

# Setup Guide - SQL Toolbelt Essentials

This guide covers installing the required software for the hands-on exercise. **If you're using a Demo VM provided by the presenter, skip this guide entirely.**

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## Prerequisites

- Windows 10/11 laptop with administrator access
  - Minimum 8GB RAM recommended
  - At least 10GB free disk space
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## Step 1: Install SQL Server Express

1. Download **SQL Server 2025 Express** from Microsoft:
    - **Direct link:** <https://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/p/?linkid=2216019>
  2. Run the installer and choose **Basic** installation type using defaults
  3. Accept the license terms and click **Install**
  4. Wait for installation to complete (5-10 minutes)
  5. Note the connection string shown at the end - the server name is typically `localhost\SQLEXPRESS`
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## Step 2: Install SQL Server Management Studio (SSMS)

1. Download **SSMS 20** from Microsoft:
    - **Direct link:** <https://aka.ms/ssmsfullsetup>
  2. Run the installer
  3. Click **Install** and wait for completion (5-10 minutes)
  4. Restart your computer if prompted
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## Step 2a: Configure SQL Server Network Settings (if needed)

**Note:** Only complete these steps if SSMS cannot connect to SQL Server.

To ensure SSMS can connect to SQL Server Express:

1. Open **SQL Server Configuration Manager**
  - Search for "SQL Server Configuration Manager" in the Start menu
2. Expand **SQL Server Network Configuration**
3. Click **Protocols for SQLEXPRESS**
4. Enable **TCP/IP** (right-click > Enable)
5. Enable **Named Pipes** (right-click > Enable)

6. Open **Services** (search "Services" in Start menu)
  7. Find **SQL Server Browser**, set it to **Automatic** and **Start** it
  8. Restart the **SQL Server (SQLEXPRESS)** service
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## Step 3: Install Redgate SQL Toolbelt Essentials

1. Download **SQL Toolbelt Essentials** from Redgate:
    - **Direct link:** <https://download.red-gate.com/installers/SQLToolbeltEssentials/2026-02-09/SQLToolbeltEssentials.exe>
  2. Run the installer
  3. Select **all components** to install
  4. Follow the installation wizard
  5. When prompted, sign in to the **Redgate licensing portal** to access your license or start a **14-day free trial**
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## Troubleshooting

### Cannot connect to SQL Server

- Ensure SQL Server service is running (Services > SQL Server (SQLEXPRESS))
- Try `localhost\SQLEXPRESS` or `.\SQLEXPRESS` as server name
- Check Windows Firewall isn't blocking connections

### SQL Toolbelt tools not appearing in SSMS

- Restart SSMS after installing the Toolbelt
- Check the Tools menu in SSMS for Redgate options

### Script execution errors

- Ensure you're connected with a login that has sysadmin privileges
  - Run the script from the `master` database context
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*Once setup is complete, return to the main README to continue with the exercises.*