ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Apache Airflow

The Insider's Guide

Open-source platform for authoring and scheduling workflows in Python



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among automation tools, read from Apache Airflow's own pages.

Made by Apache Software Foundation · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.4
GPA



Apache Airflow

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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Apache Airflow's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Apache Airflow's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.4

GPA, above 90 of the 134 other automation tools we grade

Apache Airflow is an open-source platform, created by its community, for programmatically authoring, scheduling and monitoring workflows. Pipelines are defined in Python and run by a scheduler and workers, with a web interface for watching runs and logs. It is free to download and run yourself, with managed versions sold by other companies.

> **Workflows are written in Python and you install and operate it yourself.**
>
> From our grade for ease of use

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Apache Airflow**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

1 **Best for scheduling Python workflows you host yourself**

Airflow schedules and monitors workflows you write in Python, and it costs nothing to download.

2 **It is free**

Apache Airflow has no paid plan at all.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **Pipelines as Python code**

Workflows are written in Python, so loops and date logic can generate tasks dynamically, with Jinja templating built in for parameters.

5 **Web interface**

A web application shows the status and logs of running and finished tasks, and lets you schedule and manage workflows.

6 **Scalable architecture**

A modular design with a message queue lets Airflow spread work over any number of workers.

7 **A 2.4 GPA, above 90 of 134**

That is against the other automation tools we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

Apache Airflow is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

Apache Airflow at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN It is free
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY Apache Software Foundation	CATEGORY Automation
OUR GRADE 2.4 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for scheduling Python workflows you host yourself

Airflow schedules and monitors workflows you write in Python, and it costs nothing to download. You install, upgrade, secure and scale it yourself, there's no visual builder and no paid support plan, so it suits people who are comfortable running their own servers.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Apache Airflow	Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	No licence fee, but it only runs if you host it, so you pay for a server and someone's time. Managed versions such as Astro are billed separately.
Free plan and trial	A	Free outright with no caps from the project. The cost is the hosting, not the software.
Features	C	Scheduling, monitoring and a large set of integrations for clouds. There's no visual builder in the core project, and the site lists no paid support plan.
Ease of use	D	No store rating on record. Workflows are written in Python and you install and operate it yourself.
Platforms and integrations	B	Web interface, with integrations for Google Cloud, AWS and Azure. No phone apps and no desktop app.
Grade point average		Fair, out of 4.0 **2.4**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Apache Airflow is for

- ✓ Fits if you write Python and already run your own servers
- ✓ Works for teams that want workflows defined as code with no licence fee

Who it is not for

- ✗ Skip it if you want a drag-and-drop builder, as workflows are Python only
- ✗ Not for you if you have nobody to install, upgrade and secure it
- ✗ Tight if you need paid support, because the project lists community help only
- ✗ Watch out: managed hosting means a separate vendor and a separate bill

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Python-literate data teams that want full control of their orchestrator
- ✓ Organizations that need free software with a large provider ecosystem
- ✓ Teams happy to run it themselves or buy a managed Airflow service

Worth knowing

- ⓘ You install, upgrade, secure and scale it yourself unless you buy a managed service such as Astronomer's Astro.
- ⓘ The project's site lists a community, meetups and a Slack for help; it offers no paid support plan.
- ⓘ Defining workflows requires Python knowledge; there is no visual builder in the core project.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

Apache Airflow is free to use.

> **No licence fee, but it only runs if you host it, so you pay for a server and someone's time.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

OPEN SOURCE

$0

Apache-2.0 licensed software you install and run yourself; hosting and operations costs are yours.

Read from airflow.apache.org on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

Open-source platform for authoring and scheduling workflows in Python. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, self-hostable, public API, workflow automation.

> **Scheduling, monitoring and a large set of integrations for clouds.**

From our grade for features

Pipelines as Python code

Workflows are written in Python, so loops and date logic can generate tasks dynamically, with Jinja templating built in for parameters.

Web interface

A web application shows the status and logs of running and finished tasks, and lets you schedule and manage workflows.

Scalable architecture

A modular design with a message queue lets Airflow spread work over any number of workers.

Provider integrations

Ready-made operators cover Google Cloud, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure and other third-party services, and you can write your own.

AI provider

The Common AI provider reached 1.0 in October 2026, covering agents, sandboxes, human approval and retries for LLM work in pipelines.

Where it runs

- Web

What it works with

- Google Cloud
- Amazon Web Services
- Microsoft Azure

Apache Airflow is made by Apache Software Foundation.

PART 04 · STANDING

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

90/134

Other automation tools it is graded above

Apache Airflow's GPA of 2.4 is higher than 90 of the 134 other automation tools we grade, and level with 23.

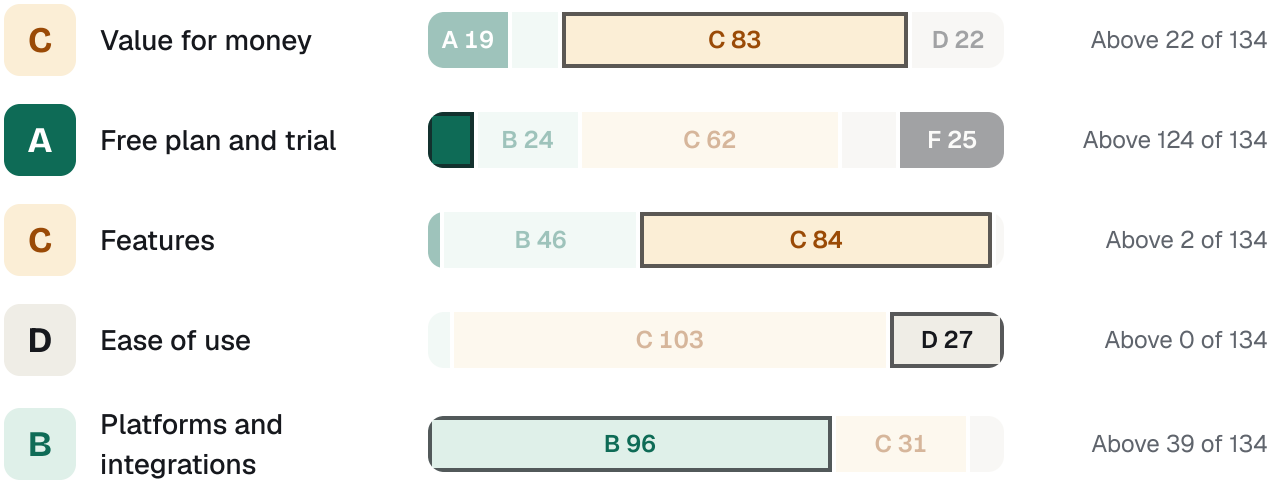
It stands best on free plan and trial (A, above 124 of 134) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

Apache Airflow has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 2.0 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

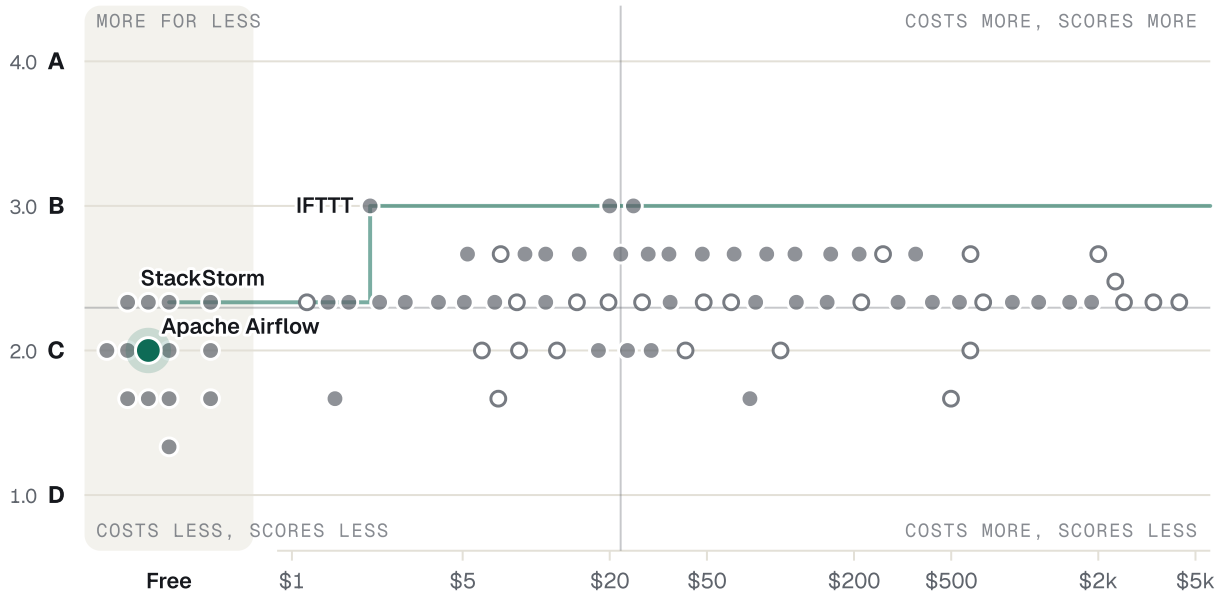
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 135 automation tools we grade, cut by the letter each got. Apache Airflow's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 80 automation tools. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. Apache Airflow is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

Apache Airflow is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces. It is one of the better ones too: its GPA of 2.4 is higher than 90 of the 134 other automation tools we grade.

What you could not

- ✕ Connections to other products, each kept working as those products change.

What this rests on. Apache Airflow's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



Prefect, Dagster, Astronomer, Kestra and Windmill

The 5 tools Apache Airflow is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

2.4 GPA

Prefect

Free plan · from $100/mo

Python workflow orchestration with an open-source core and a cloud.

- Prefect also covers AI agents.

Apache Airflow and Prefect compared in full

2.0 GPA

Dagster

Free trial · from $10/mo

Asset-based data orchestration platform, now part of Prefect.

- Apache Airflow has a free plan. Dagster does not, though it has a free trial.
- Dagster also covers dashboards.

Apache Airflow and Dagster compared in full



1.8
GPA

Astronomer

Free trial · from $0.35

Managed Apache Airflow platform (Astro) with usage-based pricing.

- Apache Airflow has a free plan. Astronomer does not, though it has a free trial.
- Apache Airflow is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Astronomer also covers AI agents and dashboards.

Apache Airflow and Astronomer compared in full



2.4
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Kestra

Free plan

Open-source workflow orchestration platform defined in YAML.

Apache Airflow and Kestra compared in full



2.6
GPA

Windmill

Free plan · from $10/mo

Open-source platform for scripts, workflows and internal apps.

- Windmill also covers AI agents and app builder.

Apache Airflow and Windmill compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

13

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Apache Airflow free?

Yes. Apache Airflow is free to use.

How much does Apache Airflow cost?

Apache Airflow lists one plan. Open source: $0.

What platforms does Apache Airflow work on?

Apache Airflow is available on Web.

Does Apache Airflow have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Apache Airflow is listed for Web.

Does Apache Airflow have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Apache Airflow is listed for Web.

Is Apache Airflow open source?

Yes. Apache Airflow is open source, according to its own site.

Does Apache Airflow have an API?

Yes. Apache Airflow offers a public API, according to its own site.

What does Apache Airflow integrate with?

Apache Airflow's listing names Google Cloud, Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure.

Who makes Apache Airflow?

Apache Airflow is made by Apache Software Foundation.

What are the alternatives to Apache Airflow?

The closest alternatives to Apache Airflow in our directory are Prefect, Dagster, Astronomer, Kestra and Windmill.

How does Apache Airflow compare with other automation tools?

Apache Airflow's GPA of 2.4 is higher than 90 of the 134 other automation tools we grade, and level with 23.

Is Apache Airflow good value for money?

ToolGPA grades Apache Airflow C for value for money. Apache Airflow has no paid plan.

Could I make my own version of Apache Airflow?

Apache Airflow is free, so making your own would save you nothing. And it is not the kind of software a weekend replaces.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Apache Airflow's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from Apache Airflow's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Apache Software Foundation. Prices change, so check airflow.apache.org before you buy.

airflow.apache.org
github.com/apache/airflow
airflow.apache.org/docs/apache-airflow/stable/st…

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at toolgpa.com.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Apache Airflow, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/apache-airflow

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "Apache Airflow: The Insider's
Guide", checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/apache-airflow
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Know someone choosing between automation tools?

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The best-graded automation tools after Apache Airflow, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Automation Insider's Guide

Every one of the 135 automation tools we grade, compared

Knime Insider's Guide

Open-source visual workflows for data analysis and automation

3.2 GPA

IFTTT Insider's Guide

Simple trigger-and-action automations for apps and smart devices

3.0 GPA

Node-RED Insider's Guide

Open-source, flow-based programming tool for event-driven apps

3.0 GPA

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Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Apache Airflow's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Apache Airflow is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Apache Software Foundation. Prices and plans change: check airflow.apache.org before you buy.