

Below is a guide for VCF Personal Use License Access as of December 2025. For updates and support outside of this please reach out to [support@broadcom.com](mailto:support@broadcom.com)

## How to Access Personal Use Licenses Through VMUG Advantage

### Purpose

This guide explains how to obtain and maintain VMware Cloud Foundation (VCF) and vSphere Foundation (VVF) home lab licenses through the VMUG Advantage program. It is intended to assist our community by providing guidance based on resources shared by Broadcom, including official videos, blogs, and instructions, as well as our own trial and error. Please note that the processes, steps, and technical details outlined here are owned and maintained by Broadcom. At VMUG, our goal is to make these steps easier to follow, but we do not control Broadcom's underlying systems or policies.

As such:

- These instructions are subject to change at Broadcom's discretion.
- Any issues, errors, or technical support needs should be directed to [support@broadcom.com](mailto:support@broadcom.com).

# Step-by-Step Process

## Step 1: *Decide what Licenses you Want*

### VCF Full License Access, 128 Core

*vDefend 128 Core & Avi Load Balancer 12 Tokens*

- What it Requires:
  - Active VMUG Advantage Membership
  - Valid VCP-VCF Admin/Architect Certification
  - Yearly Certification Refresher Exam (<20 questions)
- What you Get:
  - 3 Year Access for Personal, Non-Production Use in your home lab environment
  - VCF 9.X Download Token
  - VCF 5.X License Keys

### vSphere Standard, 32 Core

What it Requires:

- Valid VCP-VVF Admin/Architect Certification
- Yearly Renewal (or <20 question Refresher Exam if VMUG Advantage)
- What you Get:
  - 1 Year License Access (or 3 Year Access with VMUG Advantage) for Personal, Non-Production Use in your home lab environment
  - 9.X Download Token
  - 8.X License Key

Please note that these licenses will NOT be added to your Broadcom Entitlements. You will find instructions on accessing these non-production licenses below.

## Step 2: *Sign Up for VMUG Advantage*

- Navigate to the [VMUG website](https://www.vmug.com/membership/vmug-advantage-membership/) to purchase a VMUG Advantage Membership:
- Ensure you choose a term that aligns with your needs, as a VMUG Advantage membership is required for VCF license access for up to three years, provided:
  - You have passed the VCF Certification.
  - You complete the annual 20-question refresher exam each year.

- After purchasing Advantage, you can request your \$125 VMware Certification Voucher from the VMUG store. Please allow 24-48 business hours to receive your voucher from the VMUG team before outreach.

#### **Pitfalls & Fixes:**

- **Eligibility:** If you skip this step, you are not eligible for 1) VCF license access or 2) three-year access for either VCF or VVF licenses.

### **Step 3: Take your Certification Exam**

- Register for a qualifying certification with the same email address as your VMUG/VMUG Advantage Profile:  
<https://broadcom.com/support/education/vmware/certification>
- Qualifying Certifications
  - VCP VCF Architect (128 Cores License Access)
  - VCP VCF Admin (128 Cores License Access)
  - VVF Admin (32 Cores License Access)
  - VVF Architect (32 Cores License Access)
- Use your \$125 Voucher to purchase your exam.
- Complete the exam through VMware Education portal.

#### **Pitfalls & Fixes:**

- **Matching Email Required:** Email mismatch prevents license visibility in Alpine portal. If your certification email does not match your VMUG Advantage email, update one of them:
  - Option 1: Contact VMUG support at [Advantage@vmug.com](mailto:Advantage@vmug.com) to change your Advantage email (easiest solution)
  - Option 2: Email Broadcom support to update your certification email; be sure to emphasize that you're requesting your *certification* email address to be updated rather than your general support email address.
- **Certification Exam Eligibility:** You must pass one of the above Certification Exams to be eligible for either 32 or 128 core license access; no other exams are eligible.

### **Step 4: Visit the Alpine VCP Portal**

- After passing your certification, you'll receive an email from Broadcom with a link to the Alpine portal. Visit the Alpine Portal to access your licenses:  
<https://support.broadcom.com/group/ecx/alpine-certificate>

- Login with your certification/VMUG Advantage email.
- Reload the original URL (above) to ensure you are redirected to the Alpine Portal.
- Pending you're logged in with the correct email address, you should see your available licenses in the Alpine Portal.

#### **Pitfalls & Fixes:**

- **Broken Hyperlink in Email:** Some certification emails contain a dev/test URL. If yours seems to be broken, use the correct URL above.
- **Must Manually Redirect to Alpine Portal:** If you land on the support page after login, return to the Alpine portal URL manually. Do NOT attempt to build a profile on the support page.

#### **Step 5: Request your Licenses**

- In the Alpine portal, click "Request License" for eligible products and complete order process as needed. Please note that the order cost should be \$0.
- You will receive an order confirmation email; license requests are manually processed in 1–2 business days by the Broadcom team.
- Once your licenses have been provided, you'll find that your requested products in the Alpine Portal now have a green license expiration date at the top right and two icons in the bottom right: a cloud icon (to download) and the badge icon (to get your VCF5.X license keys).

#### **Pitfalls & Fixes:**

- **Weekend Delays:** Requests made late Friday may not be processed until Monday. Please give the Broadcom team 1-2 business days to complete your request before outreach.
- **Confirm Request:** If you believe you have requested your eligible licenses but have not received them, before reaching out to the Broadcom team, confirm that their status shows "Requested." If it still says "Not Requested," please click the request button again.

#### **Step 6: Get your Download Licenses & Tokens/Keys**

- After your requested licenses have been provided, you can now download software from the Broadcom Download Center.
- Navigate to the Alpine Portal and select the badge icon in the right corner of your license; this will trigger a popup panel with your 5.X keys.

- Selecting the cloud icon will take you to the download portal; please note that this will take you to the generic Broadcom Download Page rather than to the specific product you are looking for. To find your available downloads you can:
  1. Navigate to your downloads by manually searching “VMware Cloud Foundation” or “VMware vSphere” depending on your requested license, or
  2. Use this URL to navigate to the VCF/vSphere Downloads:  
<https://support.broadcom.com/group/ecx/downloads>
- Select your download. All downloads are listed, but you are only able to download what you have been given access to.
  1. VCF 9.0.1.0, or
  2. Legacy VMware Cloud Foundation Versions 5.2.1
- In the download process, you will be asked to complete a Trade Compliance and Download Conditions form; submissions are required to continue. If you are notified that your “account verification is pending,” review the below Pitfalls & Fixes section for more information.
- If downloading VCF version 9.0.1.0
  1. Select “View Group” in VMware Cloud Foundation Installer to get to the SDDC Manager Appliance and other releases.
  2. Download the SDDC Manager Appliance OVA
    - Download/Install VMware ESX (Select “View Group” & Download)
    - Download SDDC Manager OVA (Select “View Group” & Download)
  3. Deploy OVA in ESXi environment to begin installation
  4. Select “Generate Token” in the Alpine Portal. You will be asked for this token in the installation process.
- If Downloading VMware Cloud Foundation 5.2.1
  1. Select the hyperlinked “Terms and Conditions” to open and read
  2. Select “I agree to the Terms and Conditions”
  3. Download your license.

#### **Pitfalls & Fixes:**

- **Download Center:** You must use the direct URLs provided in Alpine portal for downloads and manually search for your licenses once in the download center.
- **Download Button Disabled:** Click all Terms & Conditions checkboxes. Some downloads require multiple clicks before enabling the checkbox.
- **Blank Download Links:** In the Legacy VMware Cloud Foundation Versions downloads, 5.2.1 is the correct, downloadable version. Version 5.2.1.1 is empty.

- **Terms & Conditions:** If you do not open the hyperlinked Terms and Conditions, you will not be able to select the “I agree” Statement. If you do not select the “I agree” statement, you are not able to proceed with your download.
- **Tokens:** *Do NOT share tokens.* Usage is tracked and audited. Sharing may result in license revocation. Tokens expire annually.
- **Account Verification:** You may come across the following popup notification when attempting to download: “Account verification is Pending. Please try after some time.” According to Broadcom Support, when users encounter this error message, the Broadcom team must first verify the user before access can be granted, which may take a few days. If they run into any issues during the verification process, they will contact you directly via email.

## **Step 7: Annual Renewal & Requesting Your Licenses**

- You must take a (free) refresher exam each year to renew your license access (if you are a VMUG Advantage Member). This is a short, 20 question Exam that is made to be simple and validate the use of your license for another year.
  - Renewal Window: Your renewal window is *60 days before and 60 days after license expiration.*
- Visit the Broadcom Education Portal: <https://broadcom.com/support/education/vmware/certification>
- Select “Do you have a private access code?” under “Schedule an exam” - this gives you visibility to available refresher exams
  - Select the Refresher Exam 1 option if you are taking a refresher exam for the first time (renewing your certification for the second year)
  - Select the Refresher Exam 2 option if you are taking a refresher exam for the second time (renewing your certification for the third year)
- You will be asked to provide a Private Test Code to take this exam, which you’ll find below. *Do not share this access code*; all Advantage Members have access to this key and non-Advantage members do not.
  - Private Access Code: VMUGADV.VCF.REF
- After passing certification, you’ll receive an email from Broadcom with a link to the Alpine portal. Visit the Alpine Portal to access your licenses: <https://support.broadcom.com/group/ecx/alpine-certificate>
- In your Alpine Portal, you will see your first year of expired licenses in a row at the top and your second year/third year below. You will need to manually request these licenses as you did in Step 5.

- After your third year of license access under the same certification, you must re-take and pass your VCP-VVF/VCP-VCF Admin/Architect Certification Exam to remain eligible for license access through VMUG Advantage.

#### **Pitfalls & Fixes:**

- **Missed Renewal Window:** If you miss the refresher exam renewal window, you are required to recertify to maintain your license access through VMUG Advantage.
- **Multiple Passed VCP-VCF Exams:** Due to licensing limitations, if you have passed multiple VCP-VCF Certification Exams, the timing of your required refresher exam is based on your first passed exam. You'll find this timeline reflected in your Alpine Portal. Please base your four-month renewal window on this timeline.
- **Certification Replacement:** This refresher exam does NOT take place for full certification. If your certification has lapsed/was never passed or if you are not a VMUG Advantage Member, passing the refresher exam will NOT result in license access or an official certification.