



Software Assurance Benefits (SABs) updates for February 2020 FAQs

What's changing for Software Assurance (SA)?

Microsoft is updating its SABs beginning in February 2020 to ensure SA stays relevant and useful to customers. By offering a simple set of helpful benefits coordinated across software and cloud, we can better support customers as businesses gradually adapt to a cloud-based world. With this change in direction, some SABs will be retired or changed to eliminate redundancies and better align SABs across Microsoft's products and services portfolio. The changes we're making also simplify benefit redemptions and replace outdated implementation mechanisms. While each customer experience is unique, all customers can benefit from the ability to optimize their business performance through SA. The following changes will begin in February 2020:

- We're consolidating our programmatic deployment planning assistance to a single approach, increasing our investment in FastTrack as our primary means of implementation support for customers. We're **retiring Deployment Planning Services (DPS)** as an SAB.
- We're modernizing and expanding access to online and free Microsoft learning and training resources. At the same time, **training vouchers will be phased out** of SABs.
- We're adjusting **support eligibility criteria** and **changing support allocations** to replace incident-based support with as-needed support and credits toward Unified Support, which is in line with Microsoft's future support strategy.

When are the changes happening?

The changes will start in February 2020 and will gradually be implemented through January 1, 2022.

How will partners participate in these new offers?

Microsoft is making active and significant investments in the success of the partner ecosystem:

- For deployment, partners can lead their customer engagements while FastTrack supports them with access to best practices, tools, offers, and experts, facilitating a successful digital transformation journey.

If you're a deployment partner make sure you're listed at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/solution-providers/home> and help your customers use their remaining deployment planning days while determining their eligibility for FastTrack. Learn more about [FastTrack for partners](#).

- For training, we're making significant investments to increase the alignment and quality of our training offerings and certifications. Furthermore, we're developing discounted training offers for qualified partners from which customers can benefit.

If you're a training partner, make sure you know how many training days your customers have and help them develop a plan to use their remaining days before the deadline of January 1, 2022.

Outside of the new options for partners, partner sellers also have an opportunity to help customers understand the value of purchasing SA and using their SABs. SA is still valuable for customers—sell and promote the use of benefits.

What is the partner role in FastTrack?

Partners can add value by providing their services and expertise to optimize customers' cloud implementations. Microsoft FastTrack engineers can work closely with both customers and partners during a FastTrack engagement. With the purchase of an eligible subscription, customers, partners, and field staff can request assistance for FastTrack services. Additionally, partners can combine their expertise with FastTrack services to provide best-in-class solutions to their customers' plans or become a FastTrack partner to work with the customer independently. Once engaged, an approved partner works with their customer to help build a plan that drives the achievement of their business goals.

What is the partner role in the new learning offers?

We're focusing customer and partner training offerings on digital skilling, events, instructor-led training, and certifications. Customers will continue to transact with their local or preferred Learning Partners to drive customer training initiatives.

What do I tell customers who want to use their deployment planning days?

Customers and deployment planning partners will continue to use the same process to use deployment planning days.

Who do I contact if I want to know more about FastTrack?

Contact your Partner Development Manager (PDM) for more information on FastTrack.

Does anything change with the process of redeeming training days?

No. The current process remains the same and customers can continue to accrue and use their training days per the existing process.

Who do I contact if I want to know more about learning?

Contact your Partner Sales Executive (PSE) for information on new training opportunities.

Does anything change with the support process?

There is no impact to the current process for support.

What should I tell customers about the changes?

We'll have more information for customers as we make these changes, including a customer announcement via an email to the SAB Administrator on August 22.

First and foremost, SA continues to help enhance customers' licensing value and improve business agility, including the following:

- Reduce software and services costs with rights to new software releases and cost-efficient upgrades.
- Improve operational efficiency through access to unique technologies and licensing rights.
- Maintain an available and responsive IT infrastructure with around-the-clock support.

Microsoft is investing in new ways to help organizations deploy, train, and get support for the products and services they buy from us. Because those new ways overlap with some dated and underused SABs, we're retiring those benefits. Below is a summary of the changes for each benefit:

For DPS:

Microsoft is committed to your success in deploying your Microsoft workloads. We're focusing on supporting cloud deployments through the Microsoft FastTrack program, and DPS will be retired over time. Eligible customers can leverage FastTrack for Azure, Microsoft 365, and Dynamics 365 engagements.

For training vouchers:

Microsoft is fully invested in ensuring that we provide the right level of training to make you successful. We're making significant investments to increase the alignment and quality of our training offerings and certifications. Furthermore, we're working with partners to develop training offers from which customers can benefit. Training vouchers will be retired from SABs, with new investments introduced into the learning offerings over time.

For support:

Microsoft is adjusting 24x7 support eligibility criteria and changing support incident allocations. Customers will no longer earn a limited number of support incidents based on spend, agreement type, and product(s). Instead, customers with a \$250,000 USD annual SA spend will get as-needed support and credits if they choose to upgrade to Microsoft Unified Support.

Let's do great work together.

Your Microsoft Operations Team



Microsoft Confidential | © 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved

Microsoft respects your privacy. Review our online [Privacy Statement](#)

Feedback: Was this information helpful? Please provide [comments](#) to make content more useful to you.