

Using Student-owned Computers for Educational Activities FAQ (October 2023)

About:

Q1: What is meant by "Using Student-owned Computers for Educational Activities"?

A1: Starting with the incoming students of 2020, instructors have been conducting classes under the assumption that all students have their own laptop computers. Not all classes will require the use of computers, as there are some subjects, such as physical education etc., in which they are not needed. However, students are required to bring their own computers when instructed to do so by the course instructor on the syllabus or in class.

Usage:

Q2: How will computers be used in classes?

A2: It will vary depending on the class, but the following uses are anticipated.

Using the Learning Management System (LMS)

- Confirming class communications using the LMS.
- Using the LMS to view and download class materials.
- Responding to questionnaires for class improvement

Taking online classes

- Accessing the web conference system and taking real-time classes according to the lecture timetable
- Viewing lecture videos and materials online, and having discussions on the bulletin board system
- Submitting quizzes and confirmation tests given on the web
- Taking e-learning courses on designated websites

Listening/speaking practice

- Viewing designated online videos and/or summarizing the overview of the videos for listening practice
- Recording videos of students reciting assigned content as speaking practice

Homework

- Solving exercises on the designated website
- Submitting homework/reports online
- Watching videos and materials on the designated website for preparation and review

Presentations

- Presenting learning outcomes in group-work classes

Programming

- Performing basic programming and computation on cloud servers

Depending on the faculty, students may use their computers for CAD and data analysis in their upper years.

Computer specifications:

Q3: What kind of computer should I bring?

A3: To ensure your computer operates smoothly during class, we ask that you bring one that meets the recommended specifications. Please see "Obtaining your own Laptop Computer" for a list of specifications.

Q4: Can I bring a tablet computer?

A4: It is hard to say, as many computers on the market today have characteristics of both tablets and laptops. Please be sure your computer meets the recommended specifications.

Q5: I already have a computer. Do I need to buy a new one?

A5: No. As long as it meets the recommended specifications, you can use a laptop that you already own. Please check your system's latest update information and be careful to always use a supported OS.

Q6: I don't know my computer's specifications. Where can I find them?

A6: Please look up your model's specifications on the manufacturer's website, system settings menu in your computer, etc.

Q7: My computer meets the university's "minimum specifications," but it does not meet the specifications for the faculty/department (major etc.) in which I plan to enroll. Do I need to buy a computer that meets those specifications as well?

A7: Yes. Please obtain a computer with the specifications listed for your faculty/department.

Purchasing a computer:

Q8: By when should I buy my computer?

A8: Please obtain the computer by the time of the Entrance Ceremony.

You will be asked to confirm your ID (Tohoku University ID) used to access various university systems on the web just prior to enrollment.. You will use your Tohoku University ID (specifically, your "sub ID") to set up your computer to connect to the campus Wi-Fi in preparation for classes, which will start a few days later. (Instructions for setting up your computer will be provided separately.)

Q9: About how much will the computer cost? Where should I buy it?

A9: It is hard to provide an exact amount as computer prices can fluctuate greatly depending on the time and place of purchase.

However, it does not matter where you purchase your computer as long as it meets the recommended specifications.

The Tohoku University Co-op, located on campus, sells computers that meet the recommended specifications.

Home Internet connection:

Q10: Do I need a fiber-optic Internet connection in my home (apartment)?

A10: Although a fiber-optic connection is not mandatory, we strongly recommend that you prepare an Internet connection in anticipation of taking online classes and working on assignments at home.

Just for your information, Tohoku University students can use the campus Wi-Fi service. Please use it for classwork that requires high volumes of data transfer (watching lecture videos, sending/receiving video files, exercises conducted on designated servers, etc.).

Printer:

Q11: Do I need to buy a printer?

A11: It is not mandatory. Please consider your needs and decide for yourself.

Lately, it has become common to save document files (data) on a network server and print them out (for a fee) using print services at convenience stores etc.

Charging:

Q12: Can I charge my laptop on campus?

A12: In general, we ask that you please charge your computer at home.

(The minimum recommended computer specification calls for a battery life sufficient for two 90-minute classes without recharging.)

To ensure that students who forget to charge their computers can still participate in class, we are constructing a station capable of charging a number of computers at once. Of course, it will not have room for all 2,400 first-year students should everyone forget to charge their computers. So, please remember to charge your computer before going to class.