

2008-2009 Polytechnic University Student Laptop Program Requirements

What are the requirements of Polytechnic's Laptop Program?

Polytechnic University requires that all students without exception have an appropriate laptop computer when they commence classes and for the duration of their matriculation. Your laptop is an integral and invaluable tool in your education at Polytechnic. As such,

1. You must have a laptop that can support the required software of Polytechnic's academic program by the first day of classes.
2. You must register your laptop prior to using it on Polytechnic's network by visiting the Laptop Help Desk (located in Rogers Hall Room 339).

This document will discuss how to meet the requirements of Polytechnic's Laptop Program

Required Software

Windows XP Professional or Windows Vista Home Premium (and above) is the required operating system of this laptop program for the following reasons:

- There are significant differences between Windows XP Professional and Windows XP Home Edition. At Polytechnic, we have our students work in teams. Collaboration and easy network integration are critical. This is the major advantage of Windows XP Professional over Windows XP Home Edition.
- Older versions of Windows such as Windows 2000, Windows NT, Windows ME, etc. are no longer fully supported by Microsoft.
- Windows Vista is the newest Microsoft OS and readily available in most laptops today. Vista has new features such as Windows Aero & Sidebar for better desktop navigation. It offers improved security with its embedded firewall and Windows Defender along with the ability to encrypt data and do complete pc backup.
- Much of the required software we can provide via group or volume licenses is only licensed for Windows XP and Windows Vista.

All incoming undergraduate first-year students are required to have the following software installed on their laptops by the first day of classes:

- Microsoft Office or a compatible office productivity suite such as OpenOffice or WordPerfect Office.
- Microsoft Visual Studio 2005
- Anti-virus software with maintained virus definitions
- Mindstorms
- MATLAB Release 2008a

Microsoft Office is not required by strongly recommended given its level of adoption within Polytechnic University. Transfer students may not need all the software listed above.

For all students, dependent upon your academic program and the courses you undertake in later years, you may be required to purchase additional software packages such as the following:

- LabView
- AutoCAD
- Additional “toolboxes” for MATLAB (this can be obtained directly from MathWorks or via a vendor with whom we’ve negotiated pricing for faculty & students, A-Prompt)

The cost of such later requirements will generally be comparable to the cost of a textbook. Whenever possible, you can make use of any software discounts or group licenses that Polytechnic has arranged.

You must respect copyright and software license agreements.

A software license is a type of proprietary or gratuitous license as well as a memorandum of contract between a producer and a user of computer software that specifies the parameters of the permission granted by the producer to the user. All software is protected under United States copyright laws from the time of its creation.

You are required to have valid, licensed copies of all software on your laptop and use this software within the rights granted to you by those licenses. Violation of software licenses or copyright is a violation of Poly’s Acceptable Use Policy. In addition, violation of software licenses or copyright is illegal and severe civil and criminal penalties can result.

Should violation of software licenses be detected, the Information System Department will refuse technical support, disable one’s ability to connect to the University network, and refer the matter to the Dean of Students for judicial action.

What Options Exist for Obtaining Required Software?

There are three options for obtaining required software.

Option	Explanation														
Obtain the software for \$225 from the Polytechnic Laptop Helpdesk	Polytechnic’s Laptop Helpdesk will load on your laptop a software package bundling not only the required software, but additional productivity software for a fee of \$225. The software package includes the following: <table style="margin-left: 40px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">MS Office 2007 Enterprise</td> <td>MS SharePoint Designer 2007</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MS Project 2007</td> <td>MS Publisher 2007</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MS OneNote 2007</td> <td>MS Groove 2007</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MS InfoPath 2007</td> <td>MS Visio 2007</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MS Visual Studio 2005</td> <td>MS Expression Web</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mindstorms</td> <td>Norton Antivirus Corp Ed. 10.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MATLAB Release 2008a</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	MS Office 2007 Enterprise	MS SharePoint Designer 2007	MS Project 2007	MS Publisher 2007	MS OneNote 2007	MS Groove 2007	MS InfoPath 2007	MS Visio 2007	MS Visual Studio 2005	MS Expression Web	Mindstorms	Norton Antivirus Corp Ed. 10.2	MATLAB Release 2008a	
MS Office 2007 Enterprise	MS SharePoint Designer 2007														
MS Project 2007	MS Publisher 2007														
MS OneNote 2007	MS Groove 2007														
MS InfoPath 2007	MS Visio 2007														
MS Visual Studio 2005	MS Expression Web														
Mindstorms	Norton Antivirus Corp Ed. 10.2														
MATLAB Release 2008a															
Obtain the software when you purchase a new laptop through our arrangement with CDW-G	When you purchase a new Lenovo laptop through our arrangement with CDW-G, the laptop’s price includes the installation of the software package described above.														
Obtain the software independently	You have the option of trying to obtain the best pricing arrangement possible via other vendors. This option is not recommended given the lower cost of licenses we have negotiated, but the option is yours. Though you may purchase the required software from any vendor, we have made an arrangement with A-Prompt Corporation for discount pricing on														

	required software for students and faculty of Polytechnic University. Their contact information is as follows: A-Prompt Corporation http://www.aprompt.com/ 1-800-478-9515
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If You Need to Purchase a Laptop Computer

If you don't have a laptop computer or need to purchase a new one in order to meet the requirements of Polytechnic's required academic software, there are two options for its purchase:

1. **You may purchase a laptop computer through an arrangement we have made with CDW-G.**

This arrangement is advantageous for the following reasons:

- These laptops are known to meet Polytechnic's recommended hardware specifications and have been configured with the goal of providing four years of useful life.
- These laptops have been discounted under our arrangement with the vendor. The price includes all initially required software of Polytechnic's academic program.
- Our laptop helpdesk is certified to perform warranty service on IBM/Lenovo notebooks.
- IBM/Lenovo laptops purchased through our program come with a four-year warranty and accidental damage protection.
- CDW-G offers lifetime technical support for laptops purchased from them.

To purchase a Lenovo laptop through our arrangement with CDW-G, go to the following URL:

<http://www.cdwg.com/polytechnic/>

Purchase of laptops via this program is dependent upon submission of your tuition deposit. You must use the above URL to obtain Polytechnic discounted pricing.

2. **You may purchase a laptop computer meeting the hardware specifications described below via another retailer.**

As a practical matter, our help desk is most familiar with IBM/Lenovo machines based upon the history of the program. We cannot commit to the same support on other manufacturer models, simply due to the variety available, but will be as helpful as we can.

When purchasing a new computer, you're making an investment in something you'll most likely be using throughout your four years at Polytechnic. With this in mind, please carefully consider the following advice. Though some items involve greater initial cost, they may save you money over time.

- A three year warranty is often the standard warranty. If it is possible to add an additional year's coverage, you should strongly consider purchasing this coverage to avoid potentially costly time & materials repairs after the warranty expires or the need to replace the laptop.
- Warranties only cover defects in the laptop, but not theft or damage due to accidents. You may wish to look into accident insurance via the laptop vendor or a personal insurance policy.
- Software requirements for hardware performance, memory, and storage can be expected to increase across the span of your academic career at Polytechnic University. Purchasing a "higher end" laptop specification will more likely provide greater utility.

- Better laptops provide a titanium/magnesium composite casing to better protect their LCD displays and other internals. LCD displays can be very costly to replace. Thus, we recommend you purchase a laptop with such a casing.
- Your selection of features above the minimum configuration should be based upon your own preferences and plans. In some cases, you may be planning an upgrade at a later date.
- Purchase a laptop lock that you can use to secure your laptop should you step away from it.
- Purchase a laptop case or laptop bag solely for storage and protection. Never store your laptop along with your books and other things as this will damage your laptop.

For the 2008-2009 academic year, we recommend that a newly purchased laptop meet the “Minimum Hardware Specification” detailed below. To better ensure that a new laptop meets the requirements of your academic program throughout your four years, you may wish to purchase a laptop meeting the “Recommended Hardware Specification” below.

	Minimum Hardware Specification	Recommended Hardware Specification
Processor	Intel® Core™ Duo CPU	Intel® Core™ 2 Duo CPU
Memory	2 GB DDR-RAM, expandable to 4GB	3 GB DDR-RAM, expandable to 4GB
Display	14.1 TFT XGA LCD display 1024x768 resolution	15.4 TFT WXGA LCD display 1280x1024 resolution
Storage	80GB Hard Drive, 5400 RPM CD-RW/DVD Combo Drive	100GB Hard Drive, 7200 RPM DVD-RW/DVD Combo Drive
Networking / Communications	Integrated 802.11b/g wireless Integrated Gigabit Ethernet USB 2.0 port IR port	Integrated 802.11b/g wireless Integrated Gigabit Ethernet USB 2.0 port IR port
Power	Lithium-ion battery (4.5 hr capacity)	Lithium-ion battery (4.5 hr capacity)
Operating System	Windows XP Professional or Windows Vista Home Premium (and above)	Windows XP Professional or Windows Vista Home Premium (and above)
Warranty	3-yr Warranty (4-yr Preferred)	3-yr Warranty (4-yr Preferred)
Estimated Cost (includes Polytechnic Licensed Software, but not taxes & shipping)	\$1,800	\$2,300

The prices above are representative only and shown solely for the purpose of documenting the cost that can be used in the “cost of education” computation.

Federal regulations allow students and/or parents to borrow loans to assist in the financing of computers and required software. After purchasing your computer and/or software, if you wish to obtain a student loan to receive reimbursement for the initial outlay of funds, please provide the Office of Financial Aid with a copy of your receipt at the time of the loan application. If you have any questions you may contact the Office of Financial Aid at finaid@poly.edu.

If You Need Assistance with Your Laptop

Our Laptop Help Desk is skilled in providing technical information and support. Our technicians are certified to do warranty service on IBM/Lenovo notebooks.

While we cannot commit to the same support of other manufacturer models, simply due to the variety available, we will provide as much assistance as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions

I already have a laptop. Can I use it instead of purchasing a new laptop?

If you have an existing machine with Pentium M processor or better, 1024MB of RAM, 60GB or better hard drive, compatible wireless, and the Windows XP Professional operating system, you should be able to run the current required software. However, as new software is released and required in your coursework, you may need to upgrade or replace your laptop.

What can be included in the estimated cost of education for loans and financial aid?

The costs of hardware and software purchased in order to meet the laptop program's requirements may be included in the estimated cost of education for loan and financial aid considerations. For more information, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at finaid@poly.edu.

Must I use the vendors with whom you've made an arrangement?

No. The vendors with whom we've negotiated discounted prices for your benefit are an option, not a requirement. They are familiar with our program and its implementation. The decision of whether to use them is yours. You will want to compare prices, convenience, and other factors. They are an excellent starting point for your price comparisons. The decision, however, is yours.

What is the rationale behind the minimum and recommended hardware requirements?

- **Overall configuration:** The Intel Centrino® configuration was designed for laptop use, specifically providing a high level of performance with relatively low battery usage. It consists of an integrated package of the Core™ Duo processor plus wireless capability, designed to work together for low power consumption. Your primary concern should be battery life between charges, and overall battery life. You should ensure that any alternate configurations would provide a similar level of performance with equivalent battery life.
- **CPU:** The Intel® Core™ Duo is designed specifically for use in laptop computers. If you choose a laptop with a different CPU, be sure to pay attention to expected battery life. For example, the desktop Pentium-4 is used on some laptops, and frequently is the cause of short life between battery charges and/or reduced battery life. Within the Core™ Duo line, a higher clock rate will generally have a longer technical life of the laptop throughout your college career. If you choose a CPU other than the Core™ Duo, it should have equivalent performance in industry-standard benchmarks.
- **Display:** You'll be spending a lot of time looking at your laptop's display, so quality is an important issue. In general, the larger the size and the higher the resolution, the better. If there's a tradeoff, size is more important.
- **Memory:** Windows XP Professional and Windows Vista are designed to handle a large amount of main memory, and recent experience has shown that with the increased use of streaming video and increased use of MPEG3 for music, more memory is better. Given the current pricing for main memory, 1024MB is the minimum you should consider.
- **Hard Drive:** Given the growing use of MP3 music, streaming video, and multimedia applications in general, the general rule of thumb is "bigger is better". We believe 60GB is the smallest acceptable size for a hard drive, and 80GB is much better. The speed of the drive in RPM is important for large files, and you should seek the highest value you can. 5400 RPM is a speed that you should be able to find easily, and 7200 RPM will give you noticeably better performance.
- **CD-RW/DVD Drive:** The ability to make permanent media is important, and we believe that DVD will become the dominant medium over the next few years. Therefore, a combo drive that supports both formats is necessary. DVD writing standards are not firm yet, and there have been problems with different drives being able to read disks created by each other. Therefore, we are

recommending using CD-RW technology, but still having a DVD drive.

- Wireless: Polytechnic's current wireless network is IEEE 802.11b, and will be for the indefinite future. Therefore, a laptop that supports IEEE 802.11b or compatible is mandatory.
- Ethernet: Any reasonable laptop will support 10/100/1000 technology, and there are many wired ports throughout the University that support the higher speed and greater security of wired Ethernet.
- USB: Version 2.0 ports are now commonplace and are much faster than the USB 1.0 or USB 1.1 technology. It should not be hard to find a laptop that supports USB 2.0, and anything less is not cost effective.
- IR port: It is crucial to have this device on your laptop. Students will have the capability to print anywhere on campus especially in the designated areas such as the computer labs, library, student lounge, and places where there is a printer available. Without this, students would have to use the university's computer to print documents.
- Battery: This is one of the most critical parts of your laptop. Many students like to work in places where there is no electrical power (e.g. coming in on the train or subway in the morning, sitting in the park outside Rogers Hall), so having a good battery is extremely important. Lithium Ion technology currently has the greatest battery life. In fact, you might consider buying a "booster" battery as well. The older Nickel Hydride or Nickel Cadmium technologies have MUCH less battery life, and should be avoided. After you acquire your laptop, be sure to read the manual on how to prolong battery life, and follow the manufacturer's recommended practices.
- Case: A titanium/magnesium case is extremely desirable. Students usually keep their laptops in a backpack or similar arrangement, and have damaged their displays due to pressure on the case of the laptop. A titanium case will resist this damage more effectively. In addition, there are slip cases you can buy for your laptop in computer accessory departments which may help minimize this damage. Buying a laptop with a normal plastic case and putting it in a case with other items (e.g. textbooks) is asking for trouble.

More Questions?

- **For questions about the laptop program or other technical matters**, please send an email to notebook@poly.edu. Make sure to check the Information Systems website for updates at the following URL:

<http://insight.poly.edu/laptops>
- **For questions regarding the purchase of a laptop through our recommended vendor**, please contact the CDW-G account manager whose information is provided at the following URL:

<http://www.cdwg.com/polytechnic/>
- **For questions related to other aspects of your admission or Polytechnic University's academic programs**, please contact the Admissions Office at uadmit@poly.edu or (upon admission) your academic advisor at advisement@poly.edu.