Computer Trade-Up Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Categories for related FAQs found in this document:
A. General Questions on the Trade-Up Program
B. Qualifying Computers
C. Computer Specifications and Hardware
D. Disposal of Computers that are Replaced
E. Files from the Old Computer
F. Software and Applications
G. Wall Ports/Data Drops: Connecting Computers to the Campus Network

A. General Questions on the Trade-Up Program

A.1. Why is it called a “Trade-up” program?
Computers will be replaced on a 1:1 trade-up, meaning that one new computer will be provided in exchange for one qualifying old computer.

B. Qualifying Computers

B.1. What computers will be replaced as part of the Trade-up program?
The following computers generally qualify for the trade-up program, subject to meeting other criteria:

- Apple and Windows Computers Purchased in 2014 or earlier
- Dell OptiPlex 980
- Dell OptiPlex 990
- Dell OptiPlex 9010
- Dell OptiPlex 9020
- Dell Latitude EXX20
- Dell Latitude EXX30
- Dell Latitude EXX40

B.2. What if we have an older computer—a make and model that’s not on this list?
Generally, provided the older computer is still in use, OTS will consider it within the spirit of the Trade-Up Program and include it for replacement.

B.3. If we have an older computer in storage, can we use this as the one being traded in?
It is not within the spirit of this Trade-Up Program to scour closets, museums, and storerooms for long since—retired systems; it is also not within the spirit of the program to turn in systems that are no longer in use except for being harvested for parts. The goal of this program is to replace computers that people are currently using with an up-to-date model.

B.4. Are lab computers covered in the Trade-Up Program?
No. Upgrades or replacements for lab computers are funded through student technology funds. The OTS Classroom and Computer Lab Technologies unit works with department IT contacts to make computer purchases and there is nothing special that faculty need to do.

B.5. Can we Trade-Up a newer system for an even newer system?
Generally, anything above the 9020 "vintage" would not qualify for trade-up at this time.
B.6. I want a Windows-based laptop system as my primary computer instead. How does this work with the Computer Trade-Up Program?

The key factor is whether the laptop will be a primary or sole computer vs. a supplemental computer for you. If the laptop is used as your primary or sole computer, the university will contribute $1,202 toward the cost of it and, to ensure supportability, the laptop purchased must be one of the university’s recommended models. The balance would need to be covered by your departmental budget, so you’ll need to get an OK from your department chairperson or manager.

As with desktop computers, if you’re trading up from an old qualifying laptop, this laptop must be returned in exchange for the new computer.

B.7. I am currently using a Dell Computer but would like to switch to a Mac. Is that possible?

First, substitution of Mac should be a departmental decision. If a department has an instructional or business need for using the Mac platform, we will be delighted to support its efforts. Please contact the Faculty/Staff Help Center at 410-704-5151 for help with this process.

Assuming your department approves it, the university will contribute $1,202 toward the purchase; the balance, if any, would need to be made up through your departmental funds.

B.8. What if my current computer is not on the list for replacement and it breaks down?

If a system experiences hardware failure and is out of warranty, it will be considered for replacement even if it is newer than those specified in the Trade-Up Program. OTS will send an on-site technician to evaluate the nature and extent of the problem and if it is not cost effective to repair, then it will be considered for replacement.

B.9. What criteria might disqualify my computer for replacement through the Computer Trade-Up Program?

The following scenarios are examples of usage outside the scope of the Trade-Up Program. If replacement is desired, departmental or other sources of funding would be necessary:

- computer provided to a faculty or staff member on loan for at-home use IN ADDITION to their primary campus computer.
- computer used in a lab or computer-equipped classroom by students.
- computer that is used in a "smart classroom" teaching workstation.
- computer used to control research apparatus, devices such as Scantron scanners, or other devices or equipment.
- computer used within a self-supporting budget operation (e.g., a "3" series account).
- computer used primarily for walk-up access by students, staff, or the public such as a resource center or information kiosk.
- multiple computers (only one computer per person can be replaced through this program, and that one must be the person's primary system; the department would of course use their funds to replace additional systems if they so elect).

B.10. Can we get a new computer through the Trade-Up Program for a new faculty or staff member?

If the new faculty or staff member is replacing someone who once held the position and the computer left behind meets all qualifications to be eligible for the Trade-Up Program, the eligible system left behind can be upgraded with a new system through the Trade-Up Program.
It is not within the spirit of this Trade-Up Program to purchase new computer systems for faculty or staff filling brand new positions. The goal of this program is to replace computers that people are currently using with an up-to-date model.

C. Computer Specifications and Hardware

C.1. Will we be able to customize or upgrade the computers for our department?
If you are looking for a standard Windows desktop, to achieve volume discounts and deploy the new computers as quickly as possible, they will be delivered in recommended standard configuration. If a department identifies the need to add components or upgrade the computer, it will be done at the department’s expense once the deployment of computers has been completed.

C.2. Do I have to get a standard Windows Desktop?
There are several options for replacement computer. Towson has recommended hardware models and configurations that you can choose from. As our most widely used computer on campus, a stock of standard Windows desktops is kept in inventory.

All other replacement computers will be quoted and purchased individually with the client from the start. The university will contribute $1,202 toward the purchase; the department is responsible for the balance.

C.3. Can we substitute laptop computers?
If the standard Windows desktop configuration is not what a department needs, a department is welcome to special order another model in consultation with OTS. If the old computer qualifies, the university will contribute $1,202 toward the cost of a different computer, departmental funds would need to cover the balance.

C.4. Why aren’t any speakers included?
Cost. We applied the savings to purchasing more computers. In most cases, a person’s existing speakers can be used with the new system. If you do need speakers to perform your duties, it is recommended that you purchase them separately as the internal speaker on the computer does not produce adequate sound for most.

C.5. Do the new computers have DVD burners?
Yes. The DVD burner on the new standard Windows desktop will support standard DVDs not Blu-ray DVDs. For other computer models, check the recommended hardware list to see if a DVD is included in the configuration. If it is, it will burn DVDs and CDs.

D. Disposal of Computers that are Replaced

D.1. We would like to take the new computer and give it to Joe, since he’s the department manager. Then we want to take Joe’s computer, and give it to Sarah. Sarah’s computer would then go to the graduate assistant, the graduate assistant’s computer would go to the student worker, and finally, we’d turn in the student worker’s old computer as our trade. Can we do that?
This kind of domino effect is outside of spirit of this Trade-Up Program which is based on a 1:1 exchange. In the above scenario, it’s 1:4 exchange. While this is possible, doing so would slow down the project since the time and resources spent on just one upgrade will be significantly greater. If a department has a compelling need for this you will need to officially appeal the decision, that's fine, however the work will generally need to be deferred until the primary phase of the program is complete.

D.2. Can I take my old computer home or give it to charity?
All old computers must be transferred to OTS DH0207 for the EduCycle Program. The computers will be refurbished and upgraded for repurposing on campus or donated to Baltimore City and Harford County Public Schools.
Your department’s designated “Trade-up Coordinator” or “Inventory Coordinator” will prepare a Materiel Management Service Request (MMSR) form to transfer the old computers.

D.3. Can I give my computer to another Towson University department, center, or university---affiliated student group?
The EduCycle Program probably has a newer computer that they can repurpose to them. In addition, EduCycle upgrades the computers that are being repurposed with solid state hard drives and additional memory as needed. All old computers that have been traded up must be transferred to OTS DH0207 so that they can be refurbished for repurposing on campus or for donations to our local public schools.

E. Files from the Old Computer
   
   E.1. What happens to the files on my old computer?
   An On-Site Technician from the Office of Technology Services (OTS) will transfer all your files to your new computer. They will then remove the hard drive from your old computer, label it with your contact information and store it in a secure location for 60 days. You will be responsible for reviewing the files on your new computer within that 60-day period to assure that all files were successfully transferred. After the 60-day period has passed, the hard drives will be wiped clean of all data and destroyed.

   E.2. Must I be present when the file transfer is done? I didn't have to in the past.
   Yes. For two reasons: security and accuracy. Making sure all files are identified and transferred is a critical and shared responsibility. Faculty and staff are more reliant than ever on computers, and over the years, have built irreplaceable collections of documents. We need to get it right.

   E.3. How will I know that all my files have been transferred?
   The Office of Technology Services (OTS) will complete the file transfer from the old to the new computer. Our tool does a very good job of identifying and transferring files and data, but the "proof positive" must come from the client receiving the new computer. Therefore, it is imperative that the individual recipient thoroughly check to ensure all files were transferred to their satisfaction. The old hard drive will be retained in secure storage for 60 days, after which it will be wiped clean. During the 60-day period, if a client discovers something is missing, contact the OTS Faculty/Staff Help Center (410.704.5151) to request that a file be restored.

F. Software and Applications
   
   F.1. What will be installed on the new computers?
   The new computers will have custom Towson University software image installed. Windows-based systems will run Windows 10 Enterprise 64-bit along with Microsoft Office 2016 Enterprise. Mac systems will generally use the most recent operating system version, as well as current versions of application software.

   F.2. If I don't want Windows 10 or Office 2016, then what are my options?
   If you have a compelling business reason for not running Windows 10 with Office 2016, send your request to Kevin Burns at kburns@towson.edu. We will need to work with you to determine how best to handle that. Older versions of operating system software and applications are eventually retired due to University System of Maryland (USM) state audit requirements.

   F.3. Why doesn't OTS want us to run Windows 7?
   Microsoft will stop all support for Windows 7 in January 2020. USM state auditors required OTS to decommission all Windows 7 computers due to the lack of support and security risks. Your department must plan and budget for the necessary software and hardware upgrades that are compatible with Windows 10.
F.4. My student worker installed a lot of other software applications on my computer: Web Shots, screen savers with waterfalls, games—things like that. Will you transfer those programs?

University computer systems are part of a complex, highly interrelated network. Anytime a software application that is not essential to one’s teaching, scholarship, or administrative duties is installed, person runs the risk of introducing problems that may affect not only his or her personal computer but the entire network of thousands of computers. Each application carries a degree of risk and the effects can be unpredictable. We do not transfer these types of programs, and we do not support them.

G. Wall Ports/Data Drops: Connecting Computers to the Campus Network

G.1. If the computer for the Trade-Up is replacing a computer which is in active use BUT which was not connected to the campus network for lack of an available wall port, can I have new wall port installed? How much will it cost?

You can have an additional wall port (“data drop”) installed but the costs would need to be paid for through departmental funds. Anybody needing a data drop should contact the Faculty/Staff Help Center (410-704-5151) and request an estimate. A technician will visit the space, determine the time and materials needed, and provide an estimate for the work.

G.2. How do I decide if I need a wall port and how do I get one installed?

We suggest before proceeding that you discuss your needs with the OTS representative assigned to your department’s Trade-Up project; he or she may have other options you may wish to consider. If you wish to proceed, your department’s telephone coordinator can arrange for the new ports through OTS’ Telecommunications by calling 410.704.5151. He or she will need to provide the building and room number; department’s budget code; location within the room; and the name and telephone number of the contact person.

G.3. When we get the new Trade-Up computer, we would like to have one or more additional wall ports installed so we can move the rearrange the computers and printers in the office or make an extra port available for a notebook. Is this covered under the Computer Trade-Up Program?

OTS would not cover the cost but the department certainly could arrange for additional wall ports through telecommunications using their own funds.