Computer Policies and Information
Computer Requirements

All students at the School of Nursing are required to own a wireless-enabled laptop that can be brought to class as required, and that meets the functional requirements as outlined in this policy. It is important to note that the School requires in-class use of some applications that require the Windows operating system – these applications will run on any current generation, English-language Windows system; most also can run on current generation, English-language Macs with special accommodations (Mac users should read “Special Information for Mac Owners” in this policy).

Students at the School must have a modern laptop computer that meets the following specifications:

- be in good working order;
- be no more than four years of age at any time during your program of study;
- have a working battery capable of charging to at least 80% of full charge;
- be able to connect to the UVa wireless infrastructure;
- be free of any applications or services that hinder the ability of the laptop to function effectively in the University environment;
- have a University-supported, English-language operating system installed (refer to http://its.virginia.edu/central/ to determine supported operating systems);
- have functional, up-to-date anti-virus software installed, and be free of malware, as well as free of other applications and services that may impede the use of the laptop for academic work;
- be patched with all critical/urgent updates for the operating system and installed applications.

Hardware Considerations

- Hard drive performance can affect your overall computing experience significantly. A 5400 rpm hard drive should be considered as the minimally acceptable hard drive speed. The best laptop performance will be obtained with solid state hard drives (recommended) or 7200 rpm hard drives.

- An extended-charge battery is recommended (i.e., a 9-cell battery provides greater runtime than a 6-cell battery. Some manufacturers also offer 12-cell batteries, which offer the longest available runtime, but add significantly to a laptop’s weight). We recommend a 9-cell battery as you may not always have easy access to electrical outlets in classrooms.

- 802.11x wireless access that supports WPA2 encryption.
• Classes that utilize case studies and online exams often have multimedia components to the case studies/exams – you will need either headsets, headphones, or ear buds for use in-class with these systems. Headphones do not have a microphone, whereas headsets have a microphone – either will work for case studies and online exams that require multimedia functionality, or you may utilize ear buds for this purpose.

• Students enrolled in distance learning programs, or courses that require online collaboration using Web conferencing modalities, will require a headset. Many distance learning and online collaboration courses also require a Webcam. A Webcam either may be integrated into the computer, or be a separate peripheral device.

Netbooks (small, lightweight, and inexpensive laptops), generally speaking, are too underpowered to meet the needs of students in our programs; additionally, some Netbooks do not support installation of software applications required by the School. Similarly, handheld devices, such as iPhones and Android phones, iPads, Android Tablets, and other alternative computing devices cannot run many of the applications and software suites that are required for your coursework.

Recommended Software

• MS-Office (current version or one version previous) – students may acquire a campus-licensed version of MS-Office from Cavalier Computers for a nominal administrative fee (see “Software” later in this handbook section for more details).

• Adobe Acrobat Reader (available free from http://get.adobe.com/reader/).

Internet Access

Students living off-grounds must have an Internet Service Provider (ISP) so that you may access and transmit course materials via the Internet.

Use of Laptops for Academic Learning

Each course professor or instructor will have his or her own expectations of work to be accomplished with a personal computer. For nursing coursework, a laptop typically will be used for such tasks as:

• registering for classes;

• receiving and sending e-mail, including important class communications and assignments;

• preparation of clinical logs or other writing assignments;

• accessing online course websites;
• accessing online case studies;
• performing online research (including accessing online medical journals and databases hosted through the Health Sciences Library – http://www.hsl.virginia.edu);
• developing PowerPoint presentations for class assignments.

• Pre-licensure students (those students who do not possess an RN license) will complete online examinations in a proctored classroom setting by using a personal laptop and wireless Internet connection. Headsets, headphones, or ear buds will be required for some of these exams.

• Students in some programs will complete online exit examinations that require completion of an extended online examination in a proctored classroom environment. Headsets, headphones, or ear buds will be required for some of these exams.

• Graduate students may use a laptop to complete statistical coursework that will require specialized software, as well as to analyze data for research courses, theses, capstones, or dissertations.

• Some students may need to utilize a laptop (and/or home computer) for remote learning or remote group assignments. The University will provide access to online, synchronous learning technologies or similar web conferencing software. Students in programs that require the use of these technologies will need a headset (that includes a microphone) and possibly a webcam to participate.

Headsets are required to utilize distance learning and web conferencing software effectively; without headsets, feedback and other difficulties may be encountered, negatively affecting the experience of all online participants. The use of a laptop’s built-in speaker and microphone is not a viable option; however, a nominally priced headset will meet needs. A webcam, if required, either may be built into the laptop (an integrated webcam), or be a separate, stand-alone device. In most cases, course listings will state if distance learning technology will be utilized in the course; additionally, the course instructor will advise if distance learning or web conferencing technologies will be utilized.

**Laptop Considerations**

In contemplating a laptop, you should consider such factors as:

• size and weight (for ease of portability – you will need to carry your laptop to some classes);
• warranty lifespan;
• accidental damage (or complete care, AppleCare) coverage;
• battery life (you will not always have access to an electrical outlet).

Some online examinations for pre-licensure students, as well as some exit exams for some programs of study, must be completed in a classroom setting using a wireless connection and Web browser, and can last 2-6 hours. Extended battery life (or carrying a spare, fully charged battery) can be very helpful for completing these examinations (access to electrical outlets will be provided, but some students may find it more convenient not to have to plug into a wall outlet to complete an examination).

We recommend that you consider purchasing accidental damage (or complete care, AppleCare) insurance to cover damage from spills, dropping the laptop, wear-and-tear failures, and other problems that may arise from other than manufacturing defects. These sorts of damages and failures generally are not covered by the standard warranty, and this insurance (or advanced warranty) must be purchased at the time that you purchase your laptop. You also may wish to consider theft insurance, which may be covered under a home-owners or tenant policy.

We recommend that you consider a warranty that will cover your entire academic career at UVA. Many laptop manufacturers offer only a 1-year warranty as standard, and some less. Extended warranties typically need to be purchased at the time that the laptop is purchased or before the standard warranty expires.

**Personal Printers**

A personal printer for printing of assignments and other class materials provides a benefit to most students. Many classes post reading assignments in Adobe Acrobat PDF format at course websites. In some cases, these documents can be read or studied more easily by printing them. Additionally, there will be numerous writing assignments throughout the course of your college career. You will be required to submit many of these in a hard-copy format, and you may wish to mark-up printed copies during the writing process.

Please note that public printing at UVA is on a pay-per-page basis. Additional information is available at [http://www.virginia.edu/uvaprint/public.html](http://www.virginia.edu/uvaprint/public.html)

**Purchasing a Laptop Computer (Cavalier Computers Back-to-School program)**

Students anticipating the purchase of a new laptop computer can find examples of laptops that are appropriate for use at the School of Nursing at the University’s Cavalier Computers’ Back-to-School website: [http://www.cavcompbts.virginia.edu](http://www.cavcompbts.virginia.edu)

Students are not required to purchase a laptop through Cavalier Computers, nor do they need to own any of the specific models presented at the Back-to-School website; rather, the Back-to-School Initiative offered through Cavalier Computers is one option available to students, and may provide some assistance to you as you contemplate your specific computing needs.

A few benefits of purchasing a computer through Cavalier Computers include:
Most software is pre-installed and pre-configured (to include MS-Office, Symantec Anti-Virus, and other University software).

- Restoration images, which reinstall all software to original settings, are provided.
- On-grounds hardware support and repair services are offered.
- Extended warranties are offered as standard.
- Accidental damage insurance is offered for most systems.
- Access to loaner laptops is provided in the event that your laptop should require extended repair services.

Questions Concerning Computer Ownership and Requirements

Students with financial difficulties concerning the computer requirement, or who have additional questions concerning financing of laptops, may contact Student Financial Services at (434) 982-6000 for further information and assistance.

Students with financial aid awards who wish to purchase a computer using financial aid funds may contact Cavalier Computers for a computer quotation. After obtaining a quotation, you may submit the quotation to your financial aid counselor, who can then arrange for a direct payment check to be issued to Cavalier Computers for the cost of the laptop. Please note that this process requires several business days to complete, and is subject to financial aid approval and possibly other requirements.

Students with specific questions about computer ownership should address those questions to your School of Nursing program director. If you are uncertain of your program director’s name, you may contact the School’s Office of Admissions and Student Services (434-924-0141) to obtain that information.

Special Information for Mac Owners

We recognize that some students may choose to own a Mac. If you are a Mac owner, you likely will utilize software during your School of Nursing career that requires a Windows operating system; if so, these will be required applications for which you must devise a way to access a Windows environment from your Mac laptop.

The School of Nursing strives to limit the use of applications that run only on Windows; however, we cannot guarantee that you will not encounter applications that require Windows. You may need to access these Windows-only applications in-class (i.e., during class sessions; at this time, mandatory online testing software required of all pre-licensure students requires a Windows platform, as well as some of the exit exam platforms). Two options exist to meet the Windows requirement:
1.) If you have an Intel-based Mac, you have the ability to run Windows directly on your Mac. You may obtain a copy of the Microsoft Windows operating system for a nominal administrative fee (approximately $15) by visiting Cavalier Computers (http://www.cavcomp.virginia.edu), the on-grounds computer dealer. Once you have obtained a copy of Windows, you may install it on your Mac using either a virtualized machine technology, such as VMware Fusion (http://www.vmware.com/products/fusion/) or Parallels (http://www.parallels.com/products/fusiondesktop/), or using the Bootcamp utility (http://www.apple.com/support/bootcamp/) that is provided with OS X and later. VMware Fusion and Parallels both are applications that you must purchase, and are sold by Cavalier Computers and other retailers.

You likely will notice better performance using Bootcamp, especially if you have less than 3GB of RAM; however, you will have to boot to Windows and then reboot to Mac OS X to switch between the operating systems. VMware Fusion and Parallels both run on top of OS X, allowing you to run both OS X and Windows simultaneously. Students traditionally have found Parallels to offer better performance (anecdotally) over Fusion.

2.) The University strives to offer access to a Windows operating environment over Remote Desktop Protocol. There is no charge to students at present for these services, and you do not need a personal copy of Windows (nor do you need VMware Fusion or Parallels); however, we cannot guarantee that these services always will be available (though the School will strive to continue to offer them) or will be compatible with all applications that you may need to utilize.

You must install the free Remote Desktop Connection Client for Mac, available from http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=18140 for Remote Desktop access. You also must have encrypted (Cavalier) wireless access from your Mac. The name of the Remote Desktop Server (Terminal Server) to which you will connect will be provided at the time that you might need to utilize this technology.

Software

The University offers a limited selection of site-licensed software to students (most notably anti-virus software). Please refer to Information Technology Services’ Software Central for further information: http://its.virginia.edu/central.

Microsoft Office is available to students for a nominal administrative fee (approximately $15) through Cavalier Computers. See http://its.virginia.edu/software/mslicenses/obtain.html for further information.

Students also may obtain the latest version of the Windows operating system for a nominal administrative fee (approximately $15) through Cavalier Computers.

The SPSS statistical package utilized by some courses (mostly graduate level research courses) is available as a rental license from several authorized, online distributors. Please refer to http://its.virginia.edu/research/spss/ for further information, and a recommended rental vendor.
Technology Support

The PerceptIS Help Desk provides technical support to students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The PerceptIS Help Desk may be contacted at (434) 924-3731 or (866) 469-4866. Additional contact information is available at http://its.virginia.edu/helpdesk. Issues that cannot be resolved by the Help Desk may be supported by the School of Nursing’s technical staff, depending upon staffing availability and the required expertise; however, technical staff cannot assist with issues that require more than a nominal amount of time (typically 15 minutes) to resolve. Cavalier Computers offers a fee-based support service (http://www.cavaliercomputers.com/site_service.asp) for expanded support services, to include hardware repair and troubleshooting services, and malware remediation.

Wireless Connectivity

Students should configure laptops for access to the Cavalier encrypted wireless network when on-grounds. The UVa Network Setup Tool, available from http://network-setup.itc.virginia.edu/setup_tool.html, will configure most laptops to connect to the wireless network. This tool may be accessed and run whether on-grounds or off-grounds.

Accounts and Passwords

Information about accounts and passwords may be obtained at http://its.virginia.edu/accounts.

e-Mail

The University sends all e-mail correspondence to your official University e-mail address (computingID@Virginia.EDU). Information about student e-mail at the University is available at http://its.virginia.edu/email/student/.

File Storage

Your computer files will be among your most valuable assets as a student. Hard drives can fail at any time, and laptops can be lost or stolen. Portable USB drives can be lost easily, as well as experience data corruption or damage. You may also, at some point in time, find yourself in a situation where you will want to retrieve an earlier version of a file.

To accommodate the file storage needs of students, the University offers the Home Directory Service (HDS), as well as UVa Box accounts. Students are encouraged to utilize one or both of these services for your academic work – please do not rely upon portable drives or your local hard disk for storage of your work.

Information about the Home Directory Service is available at http://its.virginia.edu/homedir/

Information about UVa Box is available at http://its.virginia.edu/box/ The UVa Box service affords the largest amount of storage, and greater access options.