

# Computer Requirements for Students in Online and Hybrid Programs

## Do I Need to Purchase a Computer?

**Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with a stable broadband Internet connection.** Alverno strongly recommends that all students have a personal computer powerful enough to support the requirements necessary for online coursework, as well as adequate storage to accommodate new software releases. Many students find the portability of laptop computers to be convenient.

If you do not have access to a reliable computer with broadband internet access, you can use the computers located in Alverno's Computer Center, Library, and Media Hub.

## When should I purchase a computer?

Alverno strongly recommends purchasing a Windows or Mac laptop prior to the beginning of the semester.

## Should I Purchase a Windows computer or a Mac?

Windows and Mac laptops work equally well for your program. It is recommended that you choose the computer that you are most familiar with. For example, if you have typically been a Windows user at your workplace and have not used a Mac before, it is advisable to choose a Windows laptop. \*\* See note about Chromebooks, below.

## Can I Use a Chromebook, iPad, Smartphone, or Tablet Instead of a Windows or Mac Laptop/Desktop Computer?

**Chromebooks, iPads, smartphones, and other tablet devices are full laptops.** These devices may work for some basic web searches and tasks but they do not have the features necessary to allow students to fully participate in online coursework. Alverno recommends that you use a Windows or Mac desktop or laptop computer to complete your coursework.

### System Requirements

Use the following chart to help you pick out a new computer or to determine whether your current computer meets the requirements necessary to complete coursework at Alverno.

Feature	Minimum	Recommended
Operating System	Windows Vista, 7, 8, or 10 Mac OSX 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, or 10.9	Windows 7, 8, or 10 Mac OSX 10.7, 10.8, or 10.9
Processor	Intel Core i5 (Windows/Mac)	Intel Core i5 (Windows/Mac)
Memory	4GB of RAM	8GB of RAM
Monitor Resolution	1024 x 768	1280 x 800 or higher

Feature	Minimum	Recommended
Type of Hard Drive	Standard (HDD)	Solid state
Free Hard Drive Space	<p>500 GB for a new laptop</p> <p>If you will be using a laptop you currently own, it must have at least 5 GB of free disk space.</p>	<p>1 TB for a new laptop</p> <p>If you will be using a laptop you currently own, it is recommended it has 20 GB or higher of free space.</p>
USB Ports	Four high-speed USB 2.0 ports	Five high-speed USB 2.0 ports.
Earbuds/Headphones and Microphone	<p>Speakers are typically integrated into laptops. If you have a desktop computer, you may have to purchase your speakers separately.</p> <p>During online meetings, however, you should <b>always</b> wear headphones or earbuds rather than using your speakers.</p>	
Microphone	<p>Microphones are typically integrated into laptops. If you have a desktop computer, you may have to purchase your microphone separately.</p>	

Feature	Minimum	Recommended
Web camera capable of video web conferencing	Webcams are typically integrated into laptops. If you have a desktop computer, you may have to purchase your webcam separately	
Home Internet Connection	Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a consistent minimum speed of 4 Mbps.  <a href="http://speedtest.att.com/speedtest/">Go to http://speedtest.att.com/speedtest/ to test your internet speed.</a>	Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a speed of 10 Mbps or higher  <a href="http://speedtest.att.com/speedtest/">Go to http://speedtest.att.com/speedtest/ to test your internet speed.</a>
Video RAM	512 MB	1 GB
Wireless Networking	Built-in wireless networking (802.11b/g/n)	Built-in high-speed wireless LAN (802.11b/g/n); 10/
Battery	6 Cell Battery	9 Cell Battery
Internet Browser	Having multiple browsers already installed allowed on your computer allows you to quickly switch to a different browser when you experience a browser-related issue.  Windows and Mac users should download the following free browsers:	

Feature	Minimum	Recommended
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Google Chrome</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mozilla Firefox</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Internet Explorer</a> (Important: This browser should not be used with Moodle or LiveText)</li> </ul> <p>Mac users may also want to use the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Apple Safari</a></li> </ul>	
Java	<a href="https://java.com/en/">Download Java at https://java.com/en/</a> .	
Adobe Flash Player	<p>The Flash Player plugin for your browser will allow you to access Flash video and interactive media which may be posted by some instructors. <a href="#">You can download Flash from the Adobe website.</a></p>	
Adobe Acrobat Reader	<p>Adobe Acrobat Reader is a tool that allows you to view, annotate, and print .pdf files. <a href="https://get.adobe.com/reader/">https://get.adobe.com/reader/</a></p>	
Microsoft Office for Windows or Mac (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote)	<p>While you are a student at Alverno College, have free access to Microsoft Office 365. Office 365 Education is a collection of services that allows you to collaborate and share your schoolwork online. Office 365 includes Office Online (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote), 1TB of OneDrive (cloud) storage.</p>	

Feature	Minimum	Recommended
	<p>As part of our Office 365 agreement, students and faculty can also install the full Office applications on up to 5 PCs or Macs for free. This means <b>you do not have to purchase Microsoft Office software (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote)</b> because it is already provided to you for free.</p> <p><a href="#">Visit Alverno's Tech Services website for details about how to download Microsoft Office software.</a></p>	
Antivirus/Malware Software	<p>To protect yourself from viruses, Trojans, worms and other malicious programs that can infect your computer, Tech Services recommends installing antivirus and anti-malware software. Depending on your operating system (Windows or Mac OS), there are several antivirus and malware programs available either free or that can be purchased.</p> <p><a href="#">Visit Alverno's Tech Services website for more information on antivirus and malware programs for your computer.</a></p>	

## Other Recommendations

- Printer - Note that as an Alverno student, you are allowed to print 400 pages for free each semester.
- 4GB or larger USB Flash Drive (removable storage device)
- External hard drive which meets or exceeds your hard drive capacity (for backups).
- Surge protector or uninterruptible power supply.
- Extended warranty.
- Cable lock to secure your laptop.
- Computer bag for portability and protection
- Check your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy to see if your computer is covered for damage or theft. Or consider purchasing accident insurance when you buy your laptop.

## Personal Computer Support and Repair

Computer Repair for Students Alverno College does not offer computer/laptop diagnostic and repair services to students. The following list may assist you in obtaining the services you need. If your computer/laptop is under warranty, contact the vendor directly. The following locations offer computer/laptop repair services:

- Best Buy 4610 South 76th Street Greenfield, WI 53220 414-281-3434
- Milwaukee PC 4160 South 108th Street Greenfield, WI 53228 414-427-6965
- Apple Store 2500 N. Mayfair Rd. Wauwatosa, WI 53226 414-258-1614
- Geek Squad for in-home service: 1-800-433-5778

## Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Service Desk via email at [helpdesk@alverno.edu](mailto:helpdesk@alverno.edu) or by calling 414-382-6700.