

Technology Purchase and Replacement Policy

April 2021

Information Technology Services is responsible for the purchase, maintenance, replacement and upgrade of computer and computer-related technology equipment used on campus for faculty, staff, and students.

In general, equipment that falls under the replacement policy includes the primary computer for faculty and staff; general access computers (classroom, public labs, special services, loaners, etc.); central servers supporting administrative and academic needs; and equipment in electronic classrooms.

When faculty or staff members have multiple computers provided by the College, one computer is designated to be the “primary” office computer. Information Technology Services will make this designation in consultation with the faculty member, staff member or department chair as appropriate. This is the system that will be tracked for purpose of the replacement cycle.

Faculty and Staff are encouraged to consult with Information Technology Services regarding both their hardware and software needs. This includes any purchases being considered through the Computer Sales department of the College’s bookstore. This consultation process should help ensure that all purchases meet faculty/staff needs as well as campus standards.

Computer and computer-related technology includes, but is not limited to:

- Desktop and laptop computers in offices
- Desktop computers and workstations in public use labs and areas
- Computers used to provide special “services”
- iPad and tablet devices
- Loaner equipment
- Network equipment
- Central servers serving the administrative and academic needs of Union
- Electronic classroom equipment

Desktop or Laptop Purchase

Union College will consider purchasing a desktop or laptop computer for a faculty/staff member under the following conditions:

1. If the faculty/staff member chooses a laptop computer, it will be purchased in lieu of a desktop computer, *not* in addition to a desktop computer. Only one or the other will be issued to each person.
2. The College will provide the standard laptop or desktop configuration as defined by ITS. The laptop will include an external monitor, docking station, keyboard, mouse, and external drive for backups. A desktop computer will include a monitor, keyboard, mouse, and external drive for backups.
3. The laptop or desktop must be one supported by ITS and must meet minimum specifications. Current supported configurations can be found at the *supported hardware* website, which is updated yearly: <https://www.union.edu/information-technology-services/its-organization/user-services/supported-hardware>

4. If the standard laptop or desktop configuration will not support the needs of the faculty/staff member, functional requirements should be discussed with ITS to develop a configuration that does meet their needs, are reasonable and necessary based upon current technology standards, and will leverage purchasing agreements that ITS maintains with a variety of vendors.
5. Union College will assume ownership of the equipment and include it in the Union College Hardware Inventory Database. Licensing for software installed and supported by the College requires that the laptop or desktop be considered the legal property of the College. However, if an individual takes ownership of the laptop or desktop computer, most software licensed by the College (for example Microsoft Office) must be removed.
6. The faculty/staff member or department is responsible for the purchase of other consumables or peripherals.
7. College-owned desktops and laptops are supported by the College as defined in the ITS policy on College-owned Computer Technology.
8. When the faculty/staff member is eligible for an upgrade, either the desktop or laptop will be returned to ITS, or if it is not needed, the faculty/staff member or department will be given the opportunity to purchase it for a mutually agreed upon fair market value.

Insurance

1. In the case of a damaged laptop or computer, it may be the responsibility of the faculty/staff member to cover the cost to repair the damaged laptop or computer.
2. The College assumes no other responsibilities or liabilities than those listed here or required by applicable law.
3. The College is not responsible for the personal belongings of employees. Any employee who brings personal belongings to work, including any items in College owned, leased, rental or personal vehicles, does so at their own risk and must take full responsibilities for such belongings. Please take care to secure valuable items and check your homeowner's policy to see if it provides coverage.

Equipment Replacement

Faculty and Staff – Information Technology Services maintains a list of faculty, emeritus faculty and staff and their associated primary computer. ITS tries to replace desktop and laptop computers every 4-6 years pending resource availability. These standard configurations are designed to meet the computing needs for the majority of users. Each year, ITS identifies the computers that are due for an upgrade by prioritizing the oldest computers first. Computers that fail will be replaced as quickly as possible.

If a machine returned from a faculty/staff member is able to be used elsewhere on campus, then it will be recycled to another use/user.

Hardware problems or specialized software needs may cause a faculty/staff member's primary computer to be upgraded out of cycle.

Classrooms and Labs – Lectern PCs and student-use computers are replaced on an approximate 4-year cycle. The equipment is still viable enough to be redistributed to departments for use in departmental labs, student research or other needed areas.

Departmental Labs and Resources – ITS will make a best-effort at providing upgrades to equipment used for departmental labs, faculty research labs, work-study students and other department resources. The equipment used for these upgrades will be “recycled” from other areas such as faculty, staff, classroom and/or lab upgrades.

Software Replacement

Software used on campus falls into three basic categories: operating system, standard and academic (also known as discipline-specific). Information Technology Services funds the annual maintenance on a majority, but not all, of the software in these categories thereby allowing for systematic upgrades of these applications.

Other software used by faculty and not specifically provided by Information Technology Services must be purchased or upgraded by the faculty member or their department. Consultation with ITS for application recommendations, pricing options, etc. is strongly recommended prior to any purchasing decisions.

Operating System

Operating systems, which are commonly used on campus, will be upgraded by Information Technology Services in a timely manner and on an as-needed basis. Upgrades will be for College-owned computers only. For faculty and staff, ITS is responsible for providing the upgrade needed for the computer considered to be the user’s primary computer. Some faculty/staff may have multiple College-owned computers (laptop, desktop, research, etc.) that they use.

Currently, the operating systems supported by ITS are Microsoft Windows, Apple Macintosh OS X and LINUX (Ubuntu).

Standard Software

The list of software applications supported by ITS are located here: <https://www.union.edu/information-technology-services/supported-software>. ITS will provide assistance for the integration of these supported applications with other supported campus technology resources, including services such as installation, training, maintenance, troubleshooting and upgrades. Departments or individuals who choose to acquire software that is not listed should plan on developing their own expertise and be prepared to resolve problems through the vendor’s support services. ITS will provide help installing these software applications and basic troubleshooting. If you want to add an application to the officially supported list, please contact ITS.

Academic (Discipline-Specific) Software

Some of the discipline-specific software that is used by a variety of departments has been licensed by Information Technology Services. Other discipline-specific software applications which are heavily used by individual departments and/or students are jointly licensed and maintained by ITS and the primary-use department. There are a number of software licensing methodologies used on campus including:

- Unlimited site license – allows software installation on an unlimited number of computers.
- Limited campus license – allows software installation on a specified number of computers. Computers may need to be connected to the campus network (locally hosted or via VPN) but are not restricted to specific locations.
- Individual license(s) – limited number of computers (or locations) can have the software installed.

Generally, the licenses for discipline-specific software will allow ITS to install the software on any College-owned computer.

ITS will maintain a list of software packages and licensing information on the ITS website at <https://www.union.edu/information-technology-services/supported-software>.

Other software used by faculty/staff and not specifically provided by Information Technology Services must be purchased or upgraded by the faculty/staff member or their department. Consultation with ITS for application recommendations, pricing options, etc. is strongly recommended prior to any purchasing decisions. Funding options available to faculty for software needed for scholarly research may include Faculty Research Fund (FRF) grants and/or Humanities Development Fund (HDF) grants.