



## Academic Computing and Networking Services

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## Hardware and Software Recommendations for Students

At this time Colorado State University does not require students to purchase computers. While Colorado State does offer access to computers through [college computing labs](#), a student may find it more convenient to bring his/her own computer to campus. Colorado State offers the following guidelines for those who choose to bring a computer to campus. These recommendations are reviewed semi-annually by the University standards committee.

For the freshman and sophomore years, basic computing functions can be provided by most of the currently available standard microcomputers. A student computer configuration should include an office software suite and printer. Appropriate networking and Web browsing software is available from the University to students at no additional cost.

As a student progresses through school computing needs may change. The functional needs of the first two years may be less than those of junior and senior years or for graduate or professional programs. Students in their junior or senior years should check with their college for any special requirements. See the list of colleges below.

Computer vendors offer special educational promotions to Colorado State University students. The University does not endorse any of the commercial providers or their products, but is pleased to pass on information regarding educational discounts. Visit the [RamTech](#) web site and click on the word "Computers" in the side bar. It's wise to compare these prices to those in your area.

## Sample Desktop/Laptop Hardware Configurations

*Please check the hardware notes listed at the end of this section.*

Hardware	Windows PC	Macintosh
Operating System	Windows 7 SP 1 (not Home Edition) or Windows 8.1 Enterprise	Mac OS X 10.7/10.8
Processor	Core 'i-Series' - multi-core	Intel Core 2
Memory	8 GB	8 GB
Hard Disk	200 GB, SSD	150 GB
Video Card	512 MB dedicated memory	

Hardware	Windows PC	Macintosh
Video Monitor Laptop Monitor	20 inch or larger LED or LCD flat screen 14 inch or larger	19 inch or larger LED or LCD flat screen 13 inch or larger
CD/DVD	DVDRW	DVDRW
Sound Card	Any type with audio input	Built in
Mouse and Keyboard	USB standard	USB standard
Network Hardware	10/100/1000 Mbps Ethernet card (see <a href="#">note 2</a> )	Ships with Gigabit Ethernet port
Wireless	802.11g/n/a/c	802.11n
Backup Hardware	See <a href="#">note 3</a>	See <a href="#">note 3</a>
Printer	Inkjet or Laser (300 DPI or greater)	Inkjet or Laser (300 DPI or greater)

## Hardware Notes:

- Hardware changes at a rapid pace and any machine purchased may not meet the needs of a student through the entire four years.
- Students living in the Residence Halls are encouraged to purchase a network card and network connection. This enables students to connect to the campus network using Ethernet connections, which are many times faster than dialup modems. All rooms in the campus residence halls are wired and offer Ethernet connections. Refer to the [Housing and Dining Services](#) web pages for more information. In addition, connections in campus labs, classrooms, libraries and other public places accommodate students with notebook computers.
  - Student computers that connect in residence halls and to other campus network ports need a 100BaseTX or a combination 10/100/1000BaseTX Ethernet card installed in your computer, plus a Cat5 RJ45 cord to connect your Ethernet card to the wall jack. All residence halls now support 100Base-TX Ethernet connections. Standard brands of cards used on campus include 3COM, Intel, and SMC. If a network card is installed by a dealer, ask them to test it in a live Ethernet network to ensure that it is correctly installed.
- Any computer owner needs to perform backups. Saving data should be done frequently. For small amounts of data consider using a USB Jump/Thumb drive. CDs and DVDs are also a very popular way to back up larger amounts of data. Some larger backup systems, such as an external hard drive, can save a copy of the entire hard disk.
  - Windows-based computers are the dominant choice in most Colorado State University academic programs. Students considering purchasing a Macintosh should carefully examine the requirements and recommendations of their academic programs. See the list of college recommendations below. >

## General Advice on Acquiring a Computer

Computer technology continues to change rapidly, and prices for computers continue to drop. Depending on the student's individual situation and curricular choices, it may make sense to lease or acquire a used computer initially, followed by a new computer when entering the upper division or graduate programs. It is reasonable to expect that any computer will need upgrading over the course of four or more years.

## Campus Software Standards

Specific software packages are used in many colleges and departments across campus. While other packages can provide the same functions, there are significant convenience advantages to using one of the standard packages. In many courses in which assignments are submitted in digital format, it is expected that the files submitted will conform to these standards. Colorado State has a published [list of standards](#) for software and hardware that is purchased with University funds. Recommendations for software used by students is the same as that recommended for the University-owned computers. These include:

- **Virus Software** - [Symantec AntiVirus](#) is free to students.
- **Office Software Suite** - Microsoft Office
  - **Word Processing** - Microsoft Word
  - **Spreadsheets** - Microsoft Excel
  - **Presentation Software** - Microsoft PowerPoint
- **Web Browser** - Microsoft Internet Explorer (preferred) or Firefox.
- **E-mail** - [Google Apps for CSU](#) is the campus standard for student e-mail. Google Apps for CSU is a full featured mail program that allows you to send, read, file, and delete mail all from your web browser. No special software is required and mail accounts are available for free from the University. If you prefer, you can use special email client software including Microsoft Outlook or other IMAP compliant e-mail software.
- **Networking Utilities** - The utilities for ftp, chat, news and other Internet services, are available at no cost. These can be downloaded from the [ACNS Download Center](#).

Registered students can purchase software at educational discount through our campus software store, [RamTech](#). Check their web site for products and pricing.

## Individual College and Degree Program Requirements and Recommendations

The college hardware requirements are met by the configurations listed above, except where noted below. Some colleges have additional software requirements or recommendations. See their web pages for that information. Check the following individual college and degree program requirements carefully. You are responsible to meet the requirements of your chosen college.

- College of Agricultural Sciences - use the recommendations above
- College of Health & Human Sciences - use the recommendations above
- College of Business - use the recommendations above
- [College of Engineering](#)
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences - use the recommendations above
- College of Natural Resources - use the recommendations above
- College of Natural Sciences - use the recommendations above (Some departments prefer Macintosh computers; check with your department).
- College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences - use the recommendations above
- [Professional Veterinary Medicine Students](#)

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