Hardware for Students :: HSU Suggested Minimum Computer Configurations

What computer should I bring?

- Be sure the computer you bring can run either Windows 7 or higher or Mac OS X 10.6 or higher.
- If you buy a computer, see our Current Year Purchase Recommendations below.
- In either case, make sure it is able to connect to the HSU Network (see below).

Should I purchase a new computer? What if I already have a computer?

If you already own a computer, we recommend that you bring it with you and use it until you become familiar with your department's computing practices and recommendations. Each discipline has its own unique technology needs. For example, graphics- or video-intensive disciplines may require computers with more memory and storage and/or more powerful processors. Our recommendations are updated annually to reflect evolving requirements.

Where should I purchase a new computer?

You may choose to purchase your computer from any outlet that carries systems meeting the recommended standards. Macs can be purchased through the HSU Bookstore online at http://store.apple.com/us_edu_11928 [1].

Be aware that the HSU Technology Help Desk [2] is not permitted to repair or configure non-HSU-owned computers, so it's a good idea to purchase an extended warranty on new computers.

What about laptops and tablets?

Most mobile devices are quite powerful enough to handle much of your college workload, but check ahead with your department to see if there are likely to be any special requirements. You may want to consider purchasing insurance coverage for theft, damage or loss, and you'll definitely want to sign up with a cloud-based backup service.

Recommended Computers for the 2012-2013 Academic Year

Macintosh Desktop

Models: Mac Mini, iMac, or Mac Pro
Operating System: Mac OS X 10.6 or higher
Processor: 2.0 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo or higher
Memory: 4 GB memory (RAM) or higher
Hard Drive: 320 GB hard drive
Optical Drive: SuperDrive 8x
Built-in Ethernet for on campus connections.
20” Monitor or Larger
Keyboard
Mouse

Macintosh Laptop

Models: MacBook or MacBook Pro
Operating System: Mac OS X 10.6 or higher
Processor: 2.0 GHz Intel Core Duo 2 or higher
Memory: 4 GB memory (RAM) or higher
Hard Drive: 120 GB hard drive
Optical Drive: SuperDrive 8x
Built-in Ethernet for on campus connections.
Wireless Dual Band ABGN card for on-campus wireless access (ABG is not sufficient)
13” screen or larger

Windows Desktop

Operating System: Windows 7/8
Processor: AMD A8 or Phenom Quad-Core (or better); Intel 3rd Generation Intel(R) Core - i5 (or better)
Memory: 4 GB RAM or higher
Hard Drive: 320 GB SATA Hard Drive
Optical Drive: 16x max. DVD +/-R/RW
Built in Ethernet for on campus connections.
20” monitor or larger
Keyboard
Mouse

Windows Laptop

Processor: AMD Dual-Core A4-4300M APU (3GHz) or higher; Intel 3rd generation Intel Core i3 (or better)
Operating System: Windows 7/8
Memory: 4 GB RAM or higher
Hard Drive: 250 GB SATA Hard Drive
Optical Drive: 16x max. DVD +/-R/RW
Built in Ethernet for on campus connections.
Wireless Dual Band ABGN card for on-campus wireless access (G or N is not acceptable)
15.4” screen or larger

Storing your Files

- **HSU Network Folder**: HSU offers central file storage for all current students, staff and faculty that's accessible from on or off campus. Computer labs and most office computers automatically connect to your Network Folder when you log in.
- **USB Flash Drive**: All campus computers have multiple USB ports for portable storage requirements.
- **Email Attachment**: Smaller files can be easily emailed to yourself and collected later.
- **Google Drive**: Your HSU Google Gmail [3] account and Google Drive are now linked together, so every account has 30GB of cloud-based storage available. Your HSU Google Gmail account will persist even after you graduate or leave the campus, so any files you store here will remain accessible from anywhere in the world via Gmail or the Google Drive service.

Networking

- **Wireless Networking:** HSU has free wireless available throughout the campus. Note that you must use HSU-approved antivirus software [4] in order to connect to wired and wireless networks at HSU.

Additional Considerations

Printers

You may want to purchase a printer to make your work easier. While you can copy your work to your Network Folder, burn to CD, or copy to a USB memory stick, and print it in one of the HSU labs, many people find it more convenient to print while they are doing their work.

If you do not want the added bulk of a printer in a dorm room or to buy expensive ink cartridges, not bringing a printer should pose no problems. People who want the flexibility and convenience of always having an available printer are encouraged to bring them.

How can I protect my computer?

- Be sure to purchase a power surge protector with a replaceable fuse or a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply).
- Make sure your system is covered by an insurance policy. The University is not responsible for loss or damage to your computer.
- Back up your system every day.
- Install and use **antivirus software** and keep it up to date. The Technology Help Desk can advise you on selecting appropriate software.
- Keep your operating system updated by scheduling automatic updates - very important!

Related Topics

Purchasing - Hardware [5]

Source URL: http://www.humboldt.edu/its/students-computerrecommendations

Links:
[1] http://store.apple.com/us_edu_11928
[2] http://humboldt.edu/tech-help
[3] http://www.humboldt.edu/its/glossary/5#term195
[4] http://www.humboldt.edu/its/wireless-antivirus
[5] http://www.humboldt.edu/its/category/quicklinks/purchasing-hardware