

# Buying a laptop computer for your studies

Laptop technology changes rapidly, which can make choosing the right laptop computer a confusing experience for some. We've put together some guidance to help you make the best choice of device to support you in your studies here at Hull.

Here to help

If you need any advice or guidance before you make a purchase, we are here to help. From Thursday 13 August, you can email our technical staff at [tech-advice@hull.ac.uk](mailto:tech-advice@hull.ac.uk) with any questions you may have. Or you can speak to us using our Live Chat function in the My Hull portal. Please use the chat service under the 'Talk to us section' to ask for Tech Advice.

If you are not familiar with the MyHull portal, we have created a helpful video. This outlines all you need to know about how to raise an enquiry.

We will also be running some open webinar sessions in early September to offer our support, with further details to follow.

## **Guidance on getting the right laptop for you**

There are many reputable retailers online, and on the high street, offering great value deals, but be prepared to shop around and don't just buy the first device you see. Remember that you may be able to get additional student discounts too. **Our main advice is to always try to buy the best laptop you can for your current budget. Making a 'saving' now may cost you in the future in terms of performance or how long the machine lasts.**

### Processor

The processor is where all the data and instructions are calculated and processed and is responsible for all operations that take place inside the machine.

Processors vary hugely in complexity and price and can significantly affect the performance of the computer overall. **For day-to-day tasks and the study of most subjects, apart from the sciences, then we recommend a device with either an Intel Core i3, Core i5, or their equivalent AMD Ryzen 3, Ryzen 5 processors installed.**

**If you are studying in one of the science disciplines or will be expecting to work with large datasets, then you may need to think about spending a little more money on the processor and purchase a device that uses the Intel Core i7 or AMD Ryzen 7 processors.**

**Our recommendation is to avoid any device which contains an ARM, Pentium Gold, or Intel Celeron processor.**

### Memory (RAM)

The amount of memory (measured in Giga-Bytes - GB) a computer has governs how many tasks or instructions can be completed simultaneously. Think of your memory as the size of your desk; the bigger your desk, the more work you can be capable of working on at the same time.

**We recommend that you ensure that your computer has a minimum of 4GB of RAM with 8GB or more if possible.**

## Hard Drive / Storage

The hard drive is where all of your computer files and programmes are stored. The larger the capacity of the drive the more documents, media, and software you can store.

The type of hard drive can significantly affect the performance of your computer, with newer Solid State (SSD) drives able to access information much faster than their older, mechanical (HDD) counterparts.

**Whilst our recommendation would be to obtain a device with SSD storage this does come at a cost. Whatever type of drive you get you should look to obtain one with a minimum of 256GB or higher.**

## Webcam and Audio

As we adapt to a new way of learning and study, online interactions are becoming increasingly important and audio quality is a key consideration.

**We recommend that the device you purchase includes a webcam for a fully inclusive experience in online sessions. For audio, A USB headset with Microphone will be best, a headset will also be required if you need to use audio on any of our student open-access computers around the campus.**

## Operating System

A computer's Operating System is responsible for the communication between applications software, such as Office productivity tools and the device's hardware which includes Wi-Fi, displays, printers, webcams, etc. Microsoft Windows and Apple macOS are the two most commonly found on desktops and laptops though there are others.

We recommend that you check on the software that is required for study on your course. Your faculty should be able to help with this. You will then need to check which operating system that software is compatible with.

**To ensure maximum compatibility with University services we recommend buying a laptop with Microsoft Windows 10 pre-installed.** Some newer laptops come with Windows 10 S. The S version of windows is a secured environment where only applications available from the Microsoft Store are capable of being installed. Think of it a bit like an iPhone where you can only install apps from the approved App Store.

Some University applications and services, such as our VPN connection (used for accessing on-campus resources), are not available in the Microsoft Store. To avoid circumstances where you are not able to install University applications we recommend that students consider switching out of S mode and converting their laptop, free of charge, to the standard version of Windows 10 Home.

**We recommend that you avoid devices marketed as Chromebooks or as having ChromeOS installed. Whilst these devices are very competitively priced they will not work with our systems.**

## Anti-virus

The security of your laptop and your files are very important. We will provide guidance on this when you join us and until then there is some excellent information on the [National Cyber Security Centre's website](#).

A key concept of staying secure is to ensure you have a suitable anti-virus package installed on your computer. Many retailers will offer to sell you an anti-virus package to install on your machine at the

time of purchase. This is not always required however and you should be aware that Windows has security features built-in.

Windows Defender is pre-installed on all Windows 10 devices and, if you follow our guidance on staying cyber secure when using your device, we think it's a perfectly good, free solution

#### Microsoft Office

You will be entitled to download and use up to 5 copies of Microsoft Office 365, for free, throughout your studies. This provides you with access to Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and many other Microsoft applications and services. These are provided either online or are installed on your computer, tablet, or mobile device. Remember these are free whilst you are studying at Hull so you do not need to purchase them when you buy a device.

We will provide you with more information on accessing Office 365 and installing it on your devices when you join us.

#### Internet Connectivity

The university campus and all of our onsite student accommodation is covered by a high-speed wireless connection to the internet. Many of our learning resources are accessible via the internet both onsite and remotely, therefore wherever you choose to live, we recommend that you ensure it has a good quality internet connection for your use.

#### Access to on-campus study spaces

If you need access to a personal study environment, you can book a specific seat in the Brynmor Jones Library, seats with or without a computer for booking. If you book a desk without a computer, we will be offering a laptop loan service from the beginning of the semester, with laptops available for use up to 4 hours at a time within the building.

[To book a study space please visit the Library website.](#)

#### Checklist

✓ / ✗	Item
	Laptop
	USB Headset with microphone
	Internet connection in your place of residence
	A comfortable space to sit and study or participate in online learning sessions.

#### Planning your finances

If you do not currently have IT equipment available for your studies, we recommend that you include this as part of your student budget plan as a key item if possible.

If you are experiencing financial hardship or are eligible for the [Humber Grant](#), you can apply for the Digital Access Fund which can help contribute to the purchase of IT equipment or internet access for study.

For this and any other financial support-related enquiries, please contact the Financial Support Team through your MyHull portal for more information.

**[my.hull.ac.uk](http://my.hull.ac.uk) > talk to us > ask a question > student services > financial support**