

2015-16 Computer Recommended Specifications

These recommendations should serve as guidelines for new PC purchases, but are not absolute. Purchase a desktop or laptop computer based on your needs and circumstances. Feel free to send any questions you have to the Director of Engineering Information Systems at erik.kispert@valpo.edu.

PC vs. Mac

Some of our students prefer Mac over PC, and that is completely fine. In the College of Engineering, we have almost exclusively PCs, because the vast majority of engineering software is written for Windows. There are some software vendors that offer free student versions, but many of them can only be used in the computer labs because they require the full institutional license. If you want to run student versions on your own computer, a PC is recommended.

Processor

Intel i5 or i7 processors or their AMD equivalents are recommended.

Memory

4GB are a minimum requirement; 8GB or more are recommended.

Hard Drive

We have seen strong performance improvements when upgrading to solid state drives (SSDs) in our lab environments. These are recommended, though there is a size trade-off, so purchase the type of drive that makes the most sense for what you want to get out of your storage.

Graphics Card

This will be dependent on your PC's intended use, but generally speaking a 1GB card is suggested.

Software

An office productivity suite is suggested. All Valpo students have access to five Microsoft Office 365 licenses after they have enrolled. These can be used on any type of device: PC, Mac, tablets, etc. and can be reassigned as needed.

The College of Engineering has an agreement which allows its students to download certain Microsoft software titles free of charge. The most widely downloaded of these include **Windows 7, Windows 8, Project, and Visio**. Each of these titles can be licensed once during a student's time enrolled as an undergrad, provided they are enrolled as an engineering major.