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## Online Education — Technical Considerations

In order to participate fully in your online courses, this document provides a list of technical requirements and recommendations to consider.

### Your computer

As an online student it is highly recommended that you have your own computer. To handle the demands of advanced academic applications, document formats, media, etc., your computer should meet minimum specification levels for features, memory, drive space and processing power. If you already have a computer or purchase one elsewhere, use these specifications to assess your system.

- Intel i5 or i7; AMD Ryzen 5 or 7; or M1
- 8.0GB Memory
- 250GB Solid State Hard Drive
- 802.11ac/n rated wireless or a hardwired connection
- High speed internet
- An up-to-date supported version of the operating system.
- An up-to-date web browser — Firefox and Chrome are recommended (use of Microsoft Edge has been known to cause problems with certain online tools).

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*Pro tip: Using 2 different browsers for your ESF and SYR credentials can help alleviate issues logging into the different systems, e.g., Chrome for ESF and Firefox for syr.*

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### Your computer should also be equipped with the following:

- **Speakers and/or headphones/earbuds port**
- **Microphone**
- **A webcam** is strongly encouraged for possible meetings with professors or small groups. Most webcams built into a laptop will work fine. Your ability to interact through webconferences will be limited without a webcam.

### Commonly used applications

- [Blackboard](#) Learning Management System
- Microsoft Office 365, or a Word and PowerPoint compatible program to view handouts and presentations. All students can obtain Microsoft Office Suite for free through SUNY ESF.
- Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate. Both come from Syracuse University and your SU NetID credentials.
- [ESFiD](#) and [SU NetID](#)
- [Adobe Reader](#) allows you to view, save, and print Portable Document Format (PDF) files.

ESF is primarily a Windows-based computing environment. Macintosh computers have access to most network services, but some Mac users may find certain courses require use of software that does not run natively on the Mac OS, or for which Mac licenses are not readily available. Nearly all such software will run on current Macs with Boot Camp and Windows installed, and most of it will run successfully on emulation software like Parallels or Fusion. Some software is also available on virtual desktops that you can access through a web browser.

*Though coursework is accessible by downloading the Blackboard app through Apple Store or Google Play using Chromebooks, tablets, or other mobile devices, a computer is required due to the content of some courses. It is recommended that all students have a back-up plan in case of internet outages and/or computer failure.*

Additional resources and links can be found at <https://it.esf.edu/>