

29.2. `sysconfig` — Provide access to Python's configuration information

New in version 3.2.

Source code: [Lib/sysconfig.py](#)

The `sysconfig` module provides access to Python's configuration information like the list of installation paths and the configuration variables relevant for the current platform.

29.2.1. Configuration variables

A Python distribution contains a Makefile and a `pyconfig.h` header file that are necessary to build both the Python binary itself and third-party C extensions compiled using `distutils`.

`sysconfig` puts all variables found in these files in a dictionary that can be accessed using `get_config_vars()` or `get_config_var()`.

Notice that on Windows, it's a much smaller set.

`sysconfig.get_config_vars(*args)`

With no arguments, return a dictionary of all configuration variables relevant for the current platform.

With arguments, return a list of values that result from looking up each argument in the configuration variable dictionary.

For each argument, if the value is not found, return `None`.

`sysconfig.get_config_var(name)`

Return the value of a single variable *name*. Equivalent to `get_config_vars().get(name)`.

If *name* is not found, return `None`.

Example of usage:

```
>>> import sysconfig
>>> sysconfig.get_config_var('Py_ENABLE_SHARED')
0
>>> sysconfig.get_config_var('LIBDIR')
```

```
>>>
```

```
'/usr/local/lib'  
>>> sysconfig.get_config_vars('AR', 'CXX')  
['ar', 'g++']
```

29.2.2. Installation paths

Python uses an installation scheme that differs depending on the platform and on the installation options. These schemes are stored in `sysconfig` under unique identifiers based on the value returned by `os.name`.

Every new component that is installed using `distutils` or a Distutils-based system will follow the same scheme to copy its file in the right places.

Python currently supports seven schemes:

- *posix_prefix*: scheme for Posix platforms like Linux or Mac OS X. This is the default scheme used when Python or a component is installed.
- *posix_home*: scheme for Posix platforms used when a *home* option is used upon installation. This scheme is used when a component is installed through Distutils with a specific home prefix.
- *posix_user*: scheme for Posix platforms used when a component is installed through Distutils and the *user* option is used. This scheme defines paths located under the user home directory.
- *nt*: scheme for NT platforms like Windows.
- *nt_user*: scheme for NT platforms, when the *user* option is used.

Each scheme is itself composed of a series of paths and each path has a unique identifier. Python currently uses eight paths:

- *stdlib*: directory containing the standard Python library files that are not platform-specific.
- *platstdlib*: directory containing the standard Python library files that are platform-specific.
- *platlib*: directory for site-specific, platform-specific files.
- *purelib*: directory for site-specific, non-platform-specific files.
- *include*: directory for non-platform-specific header files.
- *platinclude*: directory for platform-specific header files.
- *scripts*: directory for script files.
- *data*: directory for data files.

`sysconfig` provides some functions to determine these paths.

`sysconfig.get_scheme_names()`

Return a tuple containing all schemes currently supported in `sysconfig`.

`sysconfig.get_path_names()`

Return a tuple containing all path names currently supported in `sysconfig`.

`sysconfig.get_path(name[, scheme[, vars[, expand]]])`

Return an installation path corresponding to the path *name*, from the install scheme named *scheme*.

name has to be a value from the list returned by `get_path_names()`.

`sysconfig` stores installation paths corresponding to each path name, for each platform, with variables to be expanded. For instance the *stdlib* path for the *nt* scheme is: {base}/Lib.

`get_path()` will use the variables returned by `get_config_vars()` to expand the path. All variables have default values for each platform so one may call this function and get the default value.

If *scheme* is provided, it must be a value from the list returned by `get_scheme_names()`. Otherwise, the default scheme for the current platform is used.

If *vars* is provided, it must be a dictionary of variables that will update the dictionary return by `get_config_vars()`.

If *expand* is set to `False`, the path will not be expanded using the variables.

If *name* is not found, return `None`.

`sysconfig.get_paths([scheme[, vars[, expand]]])`

Return a dictionary containing all installation paths corresponding to an installation scheme. See `get_path()` for more information.

If *scheme* is not provided, will use the default scheme for the current platform.

If *vars* is provided, it must be a dictionary of variables that will update the dictionary used to expand the paths.

If *expand* is set to `false`, the paths will not be expanded.

If *scheme* is not an existing scheme, `get_paths()` will raise a `KeyError`.

29.2.3. Other functions

`sysconfig.get_python_version()`

Return the MAJOR.MINOR Python version number as a string. Similar to `'%d.%d' % sys.version_info[:2]`.

`sysconfig.get_platform()`

Return a string that identifies the current platform.

This is used mainly to distinguish platform-specific build directories and platform-specific built distributions. Typically includes the OS name and version and the architecture (as supplied by `os.uname()`), although the exact information included depends on the OS; e.g. for IRIX the architecture isn't particularly important (IRIX only runs on SGI hardware), but for Linux the kernel version isn't particularly important.

Examples of returned values:

- linux-i586
- linux-alpha (?)
- solaris-2.6-sun4u
- irix-5.3
- irix64-6.2

Windows will return one of:

- win-amd64 (64bit Windows on AMD64 (aka x86_64, Intel64, EM64T, etc))
- win-ia64 (64bit Windows on Itanium)
- win32 (all others - specifically, `sys.platform` is returned)

Mac OS X can return:

- macosx-10.6-ppc
- macosx-10.4-ppc64
- macosx-10.3-i386
- macosx-10.4-fat

For other non-POSIX platforms, currently just returns `sys.platform`.

`sysconfig.is_python_build()`

Return True if the running Python interpreter was built from source and is being run from its built location, and not from a location resulting from e.g. running `make install` or installing via a binary installer.

`sysconfig.parse_config_h(fp[, vars])`

Parse a `config.h`-style file.

fp is a file-like object pointing to the `config.h`-like file.

A dictionary containing name/value pairs is returned. If an optional dictionary is passed in as the second argument, it is used instead of a new dictionary, and updated with the values read in the file.

`sysconfig.get_config_h_filename()`

Return the path of `pyconfig.h`.

`sysconfig.get_makefile_filename()`

Return the path of `Makefile`.

29.2.4. Using `sysconfig` as a script

You can use `sysconfig` as a script with Python's `-m` option:

```
$ python -m sysconfig
Platform: "macosx-10.4-i386"
Python version: "3.2"
Current installation scheme: "posix_prefix"

Paths:
    data = "/usr/local"
    include = "/Users/tarek/Dev/svn.python.org/py3k/Include"
    platinclude = "."
    platlib = "/usr/local/lib/python3.2/site-packages"
    platstdlib = "/usr/local/lib/python3.2"
    purelib = "/usr/local/lib/python3.2/site-packages"
    scripts = "/usr/local/bin"
    stdlib = "/usr/local/lib/python3.2"

Variables:
    AC_APPLE_UNIVERSAL_BUILD = "0"
    AIX_GENUINE_CPLUSPLUS = "0"
    AR = "ar"
    ARFLAGS = "rc"
    ...
```

This call will print in the standard output the information returned by `get_platform()`, `get_python_version()`, `get_path()` and `get_config_vars()`.