Other than Recommended Computers, Laptops, and Tablets

The Office of Technology Services (OTS) understands that Towson faculty and staff sometimes need computers that are not included on our recommended hardware list. Purchasing other than recommended computers is a department decision and will require department approval. Because there are many manufacturers of Windows computers and tablets, e.g. HP, IBM, ASUS, Dell, OTS support for computers not on our recommended hardware list will be limited and the department will have responsibilities.

Be sure to purchase computers with the recommended minimum baseline specifications and work with OTS before purchasing other than recommended computers to ensure the best possible support. It will save you time, money, and the frustration of having to return computers that do not work on the Towson network.

Recommended Minimum Baseline Specifications

Purchasing new computers with the recommended minimum baseline specifications will meet the requirements for most academic needs and will provide you with the best performance when using campus services and when running specialized software. Students, check with your college or department that apply to your major for additional requirements and recommendations.

Component	Windows Desktop/Laptop	Mac Desktop/Laptop	Windows Tablet	Apple Tablet
Operating System (OS)[1]	Latest Business or Enterprise 64-bit OS	Latest OS	Latest full version Windows Professional OS	Latest OS
Processor	Intel Core i5	Intel Core i5	Intel Core i5	A14 Bionic chip
RAM	16GB	16GB	8GB	
Hard Drive	256GB Solid State	256GB Solid State	Your choice	Your choice
Warranty[2]	Yes, get Dell 3 Year Basic Support warranty, or warranty provided by other manufacturers	3 Year AppleCare	Yes, get warranty and/or accidental coverage	3 Year AppleCare
Security (Theft Recovery Services)[3] **Coverage for laptops and tablets**	3 Year Absolute, Inc. CompuTrace Professional	3 Year Absolute, Inc. CompuTrace Professional	3 Year Absolute, Inc. CompuTrace Professional	

[1] Home editions of Windows operating systems will not work on the Towson network and cannot be kept up-to-date with upgrades, security patches, virus updates, etc. It is the department's responsibility to ensure the computer remains up-to-date.

[2] If you purchase the recommended warranty for a Dell system that is not on our recommended hardware list, OTS can assist you with warranty repairs. If you do not purchase the Dell warranty or if you purchase a computer from another manufacturer, e.g. HP, IBM, etc., OTS cannot assist you with warranty repairs for TU-owned computers.

[3] Purchase Absolute, Inc. CompuTrace Professional coverage through OTS so that it can be managed under the Towson University account with Absolute, Inc. This will ensure that OTS and TU Police can file a theft report should the laptop be lost or stolen.

Department Responsibilities

- Using the original operating system (OS) and configuration purchased with the computer.
- Having the resources available to reformat the hard drive and reinstall the original OS and configuration if necessary.
- Handling warranty repairs if the computer is not a Dell or it does not have the Dell 3 year Next Business Day Warranty.
- Maintaining the OS with security patches, updates, and virus protection if the computer cannot be managed by the Towson network.

Note: It is recommended that you work with your department or department IT coordinator to determine what, if any, additional support they can provide.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

A. General Information

A.1.   What is the purpose of recommended standards?
Recommended standards ensure that purchased computers will work on the Towson network. They also allow OTS to provide complete support including set-up, installation, configuration, and maintenance for purchased computers. Recommended standards will save you time, money, and the frustration of having to return computers that do not work on our network.

A.2.   What are Towson's recommended standards?
The OTS hardware recommendation web site will give you a detailed description of Towson's recommended standards for all new computers to be used on campus. That site can be found at:

http://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/hardware.html

A.3.   I found a better deal. Why shouldn't I go with the better deal?
It may appear you are finding a better deal, but it may end up costing you more. You may not be able to configure your new computer on the Towson network or receive the support you need from OTS. Departments will spend more time supporting these other computers themselves because they will receive limited assistance from OTS.

A.4.   I do not have enough money to purchase the recommended Windows system. What can I do?
 If you purchase a Dell system that is not recommended by OTS, make sure it includes the recommended minimum baseline specifications detailed in the table above.

A.5.   What are the potential consequences if my department purchases a computer other than what is recommended?
Computer models that are not recommended can make the Towson network vulnerable if they cannot be routinely protected with security updates through OTS. Additionally, OTS does not stock common replacement parts such as hard drives, memory, etc. to repair other models of computers. This increases the time it takes to repair your computer and puts much of the responsibility on you instead of OTS.

A.6.   What situations warrant the use of computers that are not recommended?
OT S understands there are unique circumstances that require the use other computer models. Some circumstances that may warrant the use of non-standard computers are:
- The computer will be connected to an external device or scientific equipment that is incompatible with recommended standards.
- Grant and discipline-specific technology is not included in the recommended standards.

- Recommended standards are incompatible with required software.

A.7. **The recommended standards do not meet my needs or the needs of my department. Are there options?**
We are sensitive to unique circumstances when other computer models are required. OTS will work with you to find a solution that meets your needs while ensuring compatibility and consistency with security best practices. Please contact the Help Center for help and assistance.

B. Department Responsibilities.

B.1. **Who will be responsible for installing, configuring, and maintaining the computer?**
If OTS is unable to configure your computer to connect to the Towson network, the department will be responsible for installing, configuring, and maintaining the computer. This includes maintaining the operating system service packs, security patches, software upgrades, and keeping Anti-Virus software up-to-date.

B.2. **Where do I get software and updates?**
OTS provides resources to obtain Microsoft updates and other third party software for university computers. For details, see the Software Distribution site and the Available Software site for university computers.

B.3. **Who takes care of handling warranty repairs?**
If you do not purchase a Dell system with the standard 3 year next business day coverage (NBD), the department is responsible for handling any warranty repairs as defined by the warranty purchased with the computers. Non-Dell warranty repairs cannot be covered through OTS.

B.4. **Who will return the computer to the vendor, if necessary?**
The department will be responsible for returning the computer to the vendor.

B.5 **What about hardware upgrades or replacements?**
The department is responsible for purchasing upgrades and/or replacements.

B.6. **Who takes care of compatibility issues?**
The department is responsible for troubleshooting compatibility issues, including issues with the operating system, software, and driver configurations.

C. OTS Limited Support

C.1. **If I purchase other computer models, will I have access to install university applications?**
OTS will help you gain access to and install compatible university applications such as Antivirus software, Microsoft Office, etc.

C.2. **If I purchase a computer with an incompatible operating system, how can I connect to the Towson network?**
OTS will install the components necessary for you to use Virtual Workspace to access the Towson network and configure the computer to use the Towson wireless network.

C.3. **Will OTS provide any maintenance or support?**
OTS will provide basic support for all systems as noted in previous FAQs including access to campus applications, online services, and connection to our wireless network.

- If the computer has Windows Business/Enterprise Operating System (OS), OTS will help you connect to our network, maintain the OS, and provide antivirus security updates through our network.
- If the computer is a Dell with a 3 year Next Business Day Warranty, we will assist with warranty repairs (depending on the computer configuration).