Student Technology Requirements for Medical Students
Technical Specifications

Start Here | Quick Summary

A Windows or Mac laptop is required; tablets alone do not meet curricular needs.

Your laptop MUST:

See the **Windows** and **Apple** laptop sections later in this document for complete details.

- Be under 4 years old (2 years or newer strongly recommended)
- Have at least 8 GB of RAM (16 GB recommended)
- Include a 256 GB SSD or larger, with at least 100 GB free
- Run Windows 11 (not S mode or RT) or macOS 26/15/14
- Have a webcam, microphone, and privacy screen
- Use approved antivirus software (Sophos recommended)

Important: You will download approximately 80-100 GB of slides and course files in your first few weeks. Laptops with only 128 GB of storage often cannot meet this requirement.

Why These Requirements Exist

Your coursework uses software that can be demanding at times. You'll work with large slide decks, recorded lectures, high-resolution imaging, virtual microscopy, and research tools that work best on laptops from the past few years. Older devices tend to slow down or freeze at the worst moments, so these requirements are meant to help you avoid interruptions during the year.

Laptop Verification Deadline

All students must complete laptop verification by **July 1, 2026** (later if admitted after this date).

Before You Arrive on Campus

To avoid delays during your first week, complete the following before Orientation:

- Install Sophos antivirus (free for students through the UT Southwestern Sophos site)
- Uninstall Avast, Norton, McAfee, and Kaspersky
- Update all devices you plan to use on campus (laptops, tablets, and phones) to a current, stable OS version
- Ensure 100 GB of free space is available on your laptop
- Bring a privacy screen sized for your exact laptop model
- Verify your laptop meets all minimum requirements

During Orientation you'll learn how to connect to campus Wi-Fi, access your course schedule, download required applications, and find technical support. You don't need any of this set up before you arrive.

Overall Requirements

The personal technology requirements listed below were designed with the many activities you will face over the course of the next 4 years, including in-person and distance-delivered curricula. In many situations, you may have a more advanced laptop, which is acceptable as well.

Requirements for a Mobile Phone and Home Internet

To ensure each student has the appropriate technology to adapt to virtual learning should the need arise, you are required to have a personal mobile phone with a camera (any carrier, iOS or Android) and reliable home internet (any internet service provider).

Requirements for a Windows Laptop

While tablets (including a Galaxy Tab, Sony Xperia…etc.), netbooks (computers with an Intel Atom or equivalent), and Google Chromebooks are quality learning devices, they are not solely sufficient for the expected needs and do not meet the minimum requirements. Tablets, netbooks, and chromebooks are not prohibited, but a laptop, as described below, is required. The Microsoft Surface Pro 12 or newer, as well as the Microsoft Surface Go 4 are acceptable provided they meet the requirements outlined below. Touchscreen laptops are also supported, but you may be required to disable the touchscreen functionality during required assessments.

Minimum Requirements

- **Age of the Device**: Should be 2 years old *OR* newer (highly recommended)
    - To ensure a properly functioning laptop throughout the next 4 years; a device up to 4 years old is acceptable, provided they meet all other requirements. No device over 4 years old will be approved.
- **Operating System**: Latest version of Windows 11 (Creators Edition and Home Edition are acceptable; Windows 10, Windows RT, Windows 11S, and 10S are not acceptable)
- **Memory**: 8GB RAM *OR* higher
- **Hard drive**: 256 GB for SSD hard drive (or higher capacity) *OR* an external hard drive with a minimum of 100 GB free
    - **You will be required to have 80GB-100GB worth of slides on your laptop within the few first weeks of coursework.
- **CPU Processor**: Intel or AMD Processor required
- **Webcam**: HD 720P (minimum streaming resolution); attachable USB HD 720P webcam acceptable
- **Microphone**: Integrated in the laptop (through attachable USB webcam acceptable)
- **Software**: Antivirus software (Available for download at the UT Southwestern Sophos site).
- **Security**: Privacy Screen (required for on-campus exams, quizzes, and IRATs)

Requirements for an Apple Laptop

While tablets (including iPad Minis, iPad Pros…etc.) are quality learning devices, they are not solely sufficient for the expected needs and do not meet the minimum requirements. Tablets are not prohibited, but a laptop, as described below, is required. It should be noted that students **are allowed** to take UTSW quizzes and exams using an iPad Air or iPad Pro, however a student-furnished laptop is needed for required for several applications throughout the 4-year medical student experience.

Minimum Requirements

- **Age of the Device**: Should be 2 years old *OR* newer (highly recommended)
    - To ensure a properly functioning laptop throughout the next 4 years; a device up to 4 years old is acceptable, provided they meet all other requirements. No device over 4 years old will be approved.
- **Operating System**: macOS 26 Tahoe and macOS 15 Sequoia (14 Sonoma is also acceptable, though not recommended)
- **Memory**: 8GB RAM *OR* higher
- **Hard drive**: 256 GB for SSD hard drive (or higher capacity) *OR* an external hard drive with a minimum of 100 GB free
    - **You will be required to have 80GB-100GB worth of slides on your laptop within the few first weeks of coursework.
- **CPU Processor**: Apple Silicon M Class Processor (Intel Processor not recommended or supported)
- **Webcam**: HD 720P (minimum streaming resolution); attachable USB HD 720P webcam acceptable
- **Microphone**: Integrated in the laptop; through attachable USB webcam acceptable
- **Software**: Antivirus software (Available for download at the UT Southwestern Sophos site).
- **Security**: Privacy Screen (required for on-campus exams, quizzes, and IRATs)

Additional Information on Software for Windows and Apple Laptops

For the best experience, use Sophos (for antivirus) or Malwarebytes (for malware scanning). We have had poor experience with the antivirus applications listed below, as they negatively impact several crucial applications required in the first year. If you have the following antivirus software installed, please uninstall them before coming to campus.

- Avast
- Norton
- Kaspersky
- McAfee

It is strongly recommended that you do a scan of your machine for viruses (using Sophos) and malware (using Malwarebytes) before coming to campus. If the UTSW network detects a virus or malware on your system, your computer will be quarantined, and you will not be able to access the Internet until your machine is cleaned.

Sophos Antivirus Available to All Students for Home Use

To help our students, along with faculty and staff, protect their personal data, UT Southwestern offers free Sophos Premium antivirus software for home use. Sophos Home Premium antivirus can be used to protect up to 10-PC or Mac home computers. To activate your license, visit the UT Southwestern Sophos site and enter your UT Southwestern email address.

Additional Information on Types of Laptops
We have also discovered some laptops have more trouble than others on our campus. This doesn't mean these laptops won't work, just these brands have had more trouble and logged more service tickets:

- Acer
- Lenovo
- Sony VAIO
- Laptops labeled Windows High DPI (these are rare machines and typically used in gaming laptops)

We have had the **least** number of problems with Apple laptops.

Laptop Requirements for Medical Students
Frequently Asked Questions

What are my options for meeting these requirements?

Students may meet these requirements in any one of the following ways:

1. Use an existing laptop and complete the laptop verification process
2. Purchase a laptop elsewhere and complete the laptop verification process

Due to wide-spread supply chain issues, to be sure all incoming students are prepared for the beginning of school, each must do the following by July 1, 2026, (Additional time given to students admitted after this date):

- **Submit a completed laptop verification form by either**
    1. **Submit the document on your own**
    2. **Get help submitting the document by making an appointment for a virtual laptop review**

What is the Laptop Verification Process?

To complete the Verification Process, you must select **one** of the **two** available options:

Option 1: Submit your Laptop Verification Form yourself

Once you have your laptop in-hand (either already owned or recently purchased, verify your laptop meets the specifications by initialing each specification (on the form) and submit the form.

By submitting this form, you acknowledge your laptop meets all specifications and you are solely responsible if it is determined later that it does not meet all specifications. You also acknowledge that if it is determined later that your laptop is insufficient, you will need to upgrade your machine to meet the specifications or purchase a new laptop.

You may complete and submit the Laptop Verification Form here. (Link will open your browser.)

Option 2: Submit your Laptop Verification Form with help from Student Support

If you are unsure how to check your laptop for the correct specifications or are not comfortable with Option 1, you may set up a virtual appointment with student support to check your laptop. For this appointment, a student support technician will log on to your laptop (once you grant the technician access) and check for your laptop configuration. You will be able to watch the entire process to ensure no data is accessed that shouldn't be.

To schedule an appointment, contact the IR Service Desk at 214/648-7600 or email them at servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu. With the technician's help, complete and submit the Laptop Verification Form linked in Option 1.

Does an iPad, Microsoft Surface, netbook, or Chromebook meet the requirements?

The Microsoft Surface Pro 12 or newer, as well as the Microsoft Surface Go 4 are acceptable provided they meet the technical requirements.

The following devices are acceptable on-campus; however, they are not solely sufficient to meet your expected educational needs and **do not meet the laptop minimum requirements**. This includes all:

- Tablets (including an iPad, iPad Air, iPad Pro, Galaxy Tab…etc.)
- Netbooks (computers with an Intel Atom or equivalent)
- Chromebooks

Is a personal privacy screen required for my laptop?

Yes. You are **required** to have and purchase a privacy screen for all on-campus examinations, quizzes, and other activities that require you to view sensitive material. Privacy screens can be purchased at numerous online or traditional brick-and-mortar stores.

Is Linux supported?

No. The laptop must either be an Apple or Microsoft Windows Machine.

Can I use a beta or early release candidate version of an operating system?

No. Only approved versions of macOS and Windows are allowed on the UTSW network. When new major versions of operating systems are released, you'll receive an email indicating when it is OK to update your machine (if you choose to).

I have additional questions before I select one of these options. Who do I contact?

You should contact David Price, our student support specialist at David.Price@utsouthwestern.edu and CC: the help desk at servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu. They will serve as the first contact with the ability to inquire deeper on your behalf.

Will I be able to lease a laptop?

No. Leased laptops are not available through UT Southwestern.

Can I use financial aid to buy a laptop?

All entering medical students are allowed to borrow up to $2500 for purchase of a new laptop. However, due to Federal regulations we cannot disburse these funds to you until about a week before you start orientation in August.

What if buying a laptop before my financial aid is disbursed is a financial hardship for me?

Please don't hesitate to contact the Office of Student Financial Aid! We can help you understand the timeline for financial aid disbursement and what other options might be.
214-648-3611 or financialaid@utsouthwestern.edu

What if I don't need a laptop this first year? Can I get financial aid in a later year to buy a new one?

You can only get financial aid to buy a laptop **once** during your enrollment at UT Southwestern. If you elect to take the loan funds this year, buy the laptop this year - because subsequent loans for this purpose will not be possible. If you don't plan to buy a laptop, you need to decline at least $2500 of the loans you're offered. Don't borrow the money the first year and spend it on a trip to Hawaii instead of a laptop. When you realize later that you really DO need the laptop, the money may not be available.

What can I expect being on campus?

What will be available and what software will I need?

Material from most courses is available and will be accessible using an internet browser. As with all internet connections, the speed of access to the network will influence the feasibility of access. For example, on-campus Ethernet connection will be quicker than wireless. The same material is accessible using Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Apple Safari, but there may be slight differences in appearance. Other software used at the University will be Microsoft Office, Outlook/Exchange E-mail, and Shared Folders (common areas of data storage that allow students to share data).

To download Microsoft Office applications (for free), please login using your UT Southwestern credentials at https://portal.office.com or download them via the Windows or Apple App Stores (using your UT Southwestern credentials to log in). You may need to sign out of your undergraduate or personal account to access the UTSW license.

Some proprietary software will be available on campus only.

By using Virtual Private Networks (VPN), students may configure their laptops while off campus to be "virtually" on-campus, allowing access to most material restricted to on-campus computers.

How do I keep my laptop safe and secure on-campus?

Keep in mind the laptop you purchase is your property and is completely under your control. UT Southwestern has established standards to help you protect your equipment, but please be very

cautious with your laptop on campus. Each student is responsible for ensuring that their laptop has current anti-virus (Sophos is the recommended anti-virus vendor, *see information above regarding downloading Sophos for free*) and up-to-date operating system patches (automatic updates recommended).

While non-encrypted thumb drives are allowed for personal use (e.g. homework), it is encouraged that you consider using an encrypted thumb drive for all situations. Not only does it secure your personal documents, but it also protects you if sensitive material accidentally gets saved to that thumb drive.

All students are pre-qualified to receive 1 encrypted 4GB USB thumb drive at no cost. They are available at the IR Data Hall, which is located on the first floor of the Bass Building (BLA 120). Your UT Southwestern ID Badge and signature are required for pickup. You are allowed one device per user; replacements are available for $30 if the device is lost or stolen.

Security also involves the use of laptops in the context of the curriculum network. Computing and networking resources at UT Southwestern are protected by information security legislation. These resources must be used for university business. **Education is considered the business of students, so e-mail fraud and browsing inappropriate web sites are among the activities listed in the "no-no" category.**

You will be asked to sign a computer use policy and an information security agreement (ISA) when you register for class and each year you are enrolled thereafter.

How do I get help when I need support?

The University staff will be easily accessible for problems. You will be responsible for obtaining hardware warranty services from the manufacturer. Computer and laptop support can be reached 24/7 by calling the IR Service Desk at 214/648-7600 or emailing them at servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu.

UT Southwestern strongly recommends a warranty for as long as you plan to keep the laptop.

UT Southwestern is unable to provide any hardware repair.

What happens if my laptop breaks when I am studying for an exam?

It is strongly encouraged to seek technical support immediately if your laptop has a problem. If your laptop cannot be fixed quickly (either through the UTSW Helpdesk or third-party technical support), you may check out a laptop from OME. These are available free-of-charge on a temporary basis while your laptop is being repaired.

What happens if my computer breaks during an exam?

On-site technical personnel will be able to assist, and if it is determined the laptop cannot quickly be restored, a backup laptop will be available on a temporary basis for the immediate need.

What about other devices?

UT Southwestern does not support smartphones, but devices that support "wpa2 enterprise" should work on our campus wireless network. Best-effort technical support will be provided on-site if there is an issue, but you may be referred to third-party technical assistance (e.g. Apple Support, carrier support…etc.).

Where can I get more information?

Please visit the Student and Postdoc website *(VPN or On-Campus access required to view this page)* for more information on the computing environment at UT Southwestern. For security reasons, you will not be able to access some pages such as software downloads until you have started classes. This page is only accessible if you are on our network or logged in with VPN. The web address is https://www.utsouthwestern.net/studentcomputing.

For questions regarding computer support, please contact the IR Service Desk at 214/648-7600 or servicedesk@utsouthwestern.edu.