

# general computer recommendations

Radford University enthusiastically embraces the age of technology and is committed to encouraging student use of computers. This is facilitated through the availability of general use computer labs, specialized computer labs and, for those who wish to purchase them, privately owned personal computers. RU does not at this time require students to purchase computers. RU recognizes, however, that owning and using a personal computer aids in the development of strong technology skills, which in turn, enhances the value of a student's education. About 75 percent of RU students choose to bring their own computer to campus, and we would recommend that all students seriously consider the advantages of purchasing a personal computer. Students who use their own personal computers may still, at times, need to avail themselves of some of the specialized campus computer labs, where high-cost specialized hardware and software is available.

## Hardware Recommendations

If you choose to purchase a computer, we suggest you carefully consider the many choices of desktop and laptop computers that are available in an ever-changing market. Radford University's computer recommendations are intended to guide you throughout the purchase of a computer that will accommodate your needs during your college years. This does not mean that you need to buy a top-of-the-line model, but you do need to purchase a model capable of meeting your needs for the next several years. Computers that fall below these recommendations may be sufficient for your needs now, but unable to meet your needs after two or three years. The "Minimum Supported Configuration" is intended only for those users who are considering bringing a computer they already own to campus. Recommended minimum specifications are provided elsewhere in this material.

Since your computer is a substantial investment for you and/or your family, we also recommend that you consider including this purchase in an addendum to a personal or family insurance plan.

Some discount machines with proprietary configurations are difficult to upgrade, maintain and connect to networks. We recommend that you purchase your computer from a reputable manufacturer, catalog store or computer store that will provide you with a three- or four-year on-site service contract for timely repair of any hardware failures. This will ensure that any hardware related failures you might have throughout your college career could be easily repaired.

Most departments use Windows based computers, but a few may recommend that you purchase a Macintosh. If you already have selected a major, be sure to check your department's computer homepage, and with your departmental adviser, for any special

hardware or software recommendations before purchasing a computer.

## Software Recommendations

The University recommends the purchase of Microsoft Office XP (Office v. X for Macintosh computers). As software companies issue improvements to their products, you may want to plan for upgrading the software on your computer at least once while attending the University. E-mail attachments, network downloading and exchange of files expose your computer to viruses, so we recommend that McAfee or another anti-virus software be installed to provide protection from viruses.

## Radford University Username

All RU students are assigned a unique network account that provides access to e-mail, student records, server directories, campus computers and other network resources. The username/login for this account is typically the first letter of your first name and followed by the first eight letters of your last name and should be printed on your check-in envelope. If you have access to an Internet connection you can begin using the account via the RU Highlander Connection login page (<https://www.portal.radford.edu>). You will need to select the "Account Activation" link to set a password and start using this account. Campus departments will use your RU e-mail account as a point of contact throughout your career at Radford University. If you choose to continue using some other e-mail service it will be important for you to use the "Forward E-mail" link on the RU Webmail site to forward all of your RU e-mail to that account.



Radford University will provide you with an on-ramp to the information superhighway. RU offers the latest in educational technology and multimedia instruction. Our computer labs give you access to the programs and software that are most widely used in your field of study. Technology isn't limited to the academic environment; every student can set up a free computer account with access to the campus network, electronic mail and the Internet.



# network connections

It is essential that students be able to connect to the Internet wherever they work and live.

## On-Campus Students

Radford University provides Ethernet network connections for on-campus students and recommends that all students with personal computers living in residence halls purchase Ethernet cards for Internet access. Students living on campus may wish to obtain both a network card and a modem. As an on-campus student, this would allow you to have network connectivity in the summer while away from the campus, and to smoothly transition your connectivity if later you should decide to move off campus.

## Off-Campus Students

For students who live off campus, the University provides, at no charge, high-speed (56Kb/s) modem connections for dial-up Internet access. There are several other alternatives for off-campus students to connect to the Internet. In the Radford area, DSL, cable modems and wireless connections are available in some locations. You should ask your landlord about connectivity options.

The following information describes the difference between modem and network access to the Internet.

## What is a Modem Connection?

A modem is a device that allows you to use your telephone line to connect to the campus network and the Internet. Modems currently operate at a maximum speed of 56Kbps, and allow access to the World Wide Web, e-mail, and other Internet resources. A modem connection ties up a phone line; therefore, you cannot make or receive telephone calls on the same phone line while connected to the Internet. Modem connection to University servers is currently set at a maximum of 10 hours of modem usage per day.

## What is an Ethernet Network Connection?

An Ethernet network connection is a dedicated connection to the Internet that does not require the use of a phone line. To effect this direct connection, at least four things are required—a computer containing an Ethernet network adapter, a network cable, software to manage the communication linkages, and a room in a residence hall equipped with an Ethernet Connection.

These direct network connections operate at 150 – 200 times the speed of a modem connection and do not have daily time restrictions. You can use this type of connection to access the World Wide Web, e-mail, and other Internet resources just as with a modem connection, but at a much higher speed. For your computer to be ready to connect to the Ethernet network, you should purchase a network adapter and a 20 – 30 foot cable for use in your computer. This will cost between \$25 – \$50.

## Desktops

COMPONENT	WINDOWS	APPLE (iMAC or G4)
<b>Processor</b>	2.0 GHz or faster	G4 - 800MHz or faster
<b>Memory</b>	256MB RAM (512MB Beneficial)	256MBRAM (512MB Beneficial)
<b>Hard Drive</b>	40GB	40GB
<b>Combo CD Drive</b>	CDRW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive	CDRW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive
<b>Video Card</b>	32 MB	32 MB included
<b>Monitor</b>	15" or larger color monitor*	15" or larger color monitor*
<b>Sound Card</b>	SoundBlaster compatible and Speakers	Included
<b>Network Adapter</b>	10/100 BASE-T Ethernet adapter	10/100BASE-T Ethernet (built-in)
<b>Network Cable</b>	20' or longer Ethernet Cable	20' or longer Ethernet Cable
<b>Operating System</b>	Windows XP	MacOS X
<b>Inkjet Printer</b>	Inkjet (600 DPI or greater) and cable	Inkjet (600 DPI or greater) and cable
<b>Optional Modem</b>	56K v.90 modem	56K v.90 modem (built-in)
<b>Optional Removable Media Devices</b>	Internal 250 MB Zip Drive USB Key Chain Drive	Internal 250 MB Zip Drive USB Key Chain Drive

## Laptops

COMPONENT	WINDOWS	APPLE (iBook or G4)
<b>Processor</b>	1.4GHz or faster (Consider Centrino)	800MHz G3 or faster
<b>Memory (RAM)</b>	256MB RAM	256MB RAM
<b>Hard Drive</b>	20 GB or larger hard disk	20 GB or larger hard disk
<b>Combo CD Drive</b>	CDRW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive	CDRW/DVD-ROM Combo Drive
<b>Network Adapter</b>	802.11b compliant wireless card*	802.11b compliant wireless card*
<b>Modem</b>	56K v.90	Built in
<b>Operating System</b>	Windows XP	MacOS X
<b>Optional Removable Media Devices</b>	External 250MB Zip Drive USB Keychain Drive	External 250MB Zip Drive USB Keychain Drive

## Minimum Supported System configuration

The following are the minimum system configurations for use with the campus modem pool and Ethernet connections. The technical staff will be unable to provide support for systems that lack these minimum specifications. Although systems meeting these specifications may not run the very latest software, they will provide Internet connectivity and basic functionality.

COMPONENT	WINDOWS	APPLE (Power Mac)
<b>Processor</b>	500MHz	G3 233MHz
<b>Memory (RAM)</b>	256 MB RAM	256 MBRAM
<b>Hard Drive</b>	6 GB Hard disk (1 GB Free)	6 GB Hard disk (1 GB Free)
<b>Network</b>	10/100 Base-T Ethernet	Included adapter
<b>Modem</b>	56K v.90 modem	56K v.90 modem
<b>Operating System</b>	Windows 98	MacOS 9 or higher

### \*Recommendation Notes

<b>CD-RW</b>	CD-RW drives hold over 650MB of data and are an excellent resource for backing up files on your computer. We highly recommend this as an option for backing up your data. You may wish to consider a flat panel monitor to conserve desk space in your room.
<b>Monitor</b>	RU students often run into the dilemma of how to carry large files between their home computer and a university owned computer. All RU computer labs contain 250 MB Zip drives, so this is one option for carrying large files. USB Keychain Drives are another alternative that provides quick access to files from any computer with a USB port and will work in any campus computer.
<b>Optional Removable Media</b>	Wireless is only available in a few select areas on campus (Waldron, Peters and McConnell Halls), but we anticipate a gradual increase in wireless over the next few years.
<b>Wireless Adapter</b>	