

How to Get New Computers, Reconditioned Computers, and Performance Upgrades: A Quick-Reference Guide for TU Faculty, Staff, and Administrators (v3, 4/9/2019)

1. **TYPE OF EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS:** Options and funding for computers often depends on the type of employee. Guidelines:
 - A. **A new tenure-track faculty person:** see section 4 below.
 - B. **A new faculty or staff position (i.e., new SAP or contingent staff positions, non-tenure-track faculty including lecturers, clinical assistant professors):** the person's department is responsible for the cost of start-up technology for new positions (i.e., a new line faculty or staff budget line). There is no central fund. The department can buy a new computer, get an EduCycle computer at no cost, or provide a computer from somewhere within the college/department. Thereafter, the computer may be eligible for renewal under the Trade-Up Program (see 5 below).
 - C. **A faculty or staff vacancies filled by a replacement person:** the previous employee's computer should be re-used by the new employee. However, it must be completely reformatted and reimaged for security purposes; contact OTS to arrange.
 - D. **Adjunct faculty:** Most adjuncts have limited office hours, use shared computers, and require only basic access, so EduCycle computers are generally the best option. For higher-end processing, however, the department can purchase new computers. There is no initial purchase fund; however, they could be renewed in the future through the Trade-Up Program (see 5 below).
 - E. **Student employees, graduate or teaching assistants, volunteers:** EduCycle computers are generally the best option, unless the department wants to buy new (see 8 below).
2. **RECOMMENDED MODELS AND STANDARD CONFIGURATIONS:** New computers are configured for the future. For example, Dell Windows desktop systems are outfitted with an i7 processor, 16 GB of memory, and a 256 GB solid-state drive. For details see <https://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/hardware.html>
3. **OTHER-THAN-RECOMMENDED MODELS:** OTS will consult with the faculty or staff client to identify a desktop, laptop, tablet, or hybrid model that meets their needs AND can be secured, supported, and is compatible with the TU environment. These are handled on a case-by-case basis. It's essential to consult with OTS in advance to spec and plan these purchases and avoid unpleasant surprises for both client and the university. This holds for grant-funded purchases as well. For further information: <https://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/documents/other-than-recommended-computers.pdf>
4. **COMPUTERS FOR NEW TENURE-TRACK FACULTY:** This acquisition channel is initiated and supported by the Provost's Office which communicates directly with colleges and departments, sets a fixed dollar maximum per computer, and collects information on start-up requests. OTS then places orders and arranges delivery. For example, in FY 19, the maximum per-person allocation is \$1,241 for Windows systems, or \$1,348 for a Mac.

If someone needs a higher-end desktop system, a laptop, monitor, etc. their department MAY agree to cover the difference. In FY 19, MacBook Pros tended to run \$1,761, Dell Latitude laptops around \$1,751, and for a super high end MacBook, up to \$3,420. Again, costs above and beyond the base allocation by the Provost's Office is a department responsibility; OTS does not have supplementary funds. Also, the Provost's Funding is a one-time

purchase; when it comes time for renewal, the computer system transitions into the Computer Trade-Up Program or other renewal channels, and that program's terms and conditions apply.

- 5. COMPUTER TRADE-UP PROGRAM:** University funded and administered by Administration and Finance, this program provides ONE computer refresh for faculty and staff every 4 years, on average. (In practice, it can be longer if the person's current computer is sufficient, and often today's models can last longer). If a person needs more than one computer (e.g., a desktop computer plus a laptop) only one of them can be traded up during the period—only one. For more than one, it's up to the department to fund.

Unless a computer is grossly out of date (OTS will let you know), it's up to the individual faculty or staff member, or a department/college representative, to get the ball rolling by requesting a trade-up using an on-line wizard. The wizard determines eligibility and submits the request. Complete information is at

<https://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/buying/tradeup.html>

- 6. PERFORMANCE COMPONENT UPGRADES:** Sometimes upgrading components makes more sense, and causes less client disruption, than buying a new system. OTS has a fund for this—specifically, adding memory, a faster or higher-capacity hard drive, an upgraded video card, etc. Like the Computer Trade-Up Program, the client needs to let us know they have an under-performing computer. OTS staff will run diagnostics, rule out other performance-limiting factors, and upgrade it if it qualifies. Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. Department or college review and approval will be required. See:

<https://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/upgrades.html>

- 7. COMPUTERS FOR CLASSROOM AND STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL USE (LABS, ETC.):** These are refreshed every 3-4 years and are almost always paid for with Student Technology Fees. See

<https://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/instruction/classroom/renewal.html>

- 8. RECONDITIONED COMPUTERS:** The TU EduCycle® program takes older office, classroom, and lab computers and reconditions them by doing thorough diagnostics, cleaning them up, adding more memory, bigger and faster hard drives, and providing a new keyboard and mouse. It helps by providing supplementary or secondary computers for employees, departments, and student needs. Sometimes, it is also one of several options for people who aren't yet eligible for trade-up. It's mandatory to use EduCycle computers for all Administration and Finance Division staff, and exceptions are only approved by the vice president. There's a misconception that an EduCycle computer restarts the "I have to wait" clock at 4 years for office computers. If a not-yet-eligible office computer is replaced with an EduCycle computer, the hold is actually 1 to 2 years. THEN, if the person qualifies, a new computer can be acquired through the Computer Trade-Up Program or other means. See

<https://www.towson.edu/technology/facultystaff/hardwaresoftware/buying/reconditioning.html>

- 9. CLOUD-COMPUTING ALTERNATIVES:** This is a whole new ballgame. Pay-for-use computing and storage platforms like Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure MAY be an alternative to buying and sustaining high-end computing needs for certain faculty and staff. OTS currently has no defined plans, contracts, or packages. However, we want to meet with people who believe their needs may be solved through cloud services. This type of specialty service may have possibilities in the future, so bring these high-performance needs to us and we'll look into the options. How we pay for them is a totally different issue—this is uncharted but interesting territory.