Student Computer Purchase Requirements
Mississippi State University
College of Veterinary Medicine

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 MyCourses, performing research, and interacting with our hospital and laboratory information system. 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, and wireless network card.
- Each student must have access to a printer that is compatible with the Microsoft Windows operating system. Public printers are available to students in the library for a minor charge per page.
- 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 Dell laptops to be very reliable and durable options for all students. Because of this, we are recommending that students purchase the following model:

Dell models (that meet the minimum specification below)
CVM Information Technology Services (ITS) staff will handle minor troubleshooting and assist in the resolution of software or operating system problems related to accessing CVM systems on the model listed above that meet the minimum specifications. If you choose to purchase a PC that is not from the model listed above or does not meet the minimum hardware/software specifications, then you will be responsible for finding someone to service your computer.

Below are listed the **minimum** computer hardware specifications:

- Operating System - Microsoft Windows 7
- Processor - Intel I3, I5, or I7 class
- Memory - 2 GB RAM
- Video Card – minimum of 256 MB video memory
- Hard Drive - 80 GB
- Network Interface Card - 10/100 Ethernet II integrated PC Card
- CD/DVD Drive – 8x DVD
- Universal Serial Bus (USB ) Ports - minimum of 2 ports
- Wireless - 802.11 g compatible wireless card
- Service Maintenance Agreement - minimum 4 year agreement Complete Care

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.
**Software Requirements**

Certain software is required for your academic needs:

- Microsoft Windows 7 Professional
- Microsoft Office 2010 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 [MSU Barnes and Noble Bookstore](http://www.dell.com/bulldogs).)
- Sophos Antivirus (available to students free of charge on [ITS’s website](http://www.dell.com/bulldogs))
- Endnote (available from the [MSU library](http://www.dell.com/bulldogs))

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?**
   
   Yes! The College requires laptops 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 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 Dell Latitude E6520 laptop. If you choose to consider the purchase of a Dell laptop, you can visit MSU’s partner website by going to http://www.dell.com/bulldogs. There are certain promotions and discounts that are only available through this link.

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.
4. Will I need a printer?
Each student is required to have access to a printer that is compatible with Microsoft Windows 7 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. The CVM library offers public printers where you can print these materials at a minimal charge.

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 also have graphics capabilities. For this package, you will need to purchase Microsoft Office 2010 Professional edition, which includes MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. This software is available for a discounted price from the [MSU Barnes and Noble Bookstore](https://www.msbarnesandnoble.com/).

- **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](https://library.msu.edu/) at a reduced rate.

- **Antivirus Software**
  [MSU Policy 01.12](https://its.msu.edu/policies/pdf/01.12.pdf) 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](https://its.msu.edu/software/). 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 [MyCourses](https://mycourses.msu.edu/) and other software. Some characteristics of
spyware/adware are browser pop-ups, noticeable slowness and sluggishness 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.

- **E-Mail (BullyMail)**
  As a student, you will use email for communication with classmates, faculty, and colleagues around the world. BullyMail access is available through the BullyMail icon in the myState email channel or in MSU's webmail by selecting BullyMail in the dropdown Server menu.

- **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 7 Professional or the Mac operating system.

- **Firewall Protection Software**
  The Windows 7 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 there is still a chance your laptop may be taken. One of the reasons we require the laptop 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, the CVM ITS staff will handle minor troubleshooting and assist in getting the computer connected to CVM information systems. MSU has a computer center authorized to perform PC computer repairs. However, if you do not purchase a computer with the recommended specification, CVM ITS staff WILL NOT be able to assist or handle minor problems with your computer. If you choose to purchase a PC not with the minimum specifications listed above you will be responsible for finding someone other than CVM ITS staff to service your computer. There are multiple computer service centers within the Golden Triangle area.
**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 01.12: Use of Information Technology 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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