



Minimum Recommended IT Specifications for UNSW Students (2008)

UNSW Guideline	
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Related Policies & Documents	<i>'IT Requirements for UNSW Students' – Academic Board Policy</i>
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1. Preamble

These are the recommended minimum IT specifications required to be able to access the majority of UNSW IT systems and services, including My eLearning VISTA (Learning Management System) and MyUNSW, from an off-campus computer. Students will be advised if their Faculty's requirements differ from the requirements stated here. This is particularly important in relation to selecting an appropriate Web browser.

Students requiring assistive technologies for learning should contact the Equity and Diversity Unit for advice on:

Tel: (02) 9385 4734, email: studentequity-diversity@unsw.edu.au

Web: <http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au/disabil.html>

2. Scope

These guidelines are designed to assist UNSW students when selecting computing items (hardware and software) for home use, in order to be able to access the majority of online teaching and learning services at UNSW.

3. Guidelines

3.1 Hardware

In general, any computer with a DVD drive and standard software packages purchased in the last 18-24 months should well satisfy the requirements. Older machines may also support the requirements.

As a guide, both PC and Macintosh computers less than 3-4 years old, with Windows XP (SP1) or above, or Mac OS 10.2 and above should support these requirements, as should machines running Linux or other versions of Unix.

However, the performance of current-version software on older machines can be variable – in some cases performance will be acceptable, in others the software may not work at all.

Internet Connection:

Standard broadband or above is desirable for adequate Web access.

Wireless Connections:

Wireless connections should support any of protocols 802.11a/b/g, with a preference for 802.11g.

File Backup:

Students' personal computers should include an appropriate device to store backup files, such as a DVD burner, external hard drive, or USB stick.

3.2 Software

3.2.1 A Web browser* that supports the programs and applications you are required to use as part of your studies, and to access email. Currently recommended browsers:

- Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher (PC)
- Firefox 2.x (PC or Mac)
- Safari 2.0.1 or higher (Mac OS X)

Note: My eLearning VISTA has specific browser and Java plug-in requirements, which may be accessed from www.elearning.unsw.edu.au

3.2.2 An “office suite”-type software bundle containing at least:

A word processing program, capable of creating, importing and exporting documents and text. For non-editable documents, the preferred file format is .pdf as this is readable on all computer systems. Students may wish to use .pdf for submission of the final version of an assignment, for example.

A spreadsheet program able to import and export ASCII delimited files.

Software able to **read .pdf files** (eg Adobe Acrobat Reader *).

A program able to **import and export images** in widely-used formats such as JPEG, TIFF or PNG.

Software to enable **file transfer using FTP or similar** protocols (Only if required, check with your Faculty).

Networking software to **enable TCP/IP connection** (eg modem using PPP).

- 3.2.3 **Email software** able to link to a POP3 or IMAP server (normally included with most **Web browsers**).
- 3.2.4 **Antivirus software**, kept regularly updated. Note: UNSW provides anti-virus software free of charge to students and staff.
- 3.2.5 **Personal firewall and tools capable of intercepting malicious webware** (eg ZoneAlarm *)
- 3.2.6 **Multimedia software able to play video and audio files in common formats** (eg Quicktime *, Windows Media Player *, Flash Player *, Shockwave *, I-Tunes (for podcasting)).

3.3 *Optional*

- 3.3.1 Software able to **edit and publish HTML documents**.
- 3.3.2 Software able to **detect and disable spyware/adware** (eg AdAware*, Spybot *).
- 3.3.3 Software for **preparation and display of presentations** (often included in a typical "office-suite" software bundle)

(* can be downloaded free from the Internet).

4. Policy Framework

This Guideline is attached to, and should be read with, the UNSW Policy "IT Requirements for UNSW Students". The Guideline will be reviewed annually for currency.

5. Acknowledgements

This document is a revision of the 2004 Guideline attached to the UNSW policy "Information Technology Requirements for UNSW Students".

It was updated by Jenny Beatson, Policy Officer, IT at UNSW and reviewed by the Academic Services Committee of the Academic Board prior to submission for approval.

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