Texas A&M Health Information Technology makes the following recommendations for incoming students to satisfy computing needs during their time with the school. Due to brand loyalty, pricing, and availability, the school does not make any specific recommendations on brand or model. Instead, the following recommendations are made regarding specific components. Whether bringing an existing laptop or deciding to purchase new, the following should be considered:

Minimum Requirements

Mac vs. PC: Either will suffice. Most of the required software has versions that will work with either platform.

> **Note:** At some point in your coursework, you may run into software that is Windows-only compatible. Should that occur, and you have a Mac, additional effort and subsequent cost may be necessary to ensure your Mac functions with the software.

Warranty: A current warranty, for as long as you plan to use the laptop, is recommended. We suggest a warranty that includes *accidental damage protection* (wording may vary vendor-to-vendor) to cover accidents. Keep in mind that parts fail, accidents happen, and repairs are costly. Plan to spend several hundreds of dollars if your laptop is out of warranty and needs to be repaired or replaced.

Processor: Intel i5, i7 (9th generation or newer) or AMD equivalent or better.

> **Note:** i9 processors are great if you can afford the extra cost but will not yield substantial benefit. On the other hand, an i3 processor is typically under-powered for most day-to-day use.

Memory: 8GB (gigabytes) minimum; 16GB (or more) recommended.

Hard Drive: 250GB (gigabytes) or more required. Solid State Drive (SSD) is strongly recommended for significant performance boosts.

Optical Drive: Basic DVD-ROM drive.

> **Note:** Many new laptops do not ship with an optical drive, so consider an "external" USB-powered drive you can order from Amazon or elsewhere.

Networking Connectivity: An ethernet port (or a port that can be combined with an ethernet adapter) and a 5ft ethernet cable are **required** for all laptops. If your laptop does not have built-in ethernet (for example, the MacBook Pro) you **must** purchase an ethernet adapter and corresponding cable.

Wireless network connectivity with support for *WPA2 Enterprise* is available for non-essential usage. **All testing and classroom activities will utilize the ethernet port (or adapter) and cable.**

Date Encryption: Student devices that connect to the campus network and are used in a clinical setting **must be encrypted**. This will secure your sensitive personal data, as well as school-related protected health information (PHI), in the event your device becomes lost or stolen.

Your computer **must have a *Professional or Educational version of Windows 10* (or newer)** to encrypt your device through *BitLocker*.

> **Note:** Windows laptops require a *TPM chip*, a part included on the circuit board of your laptop, to encrypt the device. Your device needs to have this to meet the encryption requirement!

Macs **must be upgraded to *MacOS Big Sur* or *Monterey* (or newer) AND** have *FileVault* **enabled** to encrypt the device.

Battery: Capable of 4 hours runtime (bigger batteries may be more desirable).

Operating System: Windows 10 64bit, Professional or Educational versions (or newer), or MacOS Big Sur or Monterey (or newer) for Macs.

> **Note:** Laptops running a version of Windows or MacOS, that are no longer supported by the vendor, cannot be used on the Texas A&M network due to security risks and are not allowed.

External Storage: We do **NOT** recommend external storage (like a thumb drive or external hard drive) due to the risk of downloading and losing personally identifiable data, protected health information, or other sensitive data.

> **Note:** If you feel external storage is necessary, we recommend a device that allows you to set a physical pin-code on the thumb drive to restrict unauthorized access.

In its place, we recommend *Texas A&M Health's Digital Backpack*, https://it.tamu.edu/health/digital-backpack/. This site has links to the digital resources available to all Texas A&M Health Students, including *Microsoft Office 365* with 5TB of free, secure, HIPAA-compliant, cloud storage (https://it.tamu.edu/microsoft-365/).

Texas A&M students also have access to the *Texas A&M Software Center* where you may get various programs at reduced, and sometimes free, cost. Visit http://software.tamu.edu/ for more details.

A Note About Student Device Support

Texas A&M Health IT exists to serve your technical needs during your time with Texas A&M! We may be reached by email at HealthTechCare@tamu.edu or by phone at 979.436.0250.

We strive to provide *Good Faith Effort Support* to all Texas A&M students during their time in school. Due to the nature of support, personally owned equipment, financial limitations, and various other factors, there may be times where we must limit what we can support. More details may be found at the following link: https://it.tamu.edu/health/health-it-services/supported-software-and-hardware.php#section6.

Welcome to Texas A&M Health. We can't wait to meet you!