

EduCycle Computer Reconditioning Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General

1. What's the purpose of this program?

Each year, about 800 computers are replaced in campus classrooms and computer labs, ensuring fast, powerful, and up-to-date computers for learning and teaching. By reconditioning the computers coming out of service and returning them to campus, the program will help fill unmet computer needs.

2. What will a reconditioned computer include?

Reconditioned computer for campus use includes a new solid-state hard drive (128GB), memory (8GB, if needed), and a new keyboard and mouse.

3. Is there a cost to campus departments?

No.

4. How can I request a reconditioned computer?

Fill out the applicable spreadsheet and attach it to TechHelp request found on the EduCycle Web page.

5. Can you describe the overall process?

See the flowchart at the end of the PDF.

6. How does the reconditioning and upgrade work on the computers?

We are trying to find volunteers who can gain skills and experience by helping. Community partners include Hussman Center for Adults with Autism and The ASC of Baltimore. We also hope to involve TU student service groups or college or high-school students looking for technology experience. Until then, OTS has been using its own student staff. If you would like to get involved, let us know.

7. Will all the computers coming out of service be returned to campus?

If the campus doesn't need all the computers; the remaining ones will be offered to the county public school system.

8. Why can't you just give away the computers to students, faculty, or staff?

State or university property is not disposed of this way, whether the asset was originally paid for by taxpayers or students. Giving things away has historically antagonized the relationship with the businesses community.

Donations

1. What happens to the computers that can't be repurposed to campus?

They get donated to Baltimore County Public Schools, to help our public education colleagues in the surrounding county.

2. Why are you limiting the donations to Baltimore County?

Towson University's primary presence is Baltimore County; we want to focus on that relationship first. Harford County may be next, with our new presence at the Towson University Northeastern Maryland center.

3. There are dozens of worthy charities and other non---profits who could use computers. Why not them?

The goal is to help our public education colleagues in the surrounding county by making sure our excess computers continue to facilitate regional student success.

4. Are computers refurbished for donations too?

No. They will not be refurbished with the new hardware. They will be tested for functionality, as well as be cleaned, and have their hard drives wiped.

5. Can I donate the computers that my department purchased to another organization besides the county schools?

The program was approved by the President's Council as a university program. All computers, no matter how they were purchased, are university computers. We want all computers with useful life to be repurposed on campus first, and excess of that, go to Baltimore County.

6. Are you open to expanding donations to other organizations in the future?

We'll see how the program goes for the first year. Regardless, though, TU has strong ties to schools in the region, so we expect to maintain the focus of donating to other public school systems first before considering other types of organizations.

The Equipment

1. What is the standard configuration for a reconditioned computer?

Computers that are refurbished for on---campus use are raised to the following standard: 8GB of Memory, 128GB Solid State Hard Drive, and are provided with a new keyboard and mouse.

2. What if I need more memory or other upgrades, e.g. an upgraded video card, Blu---ray drive?

If compatible, you can use the memory and upgraded video card that is in your current computer. If not compatible, your department would have to pay for the upgraded memory and video card but it is still a lot less than a new computer would cost. See the [Upgrades and Repairs page](http://a.cms.omniupdate.com/10/#towson/towson/www/preview/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/upgrades.pcf) at <http://a.cms.omniupdate.com/10/#towson/towson/www/preview/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/upgrades.pcf> for details on how to upgrade.

For University Departments that Want Reconditioned Computers

1. Will there be a cost to campus departments for reconditioned computers?

No. Only if the department wants to add a bigger hard drive, more than 8 GB of RAM, or other components.

2. When will computers be available?

lot of classroom and computer lab computers get replaced in late summer and during January, so we expect the greatest number to be available in that timeframe.

3. How are requests fulfilled?

We will fulfill based as inventory becomes available and computers are reconditioned. It will be generally first come/first served, along with priority. Since we are counting on volunteers to help, we can't guarantee a particular date if we don't have anything in stock when we get your request.

4. How can a department or college request a reconditioned computer?

Contact one of the EduCycle program administrators.

5. Will a repurposed computer ever be eligible for the Computer Trade---Up Program?

The minimum refurbished computer life cycle is two years. After that time, if the computer meets all qualifications for the Computer Trade---Up Program, it may be considered for replacement. Keep in mind the Computer Trade---Up Program has a rather narrow focus and covers only individual faculty or staff members' primary computer only; there are also other limitations. See <http://www.towson.edu/tradeup/>

6. What if my repurposed computer stops working?

If the cost is minor part replacement, it may be covered by OTS. Otherwise, it may be replaced by another repurposed computer, or the department may elect to purchase new one.

7. What if my computer qualifies for a computer trade up through the Computer Trade---Up Program when it stops working?

If the repair is costly, and the computer is eligible for replacement through the Computer Trade---Up Program, they can be replaced before the two year refurbished computer life cycle.

For Potential Partners

1. What types of student volunteers are you looking for?

We welcome TU student group volunteers as well as high schools students. If you are a representative of a high school and would like to talk more about how your students can volunteer, contact us at EduCycle@towson.edu.

2. Can TU student groups work with the program to obtain student service hours, volunteer experience, or participation credit by helping out with the program?

The help would definitely be welcome. It would be up to the group with which the student is affiliated or representing to determine if it "counts." Best bet is to contact one of the EduCycle program administrators to discuss your ideas.

3. Can high school groups obtain student service hours by helping out with the program?

We are reaching out to specific high schools to discuss this option. If you are a representative of a high school and would like to talk more, contact one of the program administrators.

For College and Department Technology Staff

1. Some of the computers being decommissioned have been configured for specialty use. Can we keep them?

If you have a planned use, you can request a waiver for each computer you want to keep.

2. If add-on cards (e.g., sound, video) were added to the computer, must these be returned with the computer?

It depends. We would like a functioning computer back, so if pulling the card makes it inoperative, we need to talk about your re-use plan first.

3. OTS requested that college and department staff DoD wipe drives before returning the computers. That creates a lot of extra work for us.

From security and logistics standpoint, DoD wiping the computers as the last step before removing them from lab or classroom use saves everyone time—especially if you can start the process in batch and let things run overnight. If that's not practical, we can work with you individually on alternatives.

4. Why do lab and classroom computers need to be DoD wiped? They don't contain sensitive or confidential data.

Not necessarily. Students, faculty, and staff could have documents or attachments buried in profile, cache, or other drive location. The exposure risk cannot be ignored; they need to be DoD wiped or the drives destroyed.

5. If we already know we want to return computers coming out of service back to our own college or department, can't we just keep them?

If you have a definite use for a computer coming out of service, we'll work with you to make things as simple as possible. But you will have to request and explain each computer you want returned; we'll provide a spreadsheet to list your needs.

6. Why does OTS keep pressing me for a decommissioning date? I keep getting hounded.

We need a date—to the nearest week at least so we can plan for purchase and delivery—too early and warranty is wasted; too late and you won't have them in time.

7. Can't you just use Property Records instead of having college and departments update the computer census for classrooms and computer labs?

We've addressed this previously. Property Records does not track decommissioning data—only purchase data—and their data has not historically been close to real time. We have different needs. A more unified approach might be possible down the road; for now, it's in the hands of Financial Services who took on the Property Records function. The suggestion is on the table; that's the best we can do now.

8. Purchasing isn't a factor with the old computers, but you're still hounding me for a date. Why?

We need to arrange pickup and storage, buy parts and materials, and schedule the work teams. We're dead in the water unless we know what's in the pipeline. Also, potential campus offices that are waiting for reconditioned computers are stuck if we can't give them an answer if or when they'll get a computer.

9. Instead of turning the computers back to the reconditioning program, can we just keep them and handle things at the college or department level?

The requests will need to be reviewed and approved. OTS will provide a spreadsheet for you to list each computer you want to retain, along with an explanation of how it will be repurposed.

10. The three--year replacement cycle for lab and classrooms has created extra work—including the decommissioning process. Can OTS help?

Our three classroom and computer lab coordinators have offered help, and that will continue. They will also get our OTS lab support team involved if additional support is needed.

11. Can we have the computer drives shredded and then get reimbursed?

Computers should be returned with the hard drives intact, preferably DoD wiped. If this is not possible, work with your CCLT coordinator on other arrangements.