

Simmons College Policy on Faculty/Staff Laptop Computers

I. Overview

Simmons College is committed to providing an appropriate office desktop computer system for each fulltime faculty and staff member. This policy generally addresses the need by some faculty and staff members to have a laptop computer instead of a desktop computer.

A decision to provide a laptop will be based upon a documented need, departmental approval, and available departmental funding.

A laptop is intended for use for college-related business as a productivity tool, curriculum tool, and for research and communication. It is not intended as a replacement for any computers that may be owned personally. Use of the laptop for personal purposes should be within the standards of good judgment and common sense, in compliance with the college's published policies on acceptable use, and as required through the terms and conditions of applicable software license agreements. The laptop program will enable faculty or staff of Simmons College to conduct college business from various off-campus locations. This program does not change faculty expectations related to teaching, service or research.

II. Eligibility

Laptops will be authorized based upon job responsibilities, demonstrated need, and school/department approvals. Benefits-eligible faculty and staff of the College will be eligible for consideration for laptops. The laptop replacement option will be available to eligible faculty and staff members at the time their current Simmons-owned desktop computer is due for replacement under the standard three year replacement cycle program. Replacement at any other time is discouraged, and no funds will be available from the replacement cycle. Neither adjunct faculty members nor vouchered employees will be eligible for the faculty and staff laptop program. The policy also recognizes the need for some shared departmental laptops and provides provision for purchase or out-of-cycle replacement under special circumstances.

Criteria for Selection

- Faculty and staff who travel frequently (on and off campus) as part of their job
- Faculty who heavily use computers in the teaching of their classes, particularly online and hybrid classes
- Faculty and staff who need to make frequent software installations for use in multiple locations

- Faculty and staff who that require a particular software for research needs

III. Approval Process

All requests for faculty and staff laptops must be approved by the requestor's President's Council member. **The applicant must first secure approval from the department head, and PC member who will submit this request via email to the Executive Director of Technology.** The Executive Director of Technology will determine whether the purchase meets the approval process requirements, how the laptop will be funded, and whether it will be on the replacement cycle. If the laptop is being purchased as part of the replacement cycle, costs above the standard College allocation for a similar desktop will be paid by the department. Otherwise, the department bears the whole cost.

IV. Approval Process Requirements

- Faculty and staff will need to apply for a laptop stating the reason(s) they are requesting a laptop, and what software and hardware needs they have. While criteria are indicated above, it is the responsibility of each President's Council member to determine whether requests are in the interest of the College.
- All orders for laptops (as for any technology equipment or software) must be processed through Technology. The laptop must be a configuration, model, and brand approved by Technology and must meet or exceed standard specifications. See "Procedures for Purchasing Information Technology."
- Ownership of the laptop computer will reside with the College and the laptop must be returned when employment ends.
- The department is responsible for the purchase of additional peripherals such as monitor, keyboard, mouse, docking station, batteries or other consumables.
- Only one computer will be provided by the College for each faculty or staff member. Computers beyond this require written approval from the Executive Director of Technology, and cost of purchase and replacement will be the responsibility of the department. While a shared departmental laptop may be a cost effective way to meet mobility needs, multiple computers per faculty or staff member will not, in general, be approved.
- Computers are currently maintained on a three-year replacement cycle, whatever the source of funding. Simmons may upgrade operating systems and/or application software during that period, laptop users may not be able to benefit from these upgrades due to hardware limitations as the laptop ages. At the beginning of each replacement cycle, laptop users must re-apply to the appropriate President's Council member for a laptop and if approved, the department will continue to cover the differential costs.

- Technology support of college owned laptops will be equivalent to that provided for college owned desktop computers. Direct support (with a technician physically present) will be provided while laptops are on campus.

V. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of faculty/staff members to take appropriate precautions to prevent damage to or loss/theft of laptop computers in their care. The faculty/staff member or department may be responsible for certain costs to repair or replace the computer if the damage or loss is due to negligence or intentional misconduct. Policies for appropriate use of college property as identified in the faculty/staff handbooks or elsewhere may be used to determine whether liability due to negligent behavior exists.

VI. Theft or Loss

If the laptop is lost or stolen it must be reported to Public Safety immediately. For theft or loss off-campus, it should also be reported to local police as well. The police report should include the serial number for the lost computer. A copy of the police report must be sent to Technology within 48 hours of the discovery of the loss. Failure to secure and submit a police report may result in personal liability for replacement cost.

VII. Upgrades and Troubleshooting

Should a laptop require hardware upgrade (e.g., memory, peripheral, or hard disk), software installation, or have problems that cannot be resolved over the telephone, the computer will need to be brought to campus for hardware service, software installation, or problem diagnosis. Technology staff will not go to off-campus locations to provide services.

VIII. Software Licensing

The laptop will be configured with a standard suite of programs that are appropriate for the type of computer (see <http://my.simmons.edu/technology/helpdesk/software>). It is also possible that other applications will be provided to you by the College, based upon your professional needs or the requirements of the laptop. The College policies for appropriate use of software, including the requirement to demonstrate legal license to a program before it can be installed on a college-owned computer will be applied. Users are given administrative rights to the College-owned computers they use, whether the computer is a desktop or a laptop, based on need. Please see the Administrative Account Policy for details. You may not load software for personal use, such as games, entertainment software or personal finance software on a college-owned laptop computer.

IX. Off Campus Internet Access

You should feel free to use your laptop to connect to the Internet from locations other than campus, such as through an Internet service provider (ISP) at your home. Your laptop will typically be configured with a modem, and both wireless and wired Ethernet, the common ways to connect to the Internet through an ISP.

Technology will neither provide Internet access to you from off campus nor configure your laptop to work with your ISP. Although Technology may offer some tips or advice about best practices for off-campus use, it will be up to you and your ISP to make remote connections work.

X. Backup

You are responsible for maintaining an appropriate backup of your laptop, especially of the work-related documents and data files you create that are not restored when reinstalling the operating system and programs. Depending upon how you intend to use the laptop, you may need to store some of your documents and data files on the laptop's hard disk drive. It would be prudent to establish a process of copying the data files you use on the laptop to your central data storage area (i.e., the Simmons server) as an added precaution against data loss. You should not use central data storage to backup personal documents or data files.

XI. Virus, Hacking, and Security Protection

To ensure that virus protection and other security patches are current, laptops must be connected to the College's network on a regular basis and users must take responsibility for ensuring that security updates take place on laptops in their care. In the case of a significant security alert, users may be contacted by e-mail and/or voicemail, to bring in their laptops to the Help Desk to ensure proper security is enabled on the laptop. Although Technology pushes updates to college computers, laptops that are frequently off the college network may require manual updating.

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