

# Student Computer System Recommendations and Purchase Considerations

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Alexander College recommends that all students have their own computer. You will need a computer to participate in online classes using BlueJeans and Canvas and access your student account on MyAC. We also recommend purchasing a USB flash drive to easily store and transport your data. An 8GB flash drive is fairly inexpensive.

## General Guidelines

The most important question to ask yourself when selecting a computer is what you're going to use it for. Most personal computers at Alexander College are used for five tasks:

- Word processing
- Internet browsing
- Accessing Alexander College online resources: MyAC, Canvas and BlueJeans
- Programming/data analysis
- Recreation/games

Whatever your needs, we recommend that you purchase a computer which meets [Energy Star requirements](#). You should purchase as much memory (RAM) and hard drive space as you can comfortably afford, as these impact the life of your computer and the long-term efficiency more significantly than processor speed.

You will need the following minimum components and specifications in any computer you consider:

- CPU: Intel® Core™ i5 Ninth-Generation Processor (better: Intel® Core™ i7 Ninth-Generation Processor)
- Graphics Chipset (GPU): Varies
- RAM: 4GB minimum (better: 8GB to 16 GB)
- SSD Drive: 128GB (better: 256GB or 512GB)
- Screen: 13-inch (better: 14 or 15-inch)
- Wi-Fi: 802.11n (better: 802.11ac and dual band)
- USB Ports: USB-A or USB-C or Thunderbolt (better: more than one and different types)
- Screen Ports: HDMI or DisplayPort (better: more than one and different types)
- Bluetooth: Yes
- Webcam: Yes

## Desktop or Laptop?

Laptops have the advantage of being mobile and light. Desktops are usually cheaper and easier to repair/upgrade. There are many different types of laptops, with varying weights, screen size, battery life, etc. You should carefully consider each aspect of the computer you purchase and understand your own priorities for usage.

## Windows or Mac (or Linux)?

The choice of operating system (Windows, Mac, Linux) is up to your own personal preference. If you know you will need to use a specific software package which only runs on a specific operating system,

this should help you choose. Word processing and browsing the Internet can be done with an Apple or a Windows computer. Many games, statistical analysis and programming tools are available only for the Windows operating system. Audio/video editing can be done on both operating systems, but Apple computers tend to have the edge in stability and functionality.

### **Extended Warranties**

You should consider purchasing an extended warranty with your computer as protection for future hardware or operating system issues. This is strongly suggested if you are buying a laptop or if the standard warranty period is one year or less. An extended warranty may be offered at the time of purchase, by the store you are purchasing your computer from.

Note: Alexander College does not provide hardware repair support to students, and offers limited operating system support focused on resolving issues with the specific programs used to access College online resources. If an issue falls outside of these parameters, a manufacturer's extended warranty is a good backup solution.

### **Internet Access**

Before you access the network, you should have the latest security updates for your operating system. MalwareBytes, Mcafee etc.

### **Where Should I Buy My Computer?**

We recommend you visit various online stores like [BestBuy.ca](http://BestBuy.ca) , [Staples.ca](http://Staples.ca) or [Dell](http://Dell) to compare computers prior to purchase.