Computer Recommendations for Students

Minimum Hardware Requirements for Use @ Lehigh

While the purchase of a new computer often coincides with starting school, many students bring computers to campus that they already own prior to starting college. Whatever the specific case may be, it is important to note the minimum computer hardware requirements for use at Lehigh.

Existing Computers vs. New Computer Purchases

Existing Computers

These specifications are the bare minimum specifications for a computer you have already owned for some time that you are planning to bring with you to campus. These requirements ensure that a computer will be able to run all the necessary software used in typical coursework.

New Computer Purchase

For those who are purchasing a new computer to bring to Lehigh, it is a wise to make an investment in a computer that will last through your time at Lehigh. While there are some differences in the specifications for new computers that can have a significant impact on long-term performance, most computers on the market today should meet these specifications easily at a reasonable price and provide acceptable longevity. Since the computer you purchase will likely be used for much more than just school-related work, the general recommended approach is to buy the computer that fits your needs/wants for personal use but also meets Lehigh’s recommended specifications.

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<th>Minimum Computer Hardware Recommendations</th>
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<td><strong>Existing Computers</strong></td>
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<td>Processor(CPU):</td>
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<td>Memory(RAM):</td>
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<td>Hard Drive:</td>
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Supported Operating Systems (in order to get the most assistance from support staff)

| Windows 10 | MacOS 10.14, 10.15 (Mojave, Catalina) |

New Computer Purchase Recommendations

Along with the considerations mentioned above, there are additional considerations to take into account when purchasing a new computer. Some of these considerations include: purchasing the appropriate warranty coverage, purchasing a supported brand/model (highly recommended) in order to take advantage of Lehigh’s hardware repair services, deciding what software, if any, to purchase in addition to the software Lehigh makes available to all registered students, etc.

Below, we have tried to provide answers to many common questions as well as provide you with all of the information you need in order to make an informed purchase.

Note: Chromebooks are not recommended as a primary device for coursework. While a Chromebook can be used for some course-related activities, they lack key features that traditional Windows/Mac devices offer and which may be required for some courses.

Warranty Recommendations

Making sure to buy the proper warranty coverage for your new computer is critical - and can often mean the difference between whether or not your computer can be serviced by Lehigh's hardware technicians on-campus. Generally, in order to qualify for warranty repair by Lehigh, the recommended brand computer must have been purchased directly from the manufacturer, either by phone or through the manufacturer’s Web site. For computers purchased from retail stores such as Staples, Best Buy, H.H.Gregg, Wal-Mart, etc., Lehigh typically cannot perform any type of in-warranty repair, because the warranties are provided by the store and not the manufacturer. In addition, most computer models sold in retail stores are consumer-line models which are not typically eligible for hardware repair support at Lehigh.

Most manufacturers offer extended warranty coverage as well as what is referred to as “accidental damage protection”. For example, if you drop your computer off or your desk or spill liquid on the keyboard, these would be considered “accidental damage” as opposed to a part of the computer being simply “defective”. Accidental damage protection is usually offered separately from the standard extended warranty coverage. In some rare cases, a store like Best Buy may offer their own accidental damage coverage if the manufacturer does not. In all cases, it is best to research your warranty options carefully before making your final purchase. Lehigh recommends purchasing an extended warranty (3-4 years) with on-site service. Avoid depot service warranties as this requires the computer to be sent out to the manufacturer as opposed to receiving service on-site.

Hardware Repair at Lehigh
Lehigh is an authorized repair center for the following brands/models: Dell, Lenovo (business class), and Apple computers. Lehigh recommends these brands/models as students who own these computers and encounter hardware problems can have the computers serviced on campus without the delay involved in contacting the manufacturer's technical support.

Supported Models

Laptops

- Dell (all models)
- Lenovo ThinkPad series
- Apple (all models)

Desktops

- Dell Optiplex series
- Dell Precision series
- Lenovo ThinkCentre series
- Apple (all models)

Warranty Information (In-Warranty Repairs)

Typically only the models listed above for each brand can be serviced on-campus for hardware repairs regardless of warranty eligibility. Manufacturer specific details are below:

Dell

All Dell computers can be serviced on campus for in-warranty and out-of-warranty repairs.

Lenovo

Only Lenovo models listed above can be serviced on campus for hardware repairs. Consumer models (i.e. IdeaPad series, IdeaCentre series, Essential series, etc.) cannot be serviced on campus at all.

Apple

All Apple laptop and desktop models listed above can be serviced on campus for in-warranty hardware repairs.

NOTE: AppleCare+ Protection is highly recommended for new purchases as it covers defective hardware for up to three years from purchase date and includes two incidents of accidental damage repair; however, accidental damage repairs are subject to deductible fees. See the Apple support website for warranty details.

Special Lehigh Pricing

The links below will take you to the vendor-customized web sites for Lehigh student purchases. The sites allow computer systems to be configured with discount pricing as well as provide pre-configured bundled systems with the same discounted pricing.

Dell

NOTE: Computers purchased from the custom site are supported for hardware repair on campus.

Dell Online Store for Lehigh

Lenovo

NOTE: Be sure to purchase one of the supported models listed above if you wish to have your new computer eligible for hardware repair support on campus.

Lenovo Online Store for Lehigh

Apple

NOTE: All Apple laptop and desktop computers are eligible for hardware support on campus.

Apple Online Store for Lehigh

PC vs Mac

With the growing number of students bringing Macs to campus (over 50% of the Fall 2016 first year student class), it is likely that there are more students (and parents) debating whether or not to buy a PC or a Mac. The very short answer is that Lehigh fully supports both Windows and Mac platforms; and, as stated above, it is always recommended that you purchase the computer that fits your wants/needs for personal use as long as the hardware specifications fit Lehigh's minimum requirements. In order to help you make your final purchase decision, LTS has put together a brief section explaining the pros and cons of both platforms. Read more about pros and cons related to purchasing a PC versus a Mac.
One of the major benefits available to Lehigh students is that MS Office is provided free throughout their time at Lehigh. When you purchase a new computer, many times you will either have the option to purchase additional software such as Microsoft Office or an anti-virus program, or have your new computer configured to come with such software pre-installed. Before spending the extra few hundred dollars purchasing extra or pre-installed software, be sure to review the list of software Lehigh makes available to students.