

MLC Student-Owned Technology Devices

Students at MLC are expected to have a student-owned computing device available for use in class. It is up to the individual instructor as to how devices will be used in their classrooms. Not every instructor will use the devices on a daily basis, but only when it enhances the learning experience in some way.

Functionality of Devices

The goal of any device is to be usable in a variety of contexts. Because of this it is recommended to purchase a device that is durable and has a long battery life. It will need to handle the rigors of student life on campus. It is wise to discuss the specifications of any device under consideration with the chosen vendor, who will help in the difficult balance between cost, efficiency, and robustness (i.e. consider specifications as well as cost when purchasing).

The main use of devices in class often centers around the use of word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation tools, along with a web browser (the learning management system on campus is accessed through a web browser). Access to a modern web browser is a requirement.

Please note: *Google Workspace* is web-based and is free to all instructors and students at MLC. It includes word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation tools. In addition, recent versions of *Microsoft Office* are available through MLC Network Services for both Microsoft Windows and Apple macOS computers at a greatly reduced price.

Recommended Devices

MLC does not publish a recommended device list for students to choose from, but we do list some recommended minimum specifications to enable students to make an informed decision around which device(s) to purchase. You are free to choose the specific model/brand you desire along with insurance and/or service agreements through your vendor.

Laptops/Notebooks/Convertibles

In general, laptops/notebooks are the most commonly purchased device for use in the classroom. There are a number of different brands/manufacturers to choose from with a variety of price-points. Laptops in general are larger, heavier, and have a shorter battery life than some other devices, such as tablets, but balance that with built-in keyboards, optional touch screens, higher performance, and ability to run some legacy software.

Specifications to Look At

- Modern Operating System
 - Microsoft Windows 10 or later
 - Apple macOS 10.15 “Catalina” or later
 - Google ChromeOS
 - Various Linux Distributions (Ubuntu, Fedora, openSUSE, etc.)
- 4 GB RAM (memory) or greater
- 100 GB hard drive (HDD or SSD) or greater (not applicable to ChromeOS devices)
- Webcam and microphone
- 6 hours of battery life or greater

Chromebooks & Student Teaching

Student teaching requires a device capable of recording and processing video. Students report that Chromebooks can be frustrating to use for these requirements. Students preparing to student teach in the upcoming year may wish to evaluate their current devices and consider an upgrade, if necessary.

Some students elect to rely on the Chromebook that was issued in high school. A four year old Chromebook may not have the capability or reliability necessary for college work. Students with older Chromebooks may wish to consider an upgrade.

Tablets

Tablets are usually smaller, less powerful, simpler devices than laptops/notebooks. Often they have better battery life to go along with being easier to slip into your bag to take to class. While often considered secondary devices to a desktop or laptop in your room, they are becoming more and more capable as time goes on, but be aware of the limitations of using these devices. There are some educational programs and other tools that will not run on tablets.

Specifications to Look At

Specifications are hard to quantify when it comes to tablet devices. The main thing to keep in mind is to purchase newer devices that are loaded with a recent version of the tablet’s operating system.

Desktops

More common years ago, some students still use desktops in their dorm room and have a separate device to take to class when needed.

Specifications to Look At

- Modern Operating System
 - Microsoft Windows 10 or later
 - Apple macOS 10.15 "Catalina" or later
 - Google ChromeOS
 - Various Linux Distributions (Ubuntu, Fedora, openSUSE, etc.)
- 4 GB RAM (memory) or greater
- 100 GB hard drive (HDD or SSD) or greater (not applicable to ChromeOS devices)
- Webcam and microphone

FAQs

Do I need to load any software on my device prior to coming to MLC?

Many devices come with a lot of preloaded software when purchased. Additional software may be needed depending on the activities the student chooses to engage in. Many free software alternatives, such as Google Apps, are available and students are encouraged to make use of them. Instructors will inform students of any specific apps that are required for their classes. Also, each student is required to carry security software to detect, prevent, and mitigate viruses, malware, spyware, and other nefarious software. What program to specifically install is up to the student, but there are free offerings available from many vendors.

Is it essential that I have Microsoft Office software (e.g. Word, PowerPoint, Excel) on my device?

While having these programs on your device might be beneficial due to their greater functionality compared to some free alternatives, they are not required. All devices need to be able to access and work with word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet files. The specific program you use is up to you.

If I wish to have Microsoft Office software available on my device, should I purchase this before or after coming to MLC?

If the software is not included with the purchase of your device, it is suggested that you purchase the software directly from Microsoft or another reseller. Contact MLC Network Services if there are any questions.

What should I do if there is a problem with my device while at MLC?

You are welcome to check with Network Services for directions.

What responsibility will MLC take if my device is stolen and/or broken at MLC?

The student is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and security of his/her own device. MLC carries no insurance on the personal belongings of students.

May the students use 4G/LTE/5G as well as WiFi?

Yes, students may use their own data plans. There is no guarantee provided as to the signal strength of cellular providers on campus. MLC also has available to students a wireless network, which is safe and monitored.