Frequently Asked Questions: Your Computer at Virginia Tech

I. Computer hardware:
- The university baseline requirement is on the front of this brochure.
- Be sure to consult your department or college for additional requirements on Day 2 of Orientation.

II. Operating System:
- For PC: Windows 7 or 8.1 (64-Bit)
- For Macintosh: OS X 10.9 (or higher)

III. Office 365 ProPlus:
- See FAQ item number 18 for more details

IV. Network/Internet:
- Please bring all software that came with your computer.
- University Computing supports Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus which is available for PC and Macintosh.
- You can download and install Symantec AntiVirus software for free provided by the university. Symantec also has a free trial version available at www.eng.vt.edu/it/requirement

V. Ethernet:
- Using Ethernet is optional in residence halls that have wireless. To use Ethernet, ensure your computer has an Ethernet port or Ethernet adapter and make sure you have an Ethernet cord – we recommend a 25-foot cord. Ethernet cords are available for purchase at the University Bookstore.

VI. Backup Storage:
- External USB hard drives are convenient for file backups on the screen with a stylus. Tables typically allow you to swivel the screen making it easier to take notes.
- A slate is a device that also allows you to write on the screen. They are lightweight and portable since they typically do not come with an attached keyboard.
- A device on which you do not write directly on the screen with a digitizer pen will not be accepted.

VII. Surge Protector:
- A surge protector provides additional outlets and helps protect your computer from power surges.

VIII. Laptop Lock:
- A laptop lock is recommended because laptops are easy targets for theft. While Virginia Tech is a safe campus, it is always best to keep one’s personal belongings secure, especially in the case of something as expensive as a laptop.

IX. Microsoft Word:
- Please also refer to the article at https://computing.vt.edu/content/pid-account-recovery-options

10. Account Recovery Options
- to set options to recover your account information if you’ve forgotten your password. Account recovery options include authentication through a Yahoo! or Google account, or a one-time use code sent via SMS or voice. If you have not managed your account in a year, you will be prompted to do so when logging into any application that uses our Central Authentication Service (CAS) such as www.my.vt.edu.
- To set your Account Recovery options, log in to “MyVT”, select the “Personal Info” tab, select the “Manage Your Profile” link, and then select “Manage Your Recovery Options” to manage your settings. For more information on Account Recovery options, see https://computing.vt.edu/content/pid-account-recovery-options

11. Do I need anti-virus software?
- Yes, Virginia Tech does not have anti-virus software on its network. Students must ensure that files shared are not copyrighted. P2P (Peer to Peer) software is efficient at sharing or uploading copyrighted files but is not considered a part of the user. This sharing or uploading is typically the basis for the internet-based copyright infringement complaints Virginia Tech receives. While Virginia Tech does not monitor the file transfers of students, it is the students’ responsibility to take action when informed by an outside source regarding allegations of copyright infringements that trace to a computer connected to the campus network. These violations can lead to possible conduct referrals or legal action by the complainant. For more information on the copyright policy, visit http://copyright.vt.edu

12. What are the differences between the recommended storage devices?
- Cloud storage options are a great way to back up documents and other school-related materials, and VT Google Services offer unlimited storage.
- External drives are convenient for file backups on your computer; they have the highest storage capacity of all removable drives and utilize fast transfer speeds.

13. What are the differences between wired and wireless internet?
- Do laptops need both?
- Wireless is the predominant method for connecting to the internet on campus, though you can use Ethernet or wireless to connect to the Internet. A wired connection is necessary for some on-campus services. Each building has wireless internet in the few residence halls that don’t have full Wi-Fi coverage yet. Wireless networking is available in most residence halls, academic and administrative buildings.

14. May I set up my own wireless router in my residence hall room?
- The only case in which a router may be set up is in the few buildings that do not have wireless coverage. To know which residence halls have wireless coverage, see http://www.nais.vt.edu/projects/rnu.
- As residence halls transition to wireless coverage, students will be required to disconnect their routers. Using a router in a building with wireless coverage can cause interference with the university’s network and result in your potential loss of Internet connection.
- If there is a need for additional Ethernet ports, then an unmanaged Ethernet switch should be used. If you temporarily use a router, then know that University Computing and Network Support will not support private wireless networking.

The operator of a private LAN/wireless router assumes responsibility for all traffic that accesses the university network via that equipment. This includes securing access to, maintaining, and troubleshooting their network equipment, as well as ensuring these activities comply with the university’s Acceptable Use guidelines at http://www.vt.edu/about/acceptable-use.html.
- CNS reserves the right to disconnect any device from the network that negatively impacts the performance of the campus network.

15. Where is wireless service available at Virginia Tech?
- Wireless networking (802.11g) is available in most academic and administrative buildings as well as residence halls and student centers. For a campus-wide map, go to support.vt.edu/computing101.
- To know which residence halls have wireless coverage, see http://www.nais.vt.edu/projects/rnu

16. Will I be able to share files on the campus network?
- Virginia Tech is an open community and therefore does not block file sharing between peers using computer applications. However, students must ensure that files shared are not copyrighted. P2P software as well as copyrighted media such as most commercially available music and movies. Peer to peer (P2P) software is efficient at sharing or uploading copyrighted files but is not considered a part of the user. This sharing or uploading is typically the basis for the internet-based copyright infringement complaints Virginia Tech receives.

17. How do I connect to wireless at Virginia Tech?
- To connect to the university’s eduroam wireless network, connect to the ‘CONNECTtoVT-Wireless’ wireless network service and go to http://webauth.cns.vt.edu. Follow the on-screen instructions to set up wireless. Note: Students are not authorized to use wireless network access. To view your wireless account information, visit https://cns.vt.edu

If you need help connecting to wireless, setting up your computer or phone, setting up VT email and adding it to a client, getting your student software, and many other things, check out www.support.vt.edu/computing101.
22. Information on University Bookstore computer purchases:
   a. Where can I order my computer?
      You can order your computer from the University Bookstore online at www.bookstore.vt.edu, by phone at 1-844-VTHokie (884-6543), or in person during orientation at the University Bookstore and Hokie Centric on-campus, including the Volume Two Bookstore off-campus.
   b. When and where do I pick up my computer?
      During Orientation, computers may be picked up at The University Bookstore and Hokie Centric on-campus and the Volume Two Bookstore off-campus. Computers may be picked up or shipped after orientation, before classes begin, as requested. During move-in, your computer may be picked up in the War Memorial Gym from Wednesday, August 19 to Friday, August 21, 9:00 am-7:00 pm and Saturday, August 22, 9:00 am-11:00 am. The War Memorial Gym is located on Drillfield Drive between Eggleston and Campbell Halls.

Purchasing
18. Where can students purchase their software?
   Students may sign for their Incoming Undergraduate Software Bundle (including Office 365) at Software Distribution, located on Torgersen Bridge (3240 Torgersen Hall). If you miss orientation or your program requires additional software, your software can be purchased at Student Software Distribution beginning August 19. Students must present their Hokie Passport when purchasing software.

19. Where should I buy my computer? Which vendor is the best?
   University Computing Support is vendor and brand neutral. If your department recommends a specific brand or model, give it serious consideration. Otherwise, compare vendors, stores, prices, reputation, repair plans and warranties.

20. Does Virginia Tech have any special purchasing arrangements with any computer vendors?
   You can buy a computer from any vendor of your choice; however, the University Bookstore has special purchasing arrangements with Apple, Dell, Fujitsu, Hewlett Packard, and Lenovo to supply students with affordable systems. You can learn more about the systems your college or department recommends at www.compreq.vt.edu, specifically the “College and Department List of Specifications” link and selecting your particular major. The bookstore’s selection is viewable at www.bookstore.vt.edu. The University Bookstore’s website also has a “major selector” which filters computers by the majors they are designed to support.

21. When is the best time to order?
   To increase the likelihood that your order will be available for pickup before classes start, allow a 2-3 week lead time between when you place your order and when you’d like to receive it. The bookstore keeps a selection of machines on hand for immediate purchase, but these quantities are limited and orders may be placed for shipping or pickup before class starts. During orientation you will have an opportunity to visit the Computer Vendor Resource Fair in Brush Mountain Room, Squires Student Center; Monday – Thursday, and on Friday, June 17, 8:15 am to 12:30 pm. The University Bookstore and several computer vendors will have various demonstration models on display, and experts will be available to talk with you about your specific computer needs. The University Bookstore is open daily to view demonstration models from Apple, Dell, Hewlett Packard, Fujitsu, and Lenovo. Their staff and vendor representatives are available to assist you.

Getting Connected
23. What else do I need to bring in August?
   You need to bring ALL of the manuals, CDs, and cables that came with your computer in person. Also, make sure you know your Virginia Tech PID and password.

24. What if I have trouble with my PID or password?
   If you have difficulty with the online account recovery options, help is available for PID and password problems 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 4HELP (540) 231-HELP (231-4357).

25. Where can I get additional questions answered?
   Begin the search for answers to your computing questions at www.4help.vt.edu. If you are unable to get to www.4help.vt.edu, then you can call 4HELP by phone at (540) 231-HELP (231-4357). For help with your computer, we will assist you through e-mail, phone, or, when necessary, through in-person assistance from one of our on-site services. We cannot guarantee to fix every problem on your computer, and we do not replace or repair hardware, but will direct you to your computer vendor or a computer repair shop.

26. What should I do to get connected?
   Arrive as close as possible to Wednesday, August 19. Unpack and turn on your computer. Go to www.support.vt.edu/computing101 and configure your devices. If you have any connection or computer problems, go to 4help.vt.edu or call 4HELP. Get Connected staff will be available during move-in from August 19 through August 22 to assist with any computer problems not resolved over the phone.