

Remote Teaching and Learning Preparedness Task Force

June 11, 2020

Recommendation – Provide students with a recommendation for minimum hardware requirements to participate in online learning.

To ensure the best possible online experience for students a set of hardware, software and Internet specifications have been developed for communication with students.

Hardware recommendations:

	Minimum Requirement
Processor	Intel Core i5 or AMD Equivalent
RAM	8 GB
Hard Drive	256 GB
Display	1024 x 768
Remote Meetings	Built-in 720p webcam. Laptop integrated microphone and speakers. A wired headset with microphone can improve meeting experience.
Warranty	1 year

Connectivity Requirements

- A high-speed internet connection, preferably high-speed ADSL, Cable, or similar
 - For example, if your connection can support Skype, Netflix and/or YouTube it should be sufficient
- A wired connection to your home Internet router can improve performance in some cases

Operating System

- Windows 10
- Mac OS Catalina or later
- Chromebooks may not provide functionality required
- All available operating system updates must be applied

Browser

Latest stable release of one of the following:

- Chrome (preferred for Collaborate)
- Firefox
- Microsoft Edge

Office & Connectivity Software

All students can install and use the institution's Microsoft Office 365 license on up to 5 devices at no additional cost.

- We recommend every student install the full Microsoft Office suite on their device, including Microsoft Teams.
- Microsoft Office can be found at <http://office365.stfx.ca>; instructions for installation are available from Microsoft: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/download-and-install-or-reinstall-microsoft-365-or-office-2019-on-a-pc-or-mac-4414eaaf-0478-48be-9c42-23adc4716658>

Security Requirements

It is highly recommended that your computer operating system be fully up to date and that you have installed an anti-virus/anti-malware tool.

- Windows:
 - Operating system updated to latest version
 - Up to date antivirus software, such as Windows Defender which comes free with Windows 10.
- mac OS:
 - Operating system updated to latest version
 - We recommend an industry leading antivirus solution; online review sites can provide guidance on the best products.

Backup and File Storage

All students have access to 1TB of free OneDrive storage as part of the institutions' Microsoft Office 365 license.

- We recommended that you store all course work and material in OneDrive so your work is stored and backed up securely.

Rationale:

- Some students will want guidance on what hardware to purchase to meet the needs of their courses.
- A well performing computer that is secured is critical to being able to participate in online instruction, particularly synchronous models.
- Students currently own a wide variety of hardware and software.
- We do know that more than half of our students purchase MacBooks. The remainder consist of Windows computers, Chromebooks, Linux, tablets and others.
- In selecting tools for online delivery consideration was given to minimizing the hardware required. There is, however, a minimum standard required to make the experience acceptable.
- Specialized software required for labs etc. could impact minimum hardware requirements

