, and then using your Product Key, download and install Office 2013 in the same manner your CATC obtained the software originally. (Note: This will only be an option as long as Microsoft supports Office 2013 via the subscription model.) Best practices and version availability for this are subject to change, please refer to [Microsoft support articles](#) or contact them directly for more information.*

Q: What if our previous version was not via the subscription, could we then have two versions of Office?

A: *This is technically possible but still not supported. If you had the retail-box or download key version of Office installed, and then installed another retail-box/download key version, or a single locally installed version of Office obtained via Office 365, you could end up having multiple versions of the software installed side-by-side on the same computer. This is not supported by Certiport in a Live-in-the-Application environment however because the software was designed to look for a single version, and multiple program files and registry keys muddy these waters. Ensure that you clean up any old versions of Office that may be installed so that only the software matching the MOS exams you wish to administer is installed locally. If your CATC has need to deliver multiple versions of the MOS certifications you will need to maintain separate machines, or separate bootable/native partitions.*

Q: How long can we delay the update to Office 2016?

A: *In February 2017, Microsoft ceased to provide critical updates for Office 2013 via the subscription model. In April 2018, they ceased all mainstream support for the product. To avoid potential vulnerability and stability issues, it is recommended that you upgrade the software as soon as possible.*

Q: I went to repair Office 365 and there are two options – which one should we select?

A: *The locally installed versions of software and features obtained via Office 365 do not require an internet connection at all times. Accordingly, two options are presented to users when performing a repair: “Quick Repair” and “Online Repair”. A Quick Repair occurs locally in an attempt to fix any errors with the installation while an Online Repair effectively uninstalls and reinstalls the software without requiring deactivation and reactivation (but requires an active internet connection to perform the more thorough repair). Opt for the Quick Repair as a first choice, and then move to the Online Repair if you continue to experience issues. Should the problem persist, a full uninstall and reinstall via the product key may be necessary.*

Q: When will Certiport be releasing the Office 2016 exams?

A: *All exams have been released. Please visit our [Exam Releases Page](#) or read our newsletters for more details.*

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