The University of Tampa

Computer Science Department

Laptop Specs

A laptop is **required** for all students **majoring** or **minoring** in computer science. Recommended laptop specifications are listed below.

Recommended System

- PC with a 64-bit operating system (Windows 10 or a Debian-based Linux (e.g., Linux Mint) is preferred)
- Intel or AMD CPU
- 8 GB (minimum) of RAM
- 240 GB (minimum) solid state drive
- 12-inch (or larger) display recommended
- 2 USB ports (recommended)
- WiFi capability*
- SD card reader* (recommended)
- Ethernet port* (recommended)
- Note that **netbooks are not recommended**

Lead Instructor's System

(in case you're curious)

- HP ProBook 650 G5
- 15.6-inch display
- Intel Core i7 1.8 GHz (quad core) CPU
- 16 GB RAM
- 512 GB NVMe SSD
- 2 USB ports
- 1 USB 3.0 port
- 1 HDMI port
- 1 VGA port
- 1 Ethernet port
- Internal WiFi capability
- SD card reader
- Operating system: Linux Mint 20 “Ulyana” with the XFCE desktop environment

Notes

- Things to consider upgrading to help make your system faster and increase its longevity: 1.5 GHz or more CPU, 16 GB or more of RAM and 512 GB or more of NVMe SSD storage.

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*If your laptop does not have this internally, a USB adapter (purchased separately) works fine.

- Please remember that your laptop will often go wherever you go, so think twice before purchasing a heavy laptop. However, the space of a larger laptop is often useful when programming. Also, it may be worth the investment to purchase a battery that provides extended life. Note that, when running on battery power, a laptop is considerably slower.
- If you will be purchasing a new laptop, models starting around $500 are acceptable. Purchasing a $1,500 laptop will generally not help you be more successful. Upgrades that make sense (see above for details): increasing RAM and upgrading to a solid state drive.
- If you come to UT with an Apple laptop (e.g., a Mac), please note that software installation and hooking up to the Raspberry Pi (in the freshman curriculum) may be more involved and perhaps even problematic. Very few computer science faculty use Macs.
- If you plan to use an older laptop, we recommend that you arrive at UT with a fresh installation of a recommended operating system. A computer service center in your town or a computer-savvy friend should be able to help you with this installation if you have difficulty.
- We recommend that you use your computer primarily for academic purposes. If you choose to load a variety of games, movies and other media files, you may experience diminished computer performance.
- The installation of anti-virus/anti-malware software is strongly encouraged before students arrive, particularly if you select Windows as your operating system. There are many free options.
- Word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software are required. Of course, MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint work if using Windows; however, LibreOffice Writer, Calc and Impress are recommended **free** alternatives (for Linux, Mac and even Windows). These should be installed before coming to UT.