



Purchasing a Computer for College

What type of computer should I purchase?

Desktop computers are fully supported, but many students find that a laptop/notebook computer is more versatile. The Office of Information Technology recommends the following general specifications for a new computer purchase. Please keep in mind that these are merely guidelines; your major/course of study may require something different. You could contact your advisor, the office of your department head, or the office of the dean of your college if you need more specific information regarding what is needed for your coursework.

CPU/Processor: Intel Core i3, 2.0GHz or higher or AMD X2 2.0GHz or higher

RAM: 4GB

Hard Drive: 250GB (minimum), 500GB (recommended)

Optical Drive: 8x DVD-RW/CD-RW (known as "DVD Multi-Recorder" or "SuperDrive" on Apple products)

Operating System: Windows 7 or Mac OS X 10.6 and up

Wireless Network Card: Support for 802.11 B/G/N

Wired Networking: Onboard Ethernet port or Thunderbolt Ethernet adapter for Apple computers.

What basic software will I need?

You may be interested in Microsoft Office, but OIT encourages you to try Google Drive first. It is available to you at no cost and may be adequate for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, and other "basic computing" tasks. UAH provides Google Apps for Education to all students, faculty, and staff. The suite of apps includes Google Drive. Look on <http://chargerware.uah.edu> for details regarding other online resources and software products available to you for installation.

What security software should I buy?

None! UAH provides anti-virus software, free of charge, for the duration of your academic career.

What other "tech items" might I need?

- **Portable storage:** Many students use USB thumb drives/flash drives to carry their documents. Storing your files in Google Drive makes them available on any device when you have network access. For small storage hardware, an 8GB device may be sufficient. The 16GB and 32GB models are relatively inexpensive if you anticipate the need for more storage.
- **Backup functionality:** Both Windows and Mac OS X include user-friendly software to support backup functionality. We recommend that students purchase an external hard drive or subscribe to an online backup service and perform regular backups.
- **Extended Warranty and Accidental Damage Protection:** Many companies offer plans. The monetary cost may not be worth the benefit of your peace of mind.

- **Ethernet cable:** If you are staying in the residence halls, you must provide your own CAT5e or CAT6 Ethernet cable for access to the wired network. Most retailers stock these in the electronics department.
- **Blank CD/DVD Media:** Some course work must be turned in on CDs or DVDs – ask early in the term and plan ahead if that is the case.

Reference: OIT Knowledge Base article #2270 at <http://tinyurl.com/UAHOITSpecs2016>