Laptop Computer Policy

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Ownership and Use

Every student in the College of Engineering is required to own and maintain a personal laptop or notebook computer that meets the minimum requirements specified below. The purpose of the laptop policy is to assure that all students in the College of Engineering have adequate access to computing resources. It is expected that new students in the College of Engineering will purchase a computer prior to starting classes.

I. Hardware Requirements

The following are minimum hardware specifications for the laptop computer a student should purchase. Computers meeting the minimum specifications are available from multiple vendors. Service and support options, including manufacturer service plans, are available. Maintenance and service is the responsibility of the student.

Processor: Dual-core processor or higher, 2.5 GHz or higher speed

Hard Drive: 500 GB or greater capacity

RAM: 8 GB or greater capacity

Network: Wireless 802.11B/G required. *The College of Engineering has a wireless 802.11B and G network*

Camera: An on-board or external camera is required

Microphone: An on-board or external microphone is required

Speakers: External or internal speakers are required unless headphones are available

Headphones: Headphones reduce feedback problems online and are recommended instead of external or internal speakers. A headphone set with an attached microphone is preferred for interactive online use.

A padded protective case for transporting the computer is recommended. A high capacity (1.0 TB) external hard drive is recommended for backing up files. A printer is recommended as a convenience. Other peripherals, such as an external mouse, keyboard, and monitor, can be added according to preferences and budget.

II. Software Requirements

Currently, all College of Engineering computer labs utilize the Microsoft Windows 10 operating system. Computers that do not use a currently supported Windows operating system (Windows 10 or Windows 11) may not run some required software. If a computer runs another operating system (such as Mac OS or Linux) third-party software may be available to run required applications.

- Microsoft Windows 10 or 11, 64-bit are the preferred operating systems. **Compatibility of required software with other operating systems is the responsibility of the user.**

- Students using Mac OS or Linux can use Oracle Virtualbox (https://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads) to install and run a Windows operating system on their computers, and vice versa.

- Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) is the preferred application package for classroom use. USA Students can download a free version of Microsoft Office through the USA Computing

Services Center, located at https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/csc/microsoftoffice/

- Open source applications, such as OpenOffice, may not be 100% compatible with Microsoft Office and so may not satisfy the requirements for some courses.

- Students can also access Office 365 - a cloud-based suite of word processing tools from Microsoft - using their jagmail.southalamba.edu email address. To get started, visit https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/csc/microsoftoffice/

- Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome are the preferred World Wide Web browsers that are compatible with USAonline, the university online learning management system. Other browsers such as MS Edge and Opera are also supported in most applications.

- Anti-Virus software is strongly recommended. Norton, McAfee and AVG are all reputable providers of antivirus packages.

- Each engineering department requires course-specific/department-specific software. In some cases, student licenses are available that allow free downloads. In other cases, there may be costs associated with instructional software. In these cases, the software will be made available through the USA Bookstore or other sources.

- Installation and maintenance of all software is the responsibility of the owner. University personnel will not install the software.

- Compliance with installation and use policies for software is the responsibility of the student. Violation of such policies may lead to disciplinary or legal action. Every student must comply with the USA Computer Use Policy, located at https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/csc/cscpolicies.html

III.   Classroom Requirements

All courses in the College of Engineering have some online component. Most classes are web-enhanced or hybrid, with some of the course content provided through USAonline. This may include some online lectures. Other courses may be fully online, which means lectures and course content are provided exclusively through USAonline.

- For in-person class meetings, instructors will indicate when a computer should be brought to class.

- Use of the computer is mandatory in some labs. Many activities have been designed to facilitate learning by working through problems using course-specific software. The lab instructor will provide guidance and assistance for such activities.

- Some instructors may require use of the computer during testing and examinations. It is the student's responsibility to come to class with the computer prepared to participate as required.

- Note that in cases where examinations are conducted online, students may be required to have a working camera and have it turned on during the examination.

- Note that students are expected to have access to a reliable internet service connection, with a minimum data transfer speed of 3 Mbps, for lectures, team-based projects, and testing.

- Copying material from sources such as the library and the Web and submitting it without proper citation is plagiarism, which is academic misconduct. Many classes utilize services such as **turnitin.com** to check the originality of submitted student work. Each class syllabus will state the academic misconduct policy for the course.

IV.   Financial Considerations

The actual cost of computers and software changes rapidly. The purchase of a laptop computer is a

significant expense, but some options are available to help with financing.

- Dell Technologies has partnered with the University of South Alabama College of Engineering to offer special pricing. Details are available from http://Dell.com/SouthAlabama

- Some financial aid agreements, loans, and scholarships allow funds to be used for the purchase of required computational resources. Meet with a counselor in Financial Aid to discuss options. Banks, credit unions, and computer vendors also can offer loans or other credit terms.

V.   Important Numbers & Addresses

Campus Bookstore
Website: https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/bookstore/
Phone: (251) 460-7012

Financial Office
Website: http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/finaid/
Phone: (251) 460-6231

USA Federal Credit Union
Website: http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/usafedcu/
Phone: (251) 706-0255

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