

2025-2026 Laptop Minimum & Recommended Specifications for CECS Students

All students entering the College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies (CECS) are required to have a laptop computer.

Below you will find the MINIMUM and RECOMMENDED laptop specifications for the students at the CECS.

MINIMUM specifications are for those who are choosing not to buy a new laptop and want to bring an existing one to DU.

RECOMMENDED specifications are for those who are choosing to purchase a new laptop and need guidance on which specifications to go with. Also please visit our Preferred Vendors list to the left. As a rule of thumb, if you are buying a new laptop, most, if not all, specifications will be fine. However, these guidelines will provide you with a good starting point.

A note on Netbooks: A note on Netbooks/Chromebooks: Netbooks are truly only suitable for basic internet browsing and word processing and are not recommended for students. Netbooks are NOT a viable solution for audio/video/web production & design, database work, and math/engineering applications.

Note: If you decide on purchasing a Mac, please contact your program advisor first. If you need Windows only software, it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** to purchase a Windows laptop.

macOS: If you are taking a course that requires the use of Windows 11, you will need a macOS that supports Rosetta to be compatible with Apple's free Boot Camp utility or virtualization software such as VirtualBox (a free product), Parallels or VMWare Fusion (choose one only). Note that Parallels or Fusion must be purchased separately in addition to the purchase of the computer.

You will need a Windows partition or virtual machine to use required software that is not compatible with a Mac operating system. The minimum required memory and hard drive space allotted to your Windows Bootcamp partition or Windows virtual machine (created using VirtualBox, Parallels or VMWare Fusion) should equal at least 4GB Memory and 50GB free disk space.

Windows software is available via free download from the UT Office of Information Technology (OIT) upon registration as a student.

Students who need to use Windows-specific programs must either have access to a Windows machine or, if available, use the application through apps.utk.edu.

Use the table below to help guide you in deciding which laptop is the best option for you.

	WINDOWS PC (strongly recommended)	APPLE MACINTOSH
Operating System	RECOMMENDED Windows 11 (64-bit) (S mode is <i>not</i> recommended)	RECOMMENDED Minimum Mac OS 15 (Sequoia)
Processor Type	MINIMUM Intel Core i7 Processor	MINIMUM Apple M1 Chip
	RECOMMENDED Intel Core i9 Processor	RECOMMENDED latest "M" chip or equivalent or higher processor
Memory	MINIMUM 16 GB RAM	MINIMUM 16 GB unified memory
	RECOMMENDED 32 GB RAM	RECOMMENDED 16 GB unified memory or Higher
Hard Drive	MINIMUM 512 GB Solid State Drive	MINIMUM 512 GB Solid State Drive
	RECOMMENDED 1 TB Solid State Drive or higher	RECOMMENDED 512 GB Solid State Drive or higher
Graphics Card	MINIMUM 512 MB Video Memory or higher	MINIMUM Integrated card
Wireless Connectivity	MINIMUM 802.11 ac (WiFi-5)	MINIMUM 802.11 ac (WiFi-5)
	RECOMMENDED 802.11 ax (WiFi-6) or higher	RECOMMENDED 802.11 ax (WiFi-6) or higher
Display	RECOMMENDED 14" (1400×900 or higher)	RECOMMENDED 14" (1400×900 or higher)
Other Capabilities	Working built-in camera/webcam	Working built-in camera/webcam
Examples	MINIMUM Dell Pro Premium U7 with 16GB RAM and 512GB storage	MINIMUM 14"/13"-inch MacBook Pro/Air M1 with 16GB unified memory and 512GB storage
	Recommended Dell Pro Premium U7 with 32GB RAM and 1TB storage	Recommended 14-inch MacBook Pro M4 (2024) with 16GB unified memory and 1TB storage

While not your only option, the Examples computers available at VolShop meet the requirements for students entering the college.



Additional Notes:

1. Additional information is available at the [Office of Information Technology](#). You may also contact the OIT help desk at 865-974-9900 or via this [OIT web contact form](#).
2. Students can also drop by the Services in the Common Help Desk for additional student computer support from the Office of Information and Technology. [View a list of their hours](#).
3. Student's VolMail account includes access to Office 365 applications. [Download Office 365 applications »](#)

The college recognizes that the computer ownership requirement may represent an additional financial burden. If you receive financial aid through UT's [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#), the cost of your computer can be considered an additional cost of attending the university. Consideration of the added expense is not automatic. You must go to the financial aid office and request an [Appeal for Budget Increase form](#) at the time you are required to purchase the computer (at the beginning of your first year).