

Technology for New Students Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a computer on campus?

The quick answer is no. Students are not required to bring a computer with them to campus. There are over 200 computers available in public areas on campus that students may use including the library lab (open for extended hours) and a 24-hour lab. However, most students find the convenience of having a computer in their room extremely beneficial. Computers are a primary communication tool and help students keep in contact. Students will, at times, find themselves having to visit a computer lab whether or not they have their own computer. Some software or hardware is only available in a computer lab and it would be cost prohibitive for students to purchase it themselves.

Should I buy a Windows computer or a Macintosh computer?

Approximately 90% of the computers purchased by the college are Windows-based Dell and the other 10% are Macintosh. ITS supports both platforms on the network, but most of the focus is on Windows computers due to the higher number. Students should purchase the computer they are most comfortable with. Last year, the incoming class brought approximately 30% Macintosh and 70% Windows computers. In the School of Engineering, Math, and Computer Science, students will be expected to use software that runs only on Windows. Mac users may need to dual boot their computer, use an on-campus computer lab PC, or borrow a PC laptop from the Library for a short term.

Should I buy a laptop or a desktop?

Desktops generally provide more computing power and have a larger screen. Portability is the number one reason students choose a laptop. Students can take it to class, the library, or just outside. There is also the added convenience of being able to take a laptop home over breaks. We estimate that 95% of student computers on campus are laptops. Unfortunately, with this portability also comes a higher likelihood of damage. For this reason, ITS strongly recommends that students buying laptops also purchase a warranty that covers accidental damage (e.g. Dell's CompleteCare). Additionally, the computer should be treated with the same security as cash, don't leave it sitting unattended and remember to keep it locked up when not in use – use a security cable.

What else should I know about buying a computer?

Each year, ITS provides a guideline for purchasing new computers. These guidelines provide recommendations for the hardware and software that should be purchased on a machine. These guidelines are a best effort to suggest a machine that will last four years without requiring any hardware upgrades. These specifications are available on the ITS website at: http://www.etown.edu/offices/its/Computer_Specifications.aspx

Can a tablet, Chromebook, or mobile device replace a laptop?

Tablets like the Surface Pro or convertible ultrabooks that run full versions of the operating system, can provide the same processing power of a laptop computer and can run most software packages. These tablets are capable of replacing laptops. However, tablet devices that run mobile operating systems like the Apple iPad, Android Tablet, Chromebooks, and other mobile devices can be wonderful tools, but should not be considered a replacement for a laptop as they have limited processing power and can only run mobile-compatible apps. Chromebooks and other mobile operating systems can make course work difficult as integrations may be limited, including Zoom, Microsoft Office, and other integral applications that are salient to the college.

What version of operating system should I have when I come to campus?

We recommend that computers run the most recent operating system when coming to campus. Currently, that is Windows 10 or OS X 11.2. We currently also support OS X 10.15 and OS X 10.14, however these older operating systems will be phased out over the coming years and will require an upgrade at that time.

What do I need to connect my computer to the wired network?

An Ethernet card is required to connect to the college's wired network. Many machines have integrated Ethernet cards, but some of the ultraportable machines do not. For those machines, USB to Ethernet adapters are available as an additional option. You will also need an Ethernet cable (25' recommended) which can be purchased at any computer store or the college's bookstore.

Is there wireless Internet available on campus?

All buildings on campus have wireless coverage. The wireless network supports up to 802.11ac wireless cards. Configuration instructions can be found on the [ITS Wireless Access webpage](#). Please note it is against the college's [acceptable use policy](#) to install your own wireless router, access point, or gateway. The wired Ethernet network is still the fastest and most reliable method for connecting to the network.

Will my iPad, Kindle Fire, tablet PC, or other device work with the wireless network?

We have two wireless networks on campus. The secure wireless network is an enterprise-level encrypted network. Any device that supports 802.1X encryption will work on this network, which includes most computers and mobile devices. There are a number of gaming and smart TVs that do not support this encryption, so we also provide an open wireless network for them. All devices connected to the network need to be registered with ITS.

Should I buy Antivirus software?

Students should not purchase antivirus software. ITS requires that all computers on the network run FortiClient antivirus and provides this software for free. It will be available for installation when students arrive on campus in the fall. If you plan to use the computer over the summer, ITS recommends you get a free trial version of antivirus software. These are generally available from most manufacturers when you purchase the computer. Please note that you will need to uninstall this trial antivirus program before installing the required software.

Do I need Microsoft Office?

Microsoft is collaborating with Elizabethtown to provide free Microsoft Office to students. Enrolled students are eligible to install Microsoft Office on their computers and personal devices (up to 5 PCs or Macs, 5 tablets, and 5 smart phones). Download and installation instructions for installing this software are available in the [ITS knowledgebase](#).

What other software should I install before arriving on campus?

All computers connected to the network are also required to have the most current updates for their operating system. To save time when registering your computer in the fall, ITS recommends that you install any updates during the summer. Windows users can get their updates from <http://update.microsoft.com> and Macintosh Users should go to the Apple Menu and select Software Update. It is good practice to regularly check for new updates. *These updates are as critical to your computer as running antivirus software.*

Do I get a college e-mail account?

All students are provided with a college e-mail account (@etown.edu). These accounts are considered the official method of electronic correspondence and students are required to check this e-mail account on a regular basis by going to <http://mail.etown.edu>. Students will be provided with their account information (username and password) at the beginning of May.

Does the college provide data storage?

Students have access to two types of data storage:

- 1) 1GB of storage on the college's "Public and Private" folders. These folders can be used to access files from anywhere on the campus network.
- 2) 1TB of cloud-based storage is available to students through Microsoft OneDrive. OneDrive can also be accessed off-campus through Microsoft's website.

Is there cable television available on campus?

Each room and common area is wired for cable television. Students receive the standard cable lineup provided by Comcast free of charge which includes over 100 HD and SD channels. A QAM-enabled television and coaxial cable are required to connect to the cable system. In the summer of 2022, Comcast will be ending support for this service. We recommend the use of a device that can support the Xfinity app to stream these channels via the network. Information about the tuner and a complete listing of the channels provided can be found on the [ITS Cable Channels webpage](#).

Can I stream cable to my computer if I don't have a television?

Residential students have access to Xfinity On Campus (XOC). XOC offers the same channel lineup as the wired cable system and allows streaming to computers and mobile devices when connected to the campus network. XOC also offers on demand, DVR, and premium services.

Do I need to bring a printer to campus?

Every lab has a high speed laser printer and express print stations are available throughout the campus, including in the residence halls. Students are provided 500 pages of free printing each semester at these locations, but some students may still prefer the convenience of a personal printer in their room. Wireless printers are not permitted due to their interference with the wireless network. Printers should be connected via USB directly to the computer with the wireless connection disabled.

I have some additional questions, who can I talk to?

The staff at the ITS Help Desk would be happy to answer any questions you may have about purchasing a computer or any technology at Elizabethtown College. The ITS Help Desk can be reached at 717-361-3333 or via e-mail at helpdesk@etown.edu. Additional, detailed information is available in the [ITS Knowledgebase](#).