

Office of the First Year Undergraduate Studies

100 Institute Road
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Computer Recommendations

What Kind of Computer Should I Bring?

Students are not required to buy their own computer at WPI as the campus is equipped with many computer labs, and computers to loan within the Library and Campus Center.

Planning to purchase a computer?

The following configuration should meet your needs at WPI:

- Current generation i5/i7 Processor or equivalent with an Integrated Graphics Card⁺
- 8GB of RAM⁺
- 500GB hard drive
- Gigabit Ethernet Adapter
- Dual band Wireless Adapter (802.11ac recommended, 802.11n minimum)
- Windows 10 (64 bit) or OS X (10.9 or higher)
- DVD+/-RW or Blu-ray Optical Drive (Optional)
- External hard drive approximately twice the size of computer hard drive capacity (for backup)

⁺Additional RAM and a Dedicated Graphics Card may better serve your needs if your major will require graphic intensive software.

Should I bundle Microsoft Office and/or a printer into my purchase?

There is no need to bundle Microsoft Office as it is available to WPI students at a significantly reduced cost (see Computer and Software Purchase section). Public printers are available across campus but many students appreciate the convenience a personal printer offers. A cable is required to use a personal printer in a residence hall (see Network Information).

Deciding between a Mac or Windows PC?

Price is often a factor in this decision making process. Most WPI students opt for a Windows-based PC because it is cost-effective and compatible with most academic software. For students choosing Apple/Mac systems, remote access servers enable use of a wide variety of academic software.

Deciding between a laptop or tablet?

A laptop computer or convertible tablet can be used for most work at WPI. It is important to consider the price of a laptop/tablet versus a desktop for the same performance. If a laptop/tablet lacks the resources needed for a particular project, computers are available in the public labs. In general, desktops are cheaper and easier to upgrade.

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Mobile tablets (iPad/Galaxy Tab/Kindle) are not recommended as primary computing devices because most academic software is not designed for these devices. Many WPI students use a tablet or other mobile device to supplement a laptop/desktop.

Computer and Software Purchase

Discount programs for computer purchases are available through the following companies:

- [Apple](#)
- [Dell](#)
- [Lenovo](#)

Extended Warranty

WPI Information Technology Services (ITS) recommends students purchase an extended warranty and on-site coverage with accidental damage. For most students, this purchase is a four-year investment.

Software Available through WPI

Academic software is available on campus at no cost via WPI's network, including Microsoft Office.

Registered students are eligible to login WPI's online store at www.wpi.edu/+onlinestore to shop for and install discounted products such as Microsoft Office, Windows Upgrades, Adobe, and others.

Windows 7, 8.1, 10: All 32-bit and 64-bit editions are supported by WPI ITS. Where software vendors are still updating academic applications for Windows 10, the applications will be available in campus labs or via remote access servers.

Macintosh OS X 10.9 and Greater: Because some academic software is not available for the Mac OS X platform, WPI makes software available via remote access servers. Mac OS X upgrades for personally owned computers are not available through ITS.

Microsoft Office: WPI ITS supports Microsoft Office 2016, 2013 for Windows, and 2011, 2016 for Mac. Office 2013 and 2016 are available on public computers. Office 2016 is also available for purchase at a discount. Visit the online web store to purchase or upgrade Microsoft Office on a personal computer.

Antivirus Protection

WPI students must install antivirus protection prior to joining WPI's network.