

Student Hardware and Software Needs for Blended and Distance Learning (Current as of May 2020)

Requirements:

Note: These are general requirements for students to participate in blended and distance courses. Some programs may have higher or different requirements and prospective students should consult their program information.

1. A desktop or laptop computer. Either a Windows-based PC with Windows 10 or a Mac with macOS Catalina 10.15 or higher. Processor: Intel i3 minimum with i5 or higher recommended. RAM: 4 Gb minimum with 8Gb or higher recommended. Storage: 10 Gb storage minimum with SSD disk recommended. Regarding storage – some programs may have higher storage requirements.
2. Speakers/headphones/earbuds with microphone for listening to audio or videos presented in courses. Note: your laptop may have a built-in microphone and speakers, but we recommend an external set for best quality of experience during synchronous activities.
3. A built-in or external webcam for interacting in course activities that require video feedback from students.
4. Google Chrome is the only browser that SAM (the College's LMS) completely supports.
5. Microsoft Office 365. Students have free access to install the suite on their computers, tablets or other mobile devices. A browser-based version is available.
6. Adobe Reader DC.
7. An Internet connection with a minimum download speed of 10Mb/s and an upload speed of 1Mb/s is recommended. A wired connection to your home router is typically preferable to a wireless connection as it provides better stability and performance.
8. Tablets, smart phones, and Chromebooks may allow you to access some course content but have limited functionality and are not recommended.

Internet Connectivity

To test your internet speed, go to <https://www.speedtest.net/> and click the “go” button. A test will take place that measures the speed at which you can upload or download data from the internet from your current location. It is normal for the upload speed to be much lower than the download speed. If necessary, consider asking others in your household to limit their use of devices/internet when you are involved in a ‘virtual’ class session.

The router in your house might send out more than one signal. Many routers broadcast a 2.4Ghz and a 5Ghz signal simultaneously. Connecting to the 5Ghz band is best. If you have an ethernet cable and your computer is situated near your router or modem, you might be able to use a wired connection instead of Wi-Fi for the best connectivity. For more information or help with this, email sam@hollandcollege.com.