IT Essentials – preparing for study

Getting ready for university can be a busy time, so we've put together this short guide to help you prepare. It outlines the IT equipment you'll need to study with us and provides answers to some of the questions you may have before you begin.

Personal Computer

To take notes during lectures, access online course material, undertake assessments, ask questions and engage with your peers, you will need a personal device. Laptops offer flexibility as you can use them at home and on campus. However, if you are working from a desktop computer at home, you can use your ID card to borrow a laptop from LapSafe when you need a laptop on campus.

Recommended minimum specifications

- Operating system should be the latest supported version of Windows or MacOS
- Intel i5/i7 CPU or equivalent
- 16GB RAM
- 512GB hard drive
- 13"/15" screen
- Webcam

We do not make official recommendations on the specific make of laptops, but it is worth noting that many of the major PC vendors offer discount schemes for students.

Other Considerations

- Choose a lightweight device with long battery life
- More RAM is usually better
- An SSD can improve performance
- A touchscreen is useful for note-taking but optional



iPads and Chromebooks may not be suitable for courses requiring specialist software (Engineering, Geosciences and Computing courses). Check with your school for any specific device requirements.

Reliable internet access

On campus and in University Halls, you can use the eduroam wireless network.

Off campus, you need a reasonable download speed. We broadly estimate at least 2MBps so that you can take part fully in live sessions. To find the best student broadband deal for your part of the city use a postcode checker on one of the digital comparison sites accredited by Ofcom. See price comparison – Ofcom.

Speakers, headphones and webcam

Most of our online courses feature audio so you'll need your laptop's built-in speakers.

You may also need a microphone to participate in online tutorials and group activities. Your laptop may feature a built-in microphone, but a headset with built-in microphone and earphones can also be useful

In addition, a webcam is useful for some interactive sessions.

Software

Microsoft 365

All registered students can download a copy of Microsoft 365 at no charge. This means you can use Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other Microsoft 365 apps for free.

Other software

The Software Download Service provides free access to selected software packages covered by the University's site licences for installation on your personal computer

Access can also be facilitated via our Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)

IT Issues

If you have any issues while studying with us, our IT Service Desk is here to help. Log into myit.abdn.ac.uk, where you can:

- Chat with us during working hours
- View self-help solutions
- Report an IT issue

Or email us at servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk

Find out more about IT Services for student

You'll find more about other IT Services for students on Toolkit – your digital companion for the University of Aberdeen