

Microsoft SQL Server Software Licensing Information

Microsoft SQL Server software is available for purchase at steep discounts to WMU faculty, staff, and departments, for university-related activities.

There are two editions of SQL Server currently available via the WMU Microsoft SelectPlus agreement, Standard Edition, and Enterprise Edition. SQL Server Standard Edition is generally sufficient for any normal needs. Datacenter Edition is designed for use in highly available clustered environments. The vast majority of applications will not require the capacity or features of Enterprise Edition.

Licensing Models – SQL Server employs two different licensing models called *Core licensing* and *Server+CAL licensing*. Standard Edition can be licensed using either Core licensing or Server+CAL licensing. Enterprise Edition is only available with Core licensing.

Core licensing – Both Standard Edition and Datacenter Edition may be purchased with core-based licensing; that is, they are licensed based on the number of physical or virtual processor cores allocated to the OS hosting SQL Server. Core licenses are sold in pairs, and a minimum of 4 core licenses (2 pairs) must be purchased for each server or virtual machine running SQL Server. Databases licensed with Core licensing do not have any limit as to the number of users or devices accessing the database. Databases that are accessible via non-authenticated web applications must be licensed using core licensing.

Server+CAL licensing – SQL Server Standard Edition alternatively can be licensed based on the number of users who will be accessing the server. This can be particularly cost-effective for small, departmental installations, as well as for test databases. With Server+CAL licensing, you must purchase a license for the server or VM (without regard to the number of cores), plus a license for each “named user”; that is, each user who will authenticate to and access the database.

Rule of Thumb: Core vs. Server+CAL licensing – With a minimum (4-core) server installation, the cost of a Core license is approximately equivalent to a server license with 30 CALs. If you have fewer than 30 named users, it is probably more cost effective to license with the Server+CAL model.

Software Assurance – WMU purchases Microsoft SQL Server with three years of Software Assurance. Software Assurance grants the right to upgrade to the latest version of the software, as well as to downgrade to an earlier supported version. Software Assurance also grants the right to move the software to another physical machine. At the end of the third year of Software Assurance, you will need to renew Software Assurance, or you will may not upgrade or move your software.