

Purpose & Goal

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance related to purchasing computer equipment at SEAS.

The goal is to ensure that members of the SEAS community have suitable computer equipment to perform their roles while also providing prudent stewardship of SEAS resources.

SEAS Computing, Harvard University Information Technology (HUIT), SEAS Finance, Areas, Research Administration, and other groups work closely to ensure that technology purchases are compliant with applicable University policies.

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1. Computers at SEAS

a. Definition: SEAS computer

For this document, a SEAS computer will be defined as desktop, laptop, or tablet (e.g., Apple iPad, Android) that is purchased with SEAS funds. This includes computers paid for with administrative department funds, Area funds, faculty discretionary funds such as startup, and principal investigator (PI) funds administered by SEAS Research Administration.

b. Ownership

Unless otherwise specified in funding terms, all computers purchased with SEAS funds are the property of SEAS and, as such, are subject to University computer, network, and information security policies. Computers should remain at Harvard if a SEAS community member leaves Harvard unless an exception request is submitted to and approved by SEAS leadership.

c. Information security requirements

[Per University policy](#), Harvard-managed or Harvard-purchased laptops and desktops must run the CrowdStrike endpoint detection and response client. All computers connecting to SEAS networks, whether wireless or wired, owned by SEAS or used in affiliation with any work at SEAS, must comply with all University and School policies including, but not limited to, the [Harvard University Information Security Policy Statements](#) and [Harvard University Information Security Requirements](#). SEAS-funded computers should be kept up to date on security patches and should be running supported operating systems.

2. SEAS Staff and Faculty Computers

a. Eligibility

A standard computer (desktop or laptop) funded through SEAS Computing is provided for staff and faculty positions at SEAS. A grid of role eligibility is below. Staff and faculty computers are eligible to be replaced (“refreshed”) once every five years.

Affiliation Type	Title	Eligible for SEAS Computing–Funded Computer
Staff	Exempt Staff	Yes
Staff	Non-Exempt Staff	Yes
Faculty	Professor (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Professor of Practice, Professor in Residence)	Yes
Faculty	Lecturer, Associate Senior Lecturer or Senior Lecturer	Yes
Faculty	Preceptor or Senior Preceptor	Yes
Faculty	Professor Emeritus/Research Professor	Yes
Faculty	Visiting Faculty (e.g., Visiting Professor, Visiting Associate, Visiting Assistant, Visiting Lecturer)	Exception required*
Research	Associate	No

Research	Research Scientist or Senior Research Scientist	Exception required*
Research	Research Associate	Exception required*
Research	Fellow	No
Research	Postdoctoral Fellow	Exception required*
Research	Senior Research Fellow	No
Research	Visiting Scholar	No
Research	Visiting Undergraduate Research Intern (VURI)	No
TA/TF	Teaching Assistant	No
TA/TF	Teaching Fellow	No

* Please contact SEAS Computing via an email to seas_computers@g.harvard.edu with the subject line “SEAS Computer Exception Request” to initiate the exception request process and include the following information:

- Individual’s SEAS affiliation
- Appointment start date
- Appointment end date
- A message from the Research Portfolio Manager (RPM) that indicates that the exception is being requested because the funding source supporting the individual does not permit the purchase of a computer and the faculty member does not have any discretionary funds available to purchase the computer.

b. Process

Requests for standard and nonstandard computers that are part of this program should be coordinated through SEAS Computing and HUIT. For new positions, SEAS Computing will coordinate with the hiring manager for staff roles and the Area Director for faculty roles.

c. Standard and nonstandard computers

The [SEAS computer configurations webpage](#) notes the SEAS standard computer models and provides a link to detailed specifications.

If a nonstandard computer is required for specific teaching, research, or administrative needs, the cost of a nonstandard computer for a staff and faculty member is partially funded through SEAS Computing and a costing string/33-digit billing code should be provided by the RPM or department budget lead for the remaining amount above the SEAS Computing allocation.

SEAS Computing will contribute up to \$1,000 towards the cost of a faculty or staff nonstandard computer purchase. A costing string/33-digit billing code will need to be provided to cover the balance.

If a faculty member selects a standard SEAS computer and wishes to upgrade the memory, storage, and/or processor, a costing string/33-digit billing code should be provided to cover the cost of the upgrades.

For any purchases or split-coding (partial funding) using rooted account strings or other RPM-managed programs, the RPM and faculty member should always be consulted for preapproval for use of the costing string/33-digit billing code.

Staff nonstandard computer requests must have written preapproval from a staff member's supervisor and department budget lead.

d. Computer refresh program

Staff and faculty computers that are fully or partially funded by SEAS Computing are eligible for replacement ("refresh") every five years. Currently, refreshes are conducted on a quarterly basis in partnership with HUIT. Faculty and staff will be contacted before the quarter in which their computer is due to be refreshed, to confirm the details of the new computer and provide information about the refresh process.

3. Computer Purchases Not Funded by SEAS Computing

Computers (desktops, laptops, and tablets) that fall into the below categories do not qualify for SEAS Computing funding and must be funded through another source:

- Non-primary computer for faculty or staff
- Computer for an individual in a role not eligible for SEAS Computing funding
- Lab or departmental computer
- Shared/common use computer
- Specialized workstations for labs

a. Preapproval process

SEAS requires pre-purchase approval for computers not funded by SEAS Computing, whether ordered through SEAS Computing/HUIT or via the Harvard procurement channel of Buy2Pay:

- Computers ordered with area funding require written Area Administrative Director preapproval.
- Computers ordered with non-area funding (e.g., with rooted account strings or other RPM-managed programs) require written RPM preapproval.
- Computers ordered with administrative department funding (e.g., HR, Communications, Finance) require department budget lead preapproval.

b. Purchasing process

HUIT can assist with identifying specifications and computer models that best meet a user's needs for both standard and nonstandard configurations, preparing your computer, and/or setting it up within your environment.

If a nonstandard computer is required, there are many configuration options available from Dell and Apple. HUIT can assist with exploring Dell and Apple options that will meet your needs. Additionally, for other common brands such as Lenovo, HUIT can likely assist with a purchase as well.

While it is not required that non–Computing funded computer purchases be coordinated through SEAS Computing and HUIT, it is strongly encouraged.

If circumstances necessitate a direct purchase, use the Harvard procurement channel of Buy2Pay. Additionally, it is important to ensure sales tax is excluded (refer to [ST-2](#) or [ST-5](#) forms).

Harvard purchasing cards (P-cards), corporate cards, department cards, or personal credit cards should not be used for purchasing SEAS computers (including desktops, laptops, and tablets).

Below are some of the benefits of ordering computers through SEAS Computing and HUIT:

- To promote compliance with University procurement and information security policies including installing CrowdStrike and, if the computer is a laptop, ensuring it is encrypted as required by University policy.
- To streamline setup and support by way of the following:
 - The computer will be shipped to HUIT
 - HUIT can install Harvard security tools and standard software
 - HUIT can affix a Harvard asset tag
 - HUIT can record the computer information (e.g., model and serial number) in the IT ticketing system, which can be helpful to have when providing support
 - HUIT will coordinate with whomever will be using the computer to get the computer to them
 - HUIT will have record of the computer if it should need troubleshooting and/or repair once deployed

To start the process of ordering a computer via SEAS Computing and HUIT, send an email to seas_computers@g.harvard.edu with specifications of the computer you want to order, including the length of the warranty (if applicable).

It is strongly encouraged to include a warranty for computer purchases. Dell and Apple both offer three- and four-year warranty options. Warranties are generally unallowable on sponsored funding, and warranty costs should be charged to a non-sponsored account string.

c. Specialized workstations for labs

Specialized computers for labs are most often not purchased through SEAS Computing/HUIT if they are a specialized brand. However, for workstations that are not a specialized brand, but rather nonstandard Dell or Apple models, HUIT can work with labs on purchasing such devices.

d. Receipt of computer

As noted above, [per University policy](#), all Harvard-managed or Harvard-purchased laptops and desktops must run the CrowdStrike endpoint detection and response client, and laptops must be encrypted. Once a computer is received on campus, the user/recipient must open an IT ticket with HUIT to request that they set up the computer with Harvard required security tools. This can be done by sending an email to ithelp@harvard.edu, which will generate an IT ticket. Please include the model, serial number, and date of purchase in the message.

4. PhD Student Laptops

Beginning in the 2022-2023 academic year, a fund was established to provide entering SEAS PhD students with a SEAS laptop. There are several standard laptop configurations for students to choose from. Computers provided through this program are the property of SEAS and must be returned when students graduate or otherwise leave SEAS, if the computers are less than four years old.

5. Repair or Replacement

A SEAS Computing-funded computer will have a four-year warranty. Should the computer have performance issues and it is determined that it is unable to be serviced, your SEAS Computing-funded computer may be eligible to be replaced ahead of schedule. Such scenarios are handled on a case-by-case basis.

Repairs or replacement due to accidental damage during the four years that are not covered by warranty will require a costing string/33-digit billing code to cover the cost of repair or replacement.

6. Redeployment of a Computer

If a SEAS community member leaves SEAS or no longer has a need for a SEAS computer, guidance on what should be done with the computer is below (based on computer funding):

- SEAS Computing-funded equipment — equipment should be returned to Computing/HUIT upon departure or when there is no longer a need.
- Area-funded equipment — equipment should be returned to Computing/HUIT upon departure or when there is no longer a need.
- Startup and gift-funded equipment — equipment stays with the lab.
- Sponsored account-funded equipment — equipment stays with the lab and is transferred to the next member, if applicable.

a. Staff computer equipment

If a staff member leaves SEAS, the computer and any SEAS computer accessories should stay at SEAS. SEAS Computing will contact the staff member to coordinate return of their computer and any computer accessories to HUIT. Staff are encouraged to review the below resources to review information about managing email and digital records.

- [Leaving Harvard for Employees](#)
- [Prepare to leave Harvard University](#)

b. Lab computer equipment

If a lab member leaves SEAS and their computer will be used by another lab member, the lab manager should open an IT ticket via an email to ithelp@harvard.edu to notify them of this change and to ensure that the computer is associated with the new individual for asset inventory and network registration purposes.

7. Computer Accessories

Desktop computers for staff and faculty come with a standard keyboard/mouse and one standard monitor, if it is not an all-in-one model with an integrated monitor. An additional monitor may be requested (total of two monitors provided).

Individuals who use laptops may request up to two standard Dell monitors, and a standard Dell or Apple keyboard and mouse. These are provided by SEAS Computing. Any required adapters (e.g., ethernet, multiport) are also provided. For Dell laptops, a docking station is provided if requested.

Nonstandard accessories can be ordered with a costing string/33-digit billing code through a departmental procurement process. Computer-related purchases must conform to University and SEAS financial and technology policies.

Computing and/or HUIT can provide details about standard accessories on request. That information is not included in this document, as it changes with some regularity as models are updated.

	Laptop — Windows	Laptop — Mac	Desktop — Windows/Mac
Monitor(s)	Up to 2 (if requested)	Up to 2 (if requested)	1 provided standard; 1 additional on request
Keyboard	Yes, if requested	Yes, if requested	Yes
Mouse	Yes, if requested	Yes, if requested	Yes
Docking station	Yes, if requested	No	N/A
Adapters	Yes, as needed	Yes, as needed	Yes, as needed