

Student Computer Purchase Requirements

College of Veterinary Medicine

Mississippi State University

Computer ownership has been a requirement for our professional students at the College of Veterinary Medicine since 1984. Computer technology has changed tremendously since 1984 and so have its many uses and functions. Our students use their laptop computers for various functions during their four-year professional college career, including accessing email, taking and archiving class notes, accessing course material via WebCT, performing research, and interacting with our hospital and laboratory information system (UVIS). These are just some of the reasons computer ownership is important during your professional academic years.

Many students can be overwhelmed by the options, accessories, and software considerations. Our goal is to make the process of purchasing computer equipment simple. The basic considerations are:

- Each student **must have a laptop computer that meets the minimum specifications listed below** and is one of the recommended models listed below.
- Each student must have a CD-RW/DVD drive, network adapter, analog modem, and wireless network card.
- Each student must have access to a printer that is compatible with Microsoft Windows Vista Business operating system (you may buy your own printer or share in the purchase of a printer with a classmate).
- Each student must have specific software (listed below).

All freshmen entering the College of Veterinary Medicine are required to purchase a laptop personal computer that meets or exceeds certain minimum specifications. Laptop computers not only make it possible for students to use computers in class and during their clinical rotations, but they also make collaborative projects easier and facilitate their use in group study.

Computer Minimum Specifications

The College has found the Gateway model M285-E Tablet PCs and the Dell Inspiron models 1505 or 1705 laptops to be very reliable and durable options for all students. Because of this, we are recommending that students purchase one of the following models:

[Gateway M285](#)

[Dell Inspiron models](#) (that meet the minimum specification below)

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We strongly recommend the purchase of a Tablet PC, such as the Gateway M285-E. One advantage of the Tablet PC is that it will be very convenient for taking notes in the classroom. Its portability and tablet format also make it more convenient when using your computer in the Animal Health Center during your clinical rotations. CVM Information Technology Services (ITS) staff will handle minor troubleshooting and assist in the resolution of software or operating system problems on those models listed above that meet the minimum specifications. If you choose to purchase a PC that is not from the models listed above or is from the list above and does not meet the minimum specifications, then **you** will be responsible for finding someone to service your computer.

Below are listed our **minimum** computer specifications:

- Operating System – Microsoft Windows Vista Business or Table PC edition (Windows Vista Home or XP Home edition will NOT work on the campus network)
- Processor – Intel Pentium dual-core 1.73 GHz (**not Celeron processor**)
- Memory – 2 GB DDR SDRAM
- Video Card – Direct X9 capable with 256 MB video memory
- Hard Drive – 80 GB
- Network Interface Card – 10/100 Ethernet II integrated PC Card
- PCMCIA slot – at least 1 PCMCIA slot
- Modem – Internal 56K Capable v.90 Fax Modem
- CD/DVD Drives – 24x Max Variable CD-RW/DVD Combo Drive
- Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports – minimum of 2 ports
- Wireless – 802.11b/g compatible wireless card
- Service Maintenance Agreement -- minimum 3 year agreement

These specifications are designed to help you choose a system that will serve your computer needs throughout your time as a student at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Admittedly in three or four years, faster processors and larger hard drives will be available, but we do not believe this will impact the ability of your computer to meet your academic needs. However, you may possibly need to upgrade your operating system, software, or even computer memory at some point in your academic career.

You should consider options for your computer that exceed these minimum requirements listed above. If you wish to upgrade your computer from the minimum specifications above, we suggest that you first purchase additional RAM and increase the processor speed, then increase the size of the hard drive. However, we suggest that you contact CVM ITS staff at 662-325-1082 for further recommendations or if you need further assistance.

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Software Requirements

Certain software is required for your academic needs:

- Microsoft Windows Vista Business or Table PC Operating System
- Microsoft Office 2007 Professional (to include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access; Microsoft Works is NOT an acceptable substitute. This software is available for a discounted price from the [Microsoft Student Select](#) service.)
- Norton Antivirus (available to students free of charge on [ITS's website](#))
- Endnote (available from the [MSU library](#))

As a student, you will also be using additional software not specified above. Much of this software is available to students at little or no fee on campus and is made available when needed. Additionally, some software may be required for certain courses throughout your academic career. These software requirements will be listed along with the book requirements and listings for courses.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Must I purchase a laptop model?

Yes! The College requires laptop models as these allow students to transport their computer between their local residence and school. It also allows them to use their computers in the classrooms and in the clinics. Furthermore, a laptop model can be secured inside your multi-disciplinary laboratory (MDL) desk resulting in less risk of damage or theft.

2. Where can I purchase the computer?

The College recommends that you purchase either a tablet PC, such as the Gateway M285-E or a Dell Inspiron 1505 or 1705 laptop. If you choose to consider the purchase of a Gateway Tablet PC, you can visit their website by [clicking here to be directed to the Gateway page](#) customized for MSU-CVM students. If you choose to consider the purchase of a Dell Inspiron laptop, you can visit their website by [clicking here to be directed to the Dell prepared web page](#) customized for MSU-CVM students. There are certain promotions and discounts that are only available through these Gateway or Dell links.

3. Will the computer I buy meet my needs throughout my veterinary school career?

Computer hardware, software, and operating systems are improved constantly. It is possible that you will need to upgrade your operating system, software, and perhaps even computer memory at some point in your academic career. Estimates for computer and software upgrades are included in the CVM Student Financial Aid budget each year.

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4. Will I need a printer?

Each student is required to have access to a printer that is compatible with Microsoft Windows VISTA Business operating system. You may purchase your own printer or share in the purchase of one with a classmate. Syllabi, class schedules, course notes, and other resources will be provided electronically. If you wish to have hard copies of these materials, you will need access to a printer to print these documents.

5. What type of software will I need?

The general software requirements for veterinary students are included with the computer specifications. In addition, other software may be needed throughout your academic career. In addition to Microsoft Windows VISTA Business or Table PC operating system, the following software will be needed:

- **Integrated Package**

An integrated software package includes a word processor, spreadsheet, database, and presentation software. The package must be capable of creating “rich text” documents and tab delimited ASCII files. The package must also have graphics capabilities. For this package, you will need to purchase Microsoft Office 2007 Professional edition, which includes MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. This software is available for a discounted price from the [Microsoft Student Select](#) service.

- **Bibliographic Database Software**

This software allows you to search online bibliographic databases, organize references, and create bibliographies instantly and automatically. For this purpose, you will need to purchase EndNotes. You can purchase EndNotes from the [MSU Library](#) at a reduced rate.

- **Antivirus Software**

[MSU Policy 01.12](#) requires that antivirus software be installed on all computers connected to the MSU campus network and virus definitions be kept current. Information Technology Services (ITS) at MSU has purchased a site-wide software license agreement for Symantec (Norton) AntiVirus Corporate Edition software. This license agreement provides MSU students, faculty, and staff with the right to use this software on their computers. To download this software, go to the [Software/Downloads page of the MSU ITS website](#). You must have a NetID to download software from the ITS website.

- **Spyware Software**

Spyware/Adware is software that is installed on your computer without your knowledge in order to gather personal information about you and your computer use. This information is used by companies to target your computer and send you unwanted information and advertisements. Not only is this an invasion of privacy, it is harmful to the software on the servers and personal computers. Several of these are known to cause problems when trying to use WebCT and other software. Some characteristics of spyware/adware are browser pop-ups, noticeable slowness and sluggishness

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of your computer, search page hijacking, and large portions of your hard disk space being consumed. We recommend installing and using the spyware/adware removal tool Spybot-S&D. This software is currently free to use on your computer and can be downloaded from the [MSU ITS website](#). You must have a NetID to download software from the ITS website.

- **Electronic Mail**

As a student, you will use email for communication with classmates, faculty, and colleagues around the world. Our mail system (FirstClass) will be installed on your computer during your first week of school at no extra cost.

- **Web Browser**

As a student, you will use an Internet browser that provides access to the World Wide Web. The “Web” is the Internet’s primary information resource. You will access the Web routinely to find information related to coursework or clinical cases. The Web Browser is included with the Microsoft XP Professional or Tablet PC operating system.

- **Firewall Protection Software**

To protect your computer and our network, firewall software will be installed on your computer. Windows VISTA Business or Tablet PC operating system has built in firewall protection.

6. How secure is my computer if I keep it at school?

The school is not responsible for the security of any personal items left in the classrooms, library, MDL, or any other locations in the College. The risk is minimal, but we have had one student-owned computer stolen from the MDL and a couple of CVM-owned computers stolen from the building. One of the reasons we require the laptop model is that while you have it at school it can be locked in your MDL desk and when you go home, you can take the computer with you. You may wish to purchase a renter's (or homeowner's) insurance policy that covers your personal belongings. Make sure that your computer is covered in such a policy. While the risk may be low – the cost is great if your computer is stolen!

7. Where do I get my computer serviced?

If you choose to purchase one of the recommended systems, then CVM ITS staff will handle minor troubleshooting and assist in the resolution of software or operating system problems. MSU has a computer center authorized to perform PC computer repairs. However, if you do not purchase one of the recommended models, then CVM ITS staff WILL NOT be able to assist or handle minor problems with your computer. If you choose to purchase a PC not from the models listed above and that does not meet the minimum specifications, then you will be responsible for finding someone other than CVM ITS staff to service your computer. 3-Point Technologies in Columbus, MS and Synergetics in Starkville, MS are licensed Dell and Gateway computer repair centers.

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Student Use and Electronic Communication Policies

All students have the responsibility to use the University computing and network resources in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner. Use of these resources must be consistent with all applicable university policies and state and federal laws. Students should be aware of all university policies pertaining to students including [OP 91.117: Student Use of Computing Resources](#).

To provide procedures and regulations in the use of electronic communications by the university to students, the university has developed an Electronic Communications Student Policy. Students should be aware of this and all university policies pertaining to students, including [OP 91.126: Electronic Communications Student Policy](#).

CVM ITS Contact Information

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STUDENT AFFAIRS OP 91.117: Student Use of Computing Resources

Date: November 29, 1994

Purpose

To provide guidelines and regulations governing students' use of computing resources at Mississippi State University.

Policy

In support of the university's mission of teaching, research, and service, Mississippi State University provides computing, networking, and information resources to the university student community. Such open access is a privilege, and requires that individual users act responsibly, including the conservation of computer resources and consideration of other users. All existing federal and state laws, and university regulations and policies apply, including not only those laws and regulations that are specific to computers and networks, but also those that may apply generally to personal conduct (See [OP 91.100](#): Code of Student Conduct).

Procedure

The university views abuse of any computer facility and resource as a serious offense. Such abuse includes but is not limited to:

1. Negligently degrading, intentionally degrading, or attempting to degrade the performance of the university's system or any system available through the Internet;
2. Penetrating or attempting to penetrate the security of the university system or any system available through the Internet;
3. Depriving or attempting to deprive other users of resources, or access to computer resources;
4. Using any computer system or network to send unsolicited, offensive, abusive, obscene, or otherwise harassing communications as determined by the receiver of the message and confirmed by a judicial board;

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5. Displaying obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit or offensive material/images that can be in view of others in a public facility or location;
6. Using a computer account belonging to another individual without the explicit permission of that individual and the Director of the Computing Center or individuals responsible for another university network (students are responsible for all activity originating from their account as well as for its safeguard and use);
7. Negligently, or intentionally and without authorization, accessing, altering, interfering with the operation of, damaging or destroying all or part of any computer, computer system, computer network, computer software, computer program, or computer database;
8. Failing to reasonably protect, or intentionally or knowingly giving or publishing any password, identifying code, personal identification code, or other confidential information about a computer, computer system, computer network, or database;
9. Inspecting, modifying, or copying programs, data, or electronic mail without authorization;
10. Placing, posting, or viewing any information in the university's computer system, computer network, or any system available through the Internet which is not in keeping with the educational purposes of the university, such purposes being determined solely by the university; and
11. Specifying false or misleading information when applying for computer access or when being investigated for computer misuse under this policy.

Students committing prohibited actions will be held accountable and shall be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures described in University Policies and Regulations Regarding Individual Behavior found online at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security.html> (See **OP 91.100**: Code of Student Conduct). Students who suspect their accounts have been infiltrated, should contact the Director of the Computing Center or the individual responsible for another university network, and the Dean of Students.

Review

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this operating policy by July 31 of each year.

OP
11/29/94
Revised 3/15/99

91.117

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STUDENT AFFAIRS OP 91.126: Electronic Communications Student Policy

Date: January 5, 2001/Signed May 7, 2001

Purpose

To provide procedures and regulations in the use of electronic communications by the university to students.

Policy/Procedure

Mississippi State University is committed to utilizing the most advanced technology available to communicate with students. Therefore, the university will employ electronic means, when appropriate, to effect such communication, and students are expected to monitor appropriately these electronic communications. To facilitate this goal, effective fall semester 2001, all students will be assigned a msstate.edu. electronic mail address by Information Technology Services. In subsequent semesters, new students will be assigned electronic mail addresses when they are accepted for admission.

Electronic means may include, but are not limited to, electronic mail, electronic bulletin boards, and information portals.

Guidelines

1. The distribution of mass email to students shall be restricted to Mississippi State University Departments for university business. Authority to approve the distribution of email in this manner rests with deans, directors and department heads.
2. Electronic communication to inform students of up-coming campus events is generally considered information that is best suited for posting on an electronic bulletin board or student portal rather than distribution by mass email. However, information regarding significant events of great interest among the students may be approved for distribution by mass email.
3. Where appropriate, electronic communications should have a from address, reply-to-address and subject line.
4. This policy does not apply to electronic communications between academic units and their students, i.e., an instructor sending electronic mail to students in his/her class.

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Review

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this operating policy by July 31 of each year.

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91.126

01/05/2001

Signed 05/07/2001

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