MLC Student-Owned Devices Policy

Students at MLC are expected to have a student-owned computing device available for use both in and for their course. It is up to the individual instructor as to how devices will be used for their courses. Not every instructor will use the devices on a daily basis. It is always up to the instructor how devices can be used to complete coursework.

Functionality of Devices

The goal of any device is to be usable in a variety of contexts. Because of this, it is recommended to purchase a device that is durable and has a long battery life. Any device will need to handle the rigors of student life on campus. It is important to keep in mind the balance between cost, efficiency, performance, and robustness when considering the specifications of a single device.

The main use of devices in class often centers around word processing, spreadsheet use, presentation tools, and web browsing (e.g. the learning management system on campus is accessed through a web browser). Access to a modern web browser like Safari, Google Chrome, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge is a requirement.

Please note: *Google Workspace for Education* is web-based and free to all instructors and students at MLC. It includes word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation tools.

Recommended Devices

MLC does not publish a recommended device list, but we do list some recommended minimum specifications to enable students to make an informed decision around which device(s) to purchase. You are free to choose the specific model/brand you desire along with insurance and/or service agreements through your vendor.

Laptops/Notebooks/Convertibles

In general, laptops/notebooks/convertibles are the most commonly purchased device for use in the classroom. There are a number of different brands/manufacturers to choose from with a variety of

price-points.

Specifications to Look At

- Modern Operating System
  - Microsoft Windows 10 or later
  - Apple macOS 11 *Big Sur* or later
  - Google ChromeOS
  - Various Linux Distributions (Ubuntu, Fedora, openSUSE, etc.)
- 8 GB RAM (memory) or greater
- 128 GB hard drive (HDD or SSD) or greater (not applicable to Chromebooks)
- Webcam and microphone
- 6 hours of battery life or greater

Tablets

Tablets are usually smaller, less powerful, simpler devices than laptops/notebooks. Often they have better battery life to go along with being easier to slip into your bag to take to class. If you're considering using a tablet for your main device, please be aware that some technology tools used in the classroom will not run on a tablet. In addition, please check the course list at the end of this document for courses that require access to a laptop.

Specifications to Look At

Specifications are hard to quantify when it comes to tablet devices. The main thing to keep in mind is to purchase newer devices that are loaded with a recent version of the tablet's operating system.

As of July 2023, these are the most recent versions of common operating systems:

- Apple iPadOS 16 or later
- Google Android 12 or later (please check with your device manufacturer)
- Windows 10 or later

Desktops

More common years ago, some students still use desktops in their dorm room and have a separate device to take to class when needed.

Specifications to Look At

- Modern Operating System
  - Microsoft Windows 10 or later

    - Apple macOS 11 *Big Sur* or later
    - Google ChromeOS
    - Various Linux Distributions (Ubuntu, Fedora, openSUSE, etc.)
- 8 GB RAM (memory) or greater
- 128 GB hard drive (HDD or SSD) or greater (not applicable to Chromebooks)
- Webcam and microphone

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to load any software on my device prior to coming to MLC?

Many devices come with preloaded software when purchased. Additional software may be needed depending on the activities the student chooses to engage in. Many free software alternatives, such as Google Workspace, are available and students are encouraged to make use of them. Instructors will inform students of any specific apps that are required for their classes. Also, each student is required to carry security software to detect, prevent, and mitigate viruses, malware, spyware, and other nefarious software. What program to specifically install is up to the student, but there are free offerings available from many vendors.

Can I use a Chromebook as my main device?

A modern Chromebook will be able to handle the requirements of most courses. However, students should refer to the list of courses that require installed software. If any of those courses are on your program plan, you will need to have a laptop when taking that course. Questions about the specific software needs for those courses can be directed to the course instructors.

Also, please consider the lifespan of mobile devices like Chromebooks. Often, if you are bringing a Chromebook to MLC that you used at your high school, the device is already near the end of its lifespan. You may need to plan to purchase a new device fairly soon after to come to campus. 5 years is usually considered the maximum lifespan of a Chromebook.

Education students are encouraged to upgrade from a Chromebook to a laptop prior to their student teaching experience. Pre-seminary students are encouraged to look at the device requirements from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Is it essential that I have Microsoft Office software (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) on my device?

While having these programs on your device might be beneficial due to their greater functionality compared to some free alternatives, they are usually not required. All devices need to be able to access and work with word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet files. The specific program you use is up to you.

What should I do if there is a problem with my device while at MLC?

Network Services is happy to look at device problems and fix them when they are able. You should contact IT Services Support by visiting https://mlc-wels.edu/support with any questions. There are device repair options both in New Ulm and nearby Mankato. Students are responsible for all costs incurred with any repairs.

What responsibility will MLC take if my device is stolen and/or broken at MLC?

The student is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and security of their own device.

May the students use 3G/4G/LTE as well as WiFi?

Yes, students may use their own data plans. There is no guarantee provided as to the signal strength of cellular providers on campus. Secure wireless access is available on campus for all students.

Which courses have specific software requirements?

The following is a list of the courses with some more advanced software needs. This often means using a tablet or ChromeOS-based device (e.g. Chromebook) can be difficult. Please reach out to the instructor if you have questions about the specific software needs.

- **MTH2020** - Elementary Statistics - Prof. Zarnstorff
- **MTH2023** - College Geometry - Prof. Zarnstorff
- **SCI2001** - Advanced Biology - Prof. Fenske
- **SCI3003** - Zoology - Prof. Fenske
- **SCI3005** - Genetics - Prof. Fenske

Revision History

- **2021** - Initial approval
- **July 20, 2023** - Updates to OS versions and some small wording changes
- **August 30, 2023** - Incorporated new updates
- **August 31, 2023** - Removed specific software requirement courses at professor request

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