ESF

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Open Academy

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.

- Windows 11 Home or Pro 14" Display
- 16 GB of RAM (memory)
- 512 GB hard drive
- 4 Year warranty with accidental damage (optional)

- High speed internet
- An up-to-date web browser (See pro tip below) — Firefox and Chrome are recommended (use of Microsoft Edge has been known to cause problems with certain online tools).

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.

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.
- Microsoft Outlook app for your computer and/or mobile device. Use this to check both your ESF and SU mail in one place, find instructions on how to add multiple accounts to Outlook at Add an email account to Outlook
- Microsoft Teams app for your mobile device, use this with your ESF credentials to receive announcements and chat for the SUS program.
- Zoom from Syracuse University using your SU NetID credentials.
- Adobe Express provides access to photo, video, and Portable Document Format (PDF) editing on any computer. Log in using your ESF credentials.

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/