

Personal Computing at Vassar

Computing and Information Services (CIS) extends its congratulations and welcomes you as a member of the Class of 2012.

This overview contains some preliminary information about personal computing at Vassar to help you plan for bringing a computer to campus in the fall. Over the summer, you can learn more about the computing environment at the College and keep up to date on the latest developments via our web site:

<http://computing.vassar.edu/>

A Brief Overview Of Computing At Vassar

For nearly twenty years, Vassar has had a campus-wide computing network that provides access to course materials, the library's wide array of online resources, electronic communication, file sharing, and the Internet. Every building, including each residence hall room, is connected to the network for communication and collaboration. The campus-wide Ethernet standard makes it possible for students to connect both Windows PCs and Macs to the network. We also provide wireless access from the dorms and many public spaces. There are more than 300 networked computers distributed across the campus for academic and public use. Every residence hall has a public computer cluster with two or more computers and a networked VPrint Printer/Copier. In addition, we have a Digital Media Lab located in the basement of New England. Additional computers are available in the 24-Hour room of the Campus Center and in the Library, where the Media Cloisters offers multimedia technologies for teaching and learning.

Computers have become an integral part of the academic and social life at Vassar. Owning your own computer will significantly enhance your experience here. If you already own a computer that meets the minimum standards described in Table 2, bring what you have. Many students have also found laptop computers to be a significant convenience.

Academic Environment

Various computer platforms including Macintosh, Microsoft Windows, and Unix are used in academic instruction here at Vassar. Some departments provide special computing facilities, such as training facilities, electronic classrooms, and specialized laboratories for working on assignments. Academic software is available for use on computers throughout the campus and in public clusters, as well as over the network.

Networking Environment

A high-speed network, compatible with all current computing platforms, is available in all residence halls. Each student has access to one wired Ethernet connection in his or her residence hall. Wireless access is also available in all Residence Halls, the Library, Academic and Administrative buildings, as well as most out-door spaces on campus. Vassar does not charge for network access.

Computer Sales and Service

The recommended configurations for a personal computer are below. Macintosh Computers with these configurations are available for convenient purchase through our campus computer store. For information about purchasing and repairing personal computers at Vassar see the following web site:

<http://computerstore.vassar.edu/>

Recommended Configuration

What follows is the recommended configuration for both Mac and Windows PC desktop and laptop computers. Students with machines that meet the minimum standard as listed in Table 2 will be able to establish connectivity to the campus network. The recommended configuration listed in Table 1 should have a life cycle that will last through your residence here at Vassar.

TABLE 1 -- RECOMMENDED CONFIGURATION (Laptops Preferred):

Macintosh	Windows PC
Intel Core 2 Duo	Intel Core 2 Duo
Macintosh System 10.4 or higher	Microsoft Windows Vista*
2GB RAM or more	2GB RAM or more
DVD-RW	Dual Layer DVD burner
200 GB Hard Drive or greater	100 GB SATA 7200 RPM
10/100 Ethernet & 802.11g wifi	10/100 BaseT (TP) Ethernet card & 802.11g wireless card
Desktop 20" Monitor or Laptop 13" Screen	Desktop 20" Monitor or Laptop 15" Screen
Word Processing: Microsoft Word 2008 or Microsoft Office 2008	Word Processing: Microsoft Word 2007 or Microsoft Office 2007
<p>* Be sure to bring you operating system installation software with you when you come to campus.</p>	

TABLE 2 -- MINIMUM SUPPORTED CONFIGURATION:

Macintosh	Windows PC
Power Macintosh G5	Pentium IV Processor, 2.0GHz
Mac OS X Version 10.4 or better	Microsoft Windows XP Professional**
1 GB Ram or more	1 GB Ram or more
CD-Combo Drive	CD-Combo Drive
80 GB Hard Drive or greater	80 GB Hard Drive or greater
10/100 BaseT (TP) Ethernet card	10/100 (TP) Ethernet card
Microsoft Office for OS X***	Microsoft Office XP***
<p>* Be sure to bring you operating system installation software with you when you come to campus.</p> <p>**If you choose to purchase Microsoft Vista, be sure to get the Ultimate version.</p> <p>***The following file formats are campus standards and will be compatible for sharing with most systems: Word 5.0 (word processing), Excel 5.0 (spreadsheet), PowerPoint 4.0 (presentation software), Acrobat 4.0 (PDF), JPG (graphic files), ASCII Text (text).</p>	

Software and Network services available

Each incoming student will have access to a comprehensive web site (computing.vassar.edu) that contains installers and instructions for software and services available at Vassar.

The software and services at Vassar include:

- Internet connectivity – both wired & campus-wide wireless access points
- E-mail account access including free mail program
- Virus protection software
- Access to shared files and programs
- Personal web page space

Technical Support

While it is possible to connect other computers to the network, doing so often requires significant expense, time, and networking expertise. Therefore, configurations that do not meet at least the minimum standard in Table 2 are not supported.

CIS professional staff and Help Desk student staff offer all members of the Vassar community practical and maintainable solutions to computing problems and questions. For supported hardware and software we provide written instructions and guides, workshops, and/or personalized information in response to a request for help on a particular topic.

During Freshman Check-in, you will receive the following information:

- Schedules for computing seminars
- Information on how to set up and configure your computer
- Information on how to make an appointment to have your computer configured for you
- Help Desk contact information.

You will also find more information about getting help on our website:

<http://computing.vassar.edu>. If you have questions or concerns regarding this letter, or if you would like to request printed copies of our online information, please call our Help Desk at (845) 437-7224.