



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

IT Requirements for UNSW Students

*Academic Board
Policy Statement*

DIVISION OF
INFORMATION
SERVICES

Effective from
(April 2004)

This document is a revision of the original version "Information Technology Requirements for Students", approved by the Academic Board in June 1999.

It was updated by Jenny Beatson, Policy Development Officer, DIS and reviewed by the Academic Services and the Policy Advisory Committees of the Academic Board. The advice and assistance of the following is gratefully acknowledged:

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- Jude Stoddart and Staff, Equity and Diversity Unit

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The Office of the Chief Information Officer
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This document replaces all previous versions of the IT Requirements for UNSW Students, and is effective from April 2004.

Approved by the Academic Board on: April 6 2004

Professor Kevin McConkey
Chair, Academic Board

Information Technology Requirements for UNSW Students

1. Introduction

Information technology has become a standard tool in education, used widely by both staff and students. With an increasing focus on e-learning and the widespread use of sophisticated applications and programs across the campus, there is a need to provide clear guidelines for the set of information technology tools that UNSW students are expected to have access to off-campus. This document outlines the University's current expectations of its students in this regard and is an update of the previous version of this document, approved by the Academic Board in 1999.

2. Principle

The University of New South Wales will continue to utilise information technology to enhance the learning and research experience of its students.

Rationale:

The use of IT in education is now pervasive, with an ever-increasing focus on e-learning, online student self-administration and use of sophisticated applications and programs across most programs of study. UNSW will remain a leader in the use of information technology in education.

Implications:

While UNSW students are expected to have off-campus access to appropriate information technology resources, the University's commitment to equity will see it continue to provide on-campus computer facilities to those students unable to access these off-campus.

3. Policy Statements

3.1 Student access to Information Technology Resources

With the now widespread use of information technology in education, students should make every effort to have access to an off-campus computer.

UNSW programs will be developed and taught on the assumption that all students have access to appropriate information technology resources.

3.2 Equity principles and Legislative requirements

The University is committed to equity principles, including provision of IT resources and appropriate assistive technologies. It is also mindful of the legislative requirement “that HECS liable and non-fee-paying HECS exempt students must be able to complete their program without facing additional course-related charges or fees imposed by the institution” (1997 DEETYA (now DEST) Ancillary Guidelines).

UNSW will continue to provide on-campus computer facilities that meet the standards described in Appendix A of this document.

3.3 Responsibilities of Faculties, Schools and Departments in providing IT resources

Faculties, Schools and Departments should be mindful of these standards and ensure that they do not expect students to have access to computers with specifications beyond the UNSW Standard IT Guidelines ***unless*** they provide adequate on-campus IT facilities and resources, funded from their own budgets.

4. Disclaimer

Although the University and individual Faculties and Schools provide advice and software for home computers and for connecting to the UNSW network, no responsibility is taken with respect to individual student machines being able to use this software or access the network.

Appendix A: UNSW Standard IT Guidelines 2004

These are the recommended system requirements to be able to access the majority of UNSW systems and facilities (including WebCT and MyUNSW) from an off-campus computer. Students will be advised if their Faculty's requirements differ from the requirements stated here. This is particularly important in relation to selecting an appropriate Web browser.

Students requiring assistive technologies for learning should contact the UNSW Equity and Diversity Unit for advice on (02) 9385 4734

<http://www.equity.unsw.edu.au/disabil.html>

4.1 Hardware

These guidelines intentionally avoid recommending a specific brand of computer. In general, any computer with modem, CD drive and standard software packages purchased in the last 18-24 months should well satisfy these requirements. Older machines may also support the requirements. As a guide, both PCs and Macintosh computers less than 3-4 years old, with Windows 98 Second Edition or above (or Mac OS 9.1 and above) should support these requirements; as should machines running Linux (or other versions of Unix). However, the performance of current-version software on older machines can be variable: in some cases performance will be acceptable, in others the software may not work at all.

A 56K modem or above is desirable for adequate Web access. CD drives are now effectively standard inclusions, but the relevant format standard is ISO-9660.

Students' personal computers should include an appropriate device to store backup files. Floppy disks may now be too small for the current size of many files and consideration should be given to a CD-writer, Zip drive (or similar), or Flash drive.

4.2 Software

- A **Web browser*** that supports the programs and applications you are required to use as part of your studies. Currently recommended browsers:
 - Internet Explorer 5.0-6.0 (PC)
 - Internet Explorer 5.0 (Mac OS 9.x)
 - Internet Explorer 5.1 (Mac OS 10.1)
 - Netscape 6.2.x and 7.0 (PC and Mac)
- Specific browser requirements for use with WebCT can be found at:
http://www.webctsupport.unsw.edu.au/student/stu_fr.html?T3_browser.cfm

- **An "office suite"-type software bundle containing at least:**

- **Wordprocessing program** capable of importing and exporting documents and text. For non-editable documents, the preferred file format is .PDF as this is readable on all computer systems. Students may wish to use .PDF for submission of, for example, the final version of an assignment. For editable documents, the preferred format is .RTF although .DOC is also widely used.
- A **spreadsheet program** able to import and export ASCII delimited files
- Software able to **read .PDF files** (eg Adobe Acrobat Reader *)
- A program able to **import and export images** in widely-used formats such as JPEG, TIFF or PNG
- Software to enable **file transfer using FTP or similar** protocols
- Networking software to enable **TCP/IP connection** (eg via modem using PPP)
- **Email software** able to link to a POP3 server (normally included with most Web browsers)
- **Antivirus** software, kept regularly updated.
- **Personal firewall** and tools capable of intercepting malicious webware (eg Zone Alarm *)
- Software able to play **video and audio files** in common web formats (eg QuickTime*, Windows Media Player*)

Optional:

- **Multimedia player** (eg Flash Player *)
- Software able to **edit and publish HTML** documents
- Software able to **detect and disable spyware/adware** (eg AdAware*, SpyBot*)
- Software for **preparation and display of presentations** (often included in a typical "office-suite" software bundle)

(*can be downloaded free from the Internet).