

I designed this chart to help community college students choose a computer for their coursework.

How to read this chart: **Minimum** refers to specifications for a computer you already own that you want to use for your college work. **Recommended** refers to specifications for those wishing purchase a computer and are looking for guidance.

	Windows PC	Apple Macintosh	Google Chromebook**	Linux Computers* [Caution]
Operating System	Minimum: Windows 8.1 Recommended: Windows 10 Home or Pro	Minimum: OS X 10.12 Sierra or higher Recommended: Current Mac OS	Recommended: Current Chrome OS	Ubuntu LTS 19.x LTS or higher
Memory	Minimum: 4GB Recommended: 8 GB	Minimum: 4GB Recommended: 8 GB	Minimum: 4GB Recommended: 8 GB	Minimum: 4GB Recommended: 8 GB
Processor Type	Minimum: Intel Core i3, AMD Ryzen 3 Recommended: Intel Core i5 or higher (i7, i9) ; AMD Ryzen 5 or 7, 3rd generation or higher	Minimum: Intel Core i3, Recommended: Intel Core i5 or higher (i7, i9)	Try to avoid Celeron processors, which unfortunately power many Chromebooks. Better options include Intel i3 or M3 or 7th generation or higher AMD processors.	Minimum: Intel Core i3, AMD Ryzen 3 Recommended: Intel Core i5 or higher (i7, i9); AMD Ryzen 5 or 7, 3rd generation or higher
Hard Drive	Minimum: 128 GB SSD Recommended: 256 GB SSD or more	Minimum: 128 GB SSD Recommended: 256 GB SSD or more	Minimum: 32 GB SSD Recommended: 64 GB SSD or more	Minimum: 128 GB SSD Recommended: 256 GB SSD or more
Camera	Webcam	Webcam	Webcam	Webcam
Wireless	Minimum: 802.11 b/g/n Recommended: 802.11ac or ax	Minimum: 802.11 b/g/n Recommended: 802.11ac or ax	Minimum: 802.11 b/g/n Recommended: 802.11ac or ax	Minimum: 802.11 b/g/n Recommended: 802.11ac or ax
Software	See below.	See below.	See below.	See below.
Warranty	Recommended: 1 year	Recommended: 1 year	Recommended: 1 year	Recommended: 1 year

* **Linux** operating systems can be installed on many different types of computers but is used primarily by computer science professionals. Only consider a Linux computer if you are already skilled with installing software. Most linux computers have no customer support.

** **Chromebooks** are laptops that rely on the internet (wifi) to operate. Because they rely on wifi to operate, Chromebooks have limited software available to them and have slower processors when compared with other laptops. That said, because of their lower-power components, Chromebooks can be cheaper than other computers.

Why no tablets: Tablets are designed primarily for consuming content. College requires you to produce content, such as papers, lab reports, home work, or digital products. As well, many websites used in college may not work on tablets or may work on tablets but work much better on computers.

Software: Check with your IT department for available free or low-cost software. Normandale students can check here for [currently available software](#).



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