

UT Southwestern School of Health Professions Technical Specifications and FAQ for Laptop Requirements

Dear UT Southwestern Student,

It is time to start thinking about the options for obtaining the laptop you will be using during school. All incoming health professions students are required to bring a laptop. Now the biggest decision confronting you is whether you wish to purchase a laptop from the University Store, purchase a laptop elsewhere, or use a laptop you already own.

We have included the technical specifications for the technology requirements for students. Also, since these are important decisions, we have composed a list of answers to "Frequently Asked Questions" to help. The questions are divided into three sections:

- 1) What are my options for meeting these requirements?
- 2) Can I use financial aid to buy it?
- 3) What can I expect?

Sincerely,

[David Price](#), Student Computer Support

[Dr. Carolyn Bradley-Guidry](#), DrPH, MPAS, PA-C

Interim Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - School of Health Professions

Overall Requirements

The personal technology requirements listed below were designed with the many activities you will face over the course of your time in your academic program, including in-person and distance-delivered curricula. In many situations, you may have a more advanced laptop, which is acceptable as well.

Requirements for a Mobile Phone and Home Internet

To ensure each student has the appropriate technology to adapt to virtual learning should the need arise, you are required to have a personal mobile phone with a camera (any carrier, iOS or Android) and reliable home internet (any internet service provider).

Requirements for a Windows Laptop

While tablets (including a Galaxy Tab, Sony Xperia...etc.), netbooks (computers with an Intel Atom or equivalent), and Google Chromebooks are quality learning devices, they are not solely sufficient for the expected needs and do not meet the minimum requirements. Tablets, netbooks, and chromebooks are not prohibited, but a laptop, as described below, is required. The

Microsoft Surface Pro 7 and newer, as well as the Microsoft Surface Go 2 are acceptable provided they meet the requirements outlined below. Touchscreen laptops are also supported, but you may be required to disable the touchscreen functionality during required assessments.

Minimum Requirements

- **Age of the Device:** Should be 2 years old *OR* newer (highly recommended)
 - To ensure a properly functioning laptop throughout the duration of your program; a device up to 4 years old is acceptable, provided they meet all other requirements. No device over 4 years old will be approved.
- **Operating System:** Latest version of Windows 11 *OR* 10 Professional or Premium (Creators Edition and Home Edition are acceptable; Windows RT, Windows 11S, and 10S are not acceptable)
- **Memory:** 8GB RAM *OR* higher
- **Hard drive:** 256 GB for SSD hard drive (or higher capacity) *OR* an external hard drive with 100 GB free
- **CPU Processor:** Intel Processor required (AMD is not acceptable)
- **Webcam:** HD 720P (minimum streaming resolution); attachable USB HD 720P webcam acceptable
- **Microphone:** Integrated in the laptop (through attachable USB webcam acceptable)
- **Software:** Antivirus software (Available for download at the [UT Southwestern Sophos site](#)).
- **Security:** Privacy Screen (required for on-campus exams, quizzes, and IRATs)

Requirements for an Apple Laptop

While tablets (including iPad Minis, iPad Pros...etc.) are quality learning devices, they are not solely sufficient for the expected needs and do not meet the minimum requirements. Tablets are not prohibited, but a laptop, as described below, is required. It should be noted that students **are allowed** to take UTSW quizzes and exams using an iPad, however a student-furnished laptop is needed for required NBME examinations (several throughout the 4-year medical student experience).

Apple laptops with the Apple Silicon - M Class Processor (including M2 and newer, M1, M1 Pro, or M1 Max) are supported and acceptable.

Minimum Requirements

- **Age of the Device:** Should be 2 years old *OR* newer (highly recommended)
 - To ensure a properly functioning laptop throughout the duration of your program; a device up to 4 years old is acceptable, provided they meet all other requirements. No device over 4 years old will be approved.
- **Operating System:** macOS 13 Ventura and 12 Monterey (11.6 Big Sur is also acceptable, though not recommended)
- **Memory:** 8GB RAM *OR* higher
- **Hard drive:** 256 GB for SSD hard drive (or higher capacity) *OR* an external hard drive with 100 GB free

- **CPU Processor:** Apple M Class Processor (Intel Processor acceptable but not recommended)
- **Webcam:** HD 720P (minimum streaming resolution); attachable USB HD 720P webcam acceptable
- **Microphone:** Integrated in the laptop; through attachable USB webcam acceptable
- **Software:** Antivirus software (Available for download at the [UT Southwestern Sophos site](#)).
- **Security:** Privacy Screen (required for on-campus exams, quizzes, and IRATs)

Additional Information on Software for Windows and Apple Laptops

For the best experience, use Sophos (for antivirus) or Malwarebytes (for malware scanning). We have had poor experience with the antivirus applications listed below, as they negatively impact several crucial applications required in the first year. If you have the following antivirus software installed, please uninstall them before coming to campus.

- Avast
- Norton
- Kaspersky
- McAfee

It is strongly recommended that you do a scan of your machine for viruses (using Sophos) and malware (using Malwarebytes) before coming to campus. If the UTSW network detects a virus or malware on your system, your computer will be quarantined, and you will not be able to access the Internet until your machine is cleaned.

Sophos Antivirus Available to All Students for Home Use

To help our students, along with faculty and staff, protect their personal data, UT Southwestern offers free Sophos Premium antivirus software for home use. Sophos Home Premium antivirus can be used to protect up to 10-PC or Mac home computers. To activate your license, visit the [UT Southwestern Sophos site](#) and enter your UT Southwestern email address.

Additional Information on Types of Laptops

We have also discovered some laptops have more trouble than others on our campus. This doesn't mean these laptops won't work, just these brands have had more trouble and logged more service tickets:

- Acer
- Lenovo
- Sony VAIO
- Laptops labeled Windows High DPI (these are rare machines and typically used in gaming laptops)

We have had the **least** number of problems with Apple laptops.

Laptop Requirements Frequently Asked Questions

What are my options for meeting these requirements?

Students may meet these requirements in any one of the following ways:

1. Use an existing laptop and complete the laptop verification process
2. Purchase a laptop elsewhere and complete the laptop verification process
3. If the cost of purchasing a laptop “out of pocket” is difficult, you may utilize the University store purchase process to pay with financial aid

Due to wide-spread supply chain issues, to be sure all incoming students are prepared for the beginning of school, each must do one of the following by March 17, 2023 for Summer 2023 start date and May 5, 2023 for Fall 2023 start date:

1. Submit a completed laptop verification form by either
 - [Submit the document on your own](#)
 - Get help submitting the document by making an appointment for a virtual laptop review
2. Or, [place an order in the University store for a laptop](#)

What is the Laptop Verification Process?

This process is only for laptops NOT purchased through the University Store. If you have an **existing laptop** or **purchase a new laptop elsewhere**, then you **must** complete this process to ensure your laptop is ready.

To complete the Verification Process, you must select **one** of the **two** available options:

Option 1: Submit your Laptop Verification Form yourself

If you are confident that your laptop (purchased new outside the University Store or already existing) meets the specifications, initial each specification (on the form) and submit the form.

By submitting this form, you acknowledge your laptop meets all specifications and you are solely responsible if it is determined later that it does not meet all specifications. You also acknowledge that if it is determined later that your laptop is insufficient, you will need to upgrade your machine to meet the specifications or purchase a new laptop.

[You may complete and submit the Laptop Verification Form here.](#) (Link will open your browser.)

Option 2: Submit your Laptop Verification Form with help from Student Support

If you are unsure how to check your laptop for the correct specifications or you are not comfortable with Option 1, you may set up a virtual appointment with student support to check

your laptop. For this appointment, a student support technician will log on to your laptop (once you grant the technician access) and check for your laptop configuration. You will be able to watch the entire process to ensure no data is accessed that shouldn't be.

To schedule an appointment, contact the IR Service Desk at 214/648-7600 or email them at servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu. With the technician's help, complete and submit the Laptop Verification Form linked in Option 1.

Does an iPad, Microsoft Surface, netbook, or Chromebook meet the requirements?

The Microsoft Surface Pro 7 or newer, as well as the Microsoft Surface Go 2 are acceptable provided they meet the technical requirements.

The following devices are acceptable on-campus; however, they are not solely sufficient to meet your expected educational needs and **do not meet the laptop minimum requirements**. This includes all:

- Tablets (including an iPad, iPad Pro, Galaxy Tab...etc.)
- Netbooks (computers with an Intel Atom or equivalent)
- Chromebooks

Is a personal privacy screen required for my laptop?

Yes. You are required to have and purchase a privacy screen for all on-campus examinations, quizzes, and other activities that require you to view sensitive material. Privacy screens can be purchased at numerous online or traditional brick-and-mortar stores.

Is Linux supported?

No. The laptop must either be an Apple or Microsoft Windows Machine.

Can I use a beta or early release candidate version of an operating system?

No. Only approved versions of macOS and Windows are allowed on the UTSW network. When new major versions of operating systems are released, you'll receive an email indicating when it is OK to update your machine (if you choose to).

I have additional questions before I select one of these options. Who do I contact?

You should contact David Price, our student support specialist at David.Price@utsouthwestern.edu and CC: the help desk at servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu. They will serve as the first contact with the ability to inquire deeper on your behalf.

Financial Aid Frequently Asked Questions

Is the cost of the laptop included in my financial aid?

Yes. You will be eligible for the funds regardless of where you purchase your laptop. As a matter of fact, an amount of \$2,500 is automatically included in the MS1 financial aid allocation for students receiving financial aid.

If I decide not to buy a laptop this year, is there anything I need to do regarding financial aid?

You may want to decline \$2,500 of your financial aid award. This will allow you to use it in later years if you need to obtain a new laptop before you graduate.

Do I have to purchase my laptop from the University Store if I am receiving financial aid?

No. You will be eligible for the funds regardless of where you purchase your laptop. However, there are two advantages to purchasing your laptop from the University Store:

First, the University Store has agreed to accept payment for your laptop directly from your UT Southwestern student account with one-half of the payment extracted from the initial financial aid disbursement and the remaining half from the mid-year disbursement. Of course, purchasing a laptop elsewhere will likely require payment in full at the time of delivery.

Second, financial aid funding does not become available to students until just before school starts. However, the University Store has agreed to facilitate the ordering of laptops from students with promised financial aid money. To purchase through the University Store, you will need to complete the form, linked above, before the established deadline.

Do I have to take the full \$2,500 even if my laptop costs less?

Absolutely not. You can decline any amount of financial aid, and you are strongly encouraged to borrow only what you need.

Is there anything else I need to know about financial aid and the purchase of a laptop?

Yes. You can only get financial aid to buy a laptop **once** during your enrollment at UT Southwestern. If you elect to take the loan funds this year, buy the laptop this year - because subsequent loans for this purpose will not be possible. If you don't plan to buy a laptop, don't take those loan funds. Don't borrow the money the first year and spend it on a trip to Hawaii instead of a laptop. When you realize later that you really DO need the laptop, the money may not be available. The smart choice is to borrow just what you need to cover whichever laptop purchase option you choose (buy UT Southwestern package, buy elsewhere, no purchase).

Will I be able to lease a laptop?

No. Leased laptops are not available through UT Southwestern.

For more information about financial aid assistance contact the Office of Student financial Aid at 214-648-3611 or financialaid@utsouthwestern.edu.

What can I expect being on campus?

What will be available and what software will I need?

Material from most courses is available and will be accessible using an internet browser. As with all internet connections, the speed of access to the network will influence the feasibility of access. For example, on-campus Ethernet connection will be quicker than wireless. The same material is accessible using Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Apple Safari, but there may be slight differences in appearance. Other software used at the University will be Microsoft Office, Outlook/Exchange E-mail, and Shared Folders (common areas of data storage that allow students to share data).

To download Microsoft Office applications (for free), please login using your UTSouthwestern credentials at <https://portal.office.com> or download them via the Windows or Apple App Stores (using your UTSouthwestern credentials to log in). You may need to sign out of your undergraduate or personal account to access the UTSW license.

Some proprietary software will be available on campus only.

By using Virtual Private Networks (VPN), students may configure their laptops while off campus to be “virtually” on-campus, allowing access to most material restricted to on-campus computers.

How do I keep my laptop safe and secure on-campus?

Keep in mind the laptop you purchase is your property and is completely under your control. UT Southwestern has established standards to help you protect your equipment, but please be very cautious with your laptop on campus. Each student is responsible for ensuring that their laptop has current anti-virus (Sophos is the recommended anti-virus vendor, *see information above regarding downloading Sophos for free*) and up-to-date operating system patches (automatic updates recommended).

While non-encrypted thumb drives are allowed for personal use (e.g. homework), it is encouraged that you consider using an encrypted thumb drive for all situations. Not only does it secure your personal documents, it also protects you if sensitive material accidentally gets saved to that thumb drive.

All students are pre-qualified to receive 1 encrypted 4GB USB thumb drive at no cost. They are available at the IR Data Hall, which is located on the first floor of the Bass Building (BLA 120). Your UT Southwestern ID Badge and signature are required for pickup. You are allowed one device per user; replacements are available for \$30 if the device is lost or stolen.

Security also involves the use of laptops in the context of the curriculum network. Computing and networking resources at UT Southwestern are protected by information security legislation. These resources must be used for University business. **Education is considered the business of students, so e-mail fraud and browsing inappropriate web sites are among the activities listed in the "no-no" category.**

You will be asked to sign a computer use policy and an information security agreement (ISA) when you register for class and each year you are enrolled thereafter.

How do I get help when I need support?

The University staff will be easily accessible for problems. You will be responsible for obtaining hardware warranty services from the manufacturer. Computer and laptop support can be reached 24/7 by calling the IR Service Desk at 214/648-7600 or emailing them at servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu.

UT Southwestern strongly recommends a warranty for as long as you plan to keep the laptop.

UT Southwestern is unable to provide any hardware repair.

What happens if my laptop breaks when I am studying for an exam?

It is strongly encouraged to seek technical support immediately if your laptop has a problem. If your laptop cannot be fixed quickly (either through the UTSW Helpdesk or third-party technical support), you may check out a laptop from OME. These are available free-of-charge on a temporary basis while your laptop is being repaired.

What happens if my computer breaks during an exam?

On-site technical personnel will be able to assist, and if it is determined the laptop cannot quickly be restored, a backup laptop will be available on a temporary basis for the immediate need.

What about other devices?

UT Southwestern does not support smartphones, but devices that support "wpa2 enterprise" should work on our campus wireless network. Best-effort technical support will be provided on-site if there is an issue, but you may be referred to third-party technical assistance (e.g. Apple Support, carrier support...etc.).

Where can I get more information?

Please visit the [Student and Postdoc website](#) (*VPN or On-Campus access required to view this page*) for more information on the computing environment at UT Southwestern. For security reasons, you will not be able to access some pages such as software downloads until you have started classes. This page is only accessible if you are on our network or logged in with VPN. The web address is <https://www.utsouthwestern.net/studentcomputing>.

For questions regarding computer support, please contact the IR Service Desk at 214/648-7600 or servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu.

For questions regarding the purchase of laptops bought through the UTSW University Store, please contact the University Store: University.Store@UTSouthwestern.edu