

Computer Hardware Acquisition, Disposition, Replacement, and Disposal Policy

Policy/Procedure

1. Introduction

The following policy outlines Dickinson's approach to the acquisition, operation, replacement, and disposal of College-owned employee and classroom computer hardware. This policy establishes general expectations for the purchase, use, re-use, and disposal of computer hardware, which helps to assure that, as a community, we are being responsible stewards of College resources, diligent toward security considerations, sustainably minded, and consistent in our practices between departments, employees, and the learning environment.

This policy applies to all purchases made with Dickinson College funding, including departmental funds, grant funds (while these may not specifically Dickinson monies, these are administered by Dickinson), User Services funds, and faculty start-up funds.

With any complex scenario involving resources and those who require them, there are circumstances that call for exceptions. Questions concerning exceptions may be directed to the Associate Director of User Services.

2. Technology Purchasing

The following section describes the rationale and best practices for the purchase of computer-related technology at Dickinson. To assure the most effective service levels and achieve the best possible pricing for all Dickinson-owned computers, computer purchases should be conducted through User Services. Contact the User Services Help Desk to initiate the purchasing process for all computer needs.

By working with User Services for computer purchases, faculty, administrators, and staff can expect professional guidance that helps to assure purchased technology is supported adequately and sustainably, and remains compatible with existing campus hardware and software. In support of this endeavor, User Services has built relationships, and negotiated purchasing agreements, with specific hardware vendors, software vendors, service agencies, and consortia partners. Involving User Services in technology purchases, and taking advantage of pre-negotiated purchasing agreements, helps assure the needs of campus users are sufficiently met, such as:

- Hardware which can be efficiently supported
- Compatibility with Dickinson's network environment
- Compliance with Dickinson's security requirements and policies

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- Suitability, based on needs assessment
- Efficient and compliant distribution of software in accordance with vendor license agreements
- Availability of sufficient Dickinson funds (including initial and recurring costs), and to assure sales tax exempt status
- Equipment is properly entered into the College's asset management system to assure the device is accounted for and replaced per the scheduled timeframe.
- Ensure the device remains evergreen with security and application updates

Due to the above descriptions, User Services will not reimburse, nor support the purchase of, any hardware typically supported by User Services (computers, printers, scanners, etc.) unless that purchase was procured through, and/or with the knowledge and approval of, User Services. With respect to hardware purchased with College funding outside the knowledge of User Services, while User Services will apply the best effort possible to supporting this hardware, support may be limited.

All technology, including hardware and software, regardless of how the purchase was originally funded (departmental funds, User Services funds, endowed funds, etc.) remains the property of Dickinson College. Dickinson does not consider requests for sale or retaining for non-College uses ('gifting') of technology to faculty, staff, or retirees; for example at the time of departure from Dickinson.

In some instances, specialized technology is a requirement that is associated with a faculty member's research. Should that faculty member leave Dickinson, there is occasionally a need to arrange for the specialized hardware or software to move with the faculty member to their new institution. At the direction and authorization of the Provost's Office, User Services will work in partnership with the faculty member and Provost's Office to arrange for this exception and any associated requirements, to include documenting the transfer.

2.1. Employee Computer Provisioning

Standardizing the specifications of purchased hardware allows the College to efficiently select and manage technology, obtain better system pricing, reduce maintenance costs, and increase access to manufacturer and vendor assistance. These standards are re-evaluated twice annually based on a number of evaluation criteria, including; common needs, available specifications, cost, reliability, supportability, quality, and sustainability.

Dickinson College will provide one College-owned computer to each member of the faculty and professional staff of the College, including visiting faculty, to perform the required work of their position. A College-owned computer is defined as a computer that is configured for the general activities associated with being a staff or faculty member and is optimized to work on the Dickinson network with associated adequate security provisions. For Tenure Track faculty members and full time administrative employees, the computer will be new (ie. manufactured by the original

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equipment manufacturer (OEM) and purchased by Dickinson within the last year) or comparable to the specifications of standard computers which have been newly acquired. For visiting or temporary faculty, as well as part-time employees, User Services may provide a new or used computer depending on available inventory and will make every attempt to fulfill the requested operating system. Visiting or temporary faculty or part-time employees seeking a different computer than that which is provided by User Services, will need to obtain their division's VP approval for the change. **The computers described above are referred to as the employee's 'primary' computer. Please see "Multiple Computers Per Employee" section below for more information regarding 'primary' computers.**

2.1.1. Employee Computer Replacement Cycle

User Services budgets for, and schedules, computer replacements across campus on a defined rotating basis to ensure that end user computing needs are met with new hardware as systems age over time. User Services continually monitors industry trends in both hardware components, and replacement cycles, in order to maintain a balance between fiscal responsibilities to the College while being cognizant of maintaining positive end user computing experience across campus.

User Services is currently forecasting to replace desktop computers (both Dell and Apple) on a six-year cycle and laptop computers (Dell, Apple, and Microsoft) on a four-year cycle. As hardware become more reliable over time and the fiscal needs of the College change, this replacement cycle may change in response to these environmental factors. Should these parameters change, User Services will provide ample communication to campus regarding any future alterations to the replacement cycle.

Employees, whose machines are scheduled for replacement, are notified via e-mail that their primary computer is scheduled to be replaced within the current refresh timeframe. The email includes the replacement timeframe and specifications of the new computer they will be receiving. No response is necessary to the email notification unless the employee's computing needs have changed and they require different specifications than that which User Service is providing, for which external funding sources to User Services will be required.

2.1.1.1. Overage Charges

If the employee's computing needs have changed, they require different specifications than that which User Service is providing, and the change in specification results in a more costly computer, the employee is responsible for locating a funding source to support this change. In these instances, User Services will cover the cost up to the value of the computer User Services had intended to provide. The employee, or the employee's department (*), is responsible for the cost differential beyond the value of the computer User Services had intended to provide. * Faculty: see section titled 'Overage Charges to Faculty and the Information Technology and Services Committee (ITSC)'

2.1.1.1.1. Overage Charge Assessment

The cost differential the employee, or the employee's department, is responsible for beyond the value of the computer User Services had intended to provide is a **one-time only** upcharge. Once a computer of a certain specification has been purchased, User Services will make every effort to replace it with a computer including comparable specifications when that computer is up for replacement in the future. The employee does not need to find a funding source again in the future to maintain the more costly computer, nor re-request the same specification changes during future replacements of the computer unless further requirements are identified and communicated at that time.

2.1.1.1.2. Overage Charges to Faculty and the Information Technology and Services Committee (ITSC)

Starting in November of 2017, Faculty requesting a computer that requires a one-time overage charge may request total or partial funding from ITSC to cover the overage cost. Faculty work with User Services to determine the cost of the overage charge for what is being requested and then submit a request to ITSC which includes the requested funding value and justification for the academic need. ITSC will review the submitted requests and communicate the level of funding provided toward the request back to the requestor before User Services proceeds with the purchase of the hardware. Details of the request form will be provided by User Services along with the overage cost at the time of the request.

2.1.1.1.3. Full/Partial Personal Contributions to Purchases of College-Owned Computers

It is not allowable for an individual to use their own personal resources to pay for this cost differential beyond the value of the computer User Services had intended to provide. Doing so presents ambiguous scenarios of ownership during computer servicing and replacement.

2.1.1.1.4. Personal Hardware in College-Owned Computers

It is not allowable for an individual to install their own hardware (ie. hard drives, peripheral boards, graphics cards, memory, etc.) in College-owned computers unless given express permission by User Services to do so. Unfamiliar and/or untested hardware may compromise the stability of the computer as well as the ability for User Services to reliably support the computer and ensure operability. Additionally, installation of additional hardware components to a machine by an individual not certified by the manufacturer to do so will void the warranty of the device.

2.1.2. Budget Forecasting

In an attempt to keep budget officers apprised of employee computers being replaced in any given fiscal year, User Services will attempt to provide access to a dashboard which provides an overview of computers within an office or department and when those computers are up for replacement. User Services will work with budget officers as need

to have conversations with employees regarding their future computing needs. This communication will go towards the end goal of allowing departments enough advanced notice to request appropriate upgrade funding during the next budget building cycle.

2.1.3. Replacement Due To Accidental Damage, Loss, or Theft

In the event an employee's College-owned computer is lost, stolen, or accidentally damaged beyond repair, User Services will make every effort to replace it with a computer including comparable specifications as soon as possible. There is no charge to the employee, or the employee's department, for this first replacement.

In the event an employee's College-owned computer is lost, stolen, or accidentally damaged beyond repair a second (or more) time(s), User Services will not fund a replacement computer for the employee. The employee, or the employee's department, will be responsible for the full cost required to fund a replacement for the lost, stolen or irreparably damaged computer with a computer built with comparable specifications to the original device for the employee to use going forward.

2.1.4. Peripheral and Multiple Peripheral Provisioning

User Services attempts to provision peripherals for computers where feasible and fiscally responsible to do so. In general, a desktop computer will be provisioned along with a keyboard, mouse and, if the computer is not an all-in-one style chassis, an external monitor as well. Laptop computers are provisioned with a power adapter. 2-in-1 computers are provisioned with a detachable keyboard, stylus and docking station.

The size of a laptop screen allows for the use of the device as a primary system without the need for a docking station. In this case, docking stations and the normally associated peripherals (keyboard, mouse, monitor, etc.) are the responsibility of the employee, or the employee's department, to fund as these items constitute personal preference over critical need. Once laptop-associated peripherals are funded by the employee, the employee may continue to use these peripherals throughout the life of the current laptop and bridged into the life of subsequent laptops should the hardware be compatible. If laptop model changes require different or new peripherals, again, this will be the responsibility of the employee, or the employee's department, to fund. As User Services becomes aware of hardware changes made by vendor decisions, User Services will notify employees to changes in peripheral compatibility and the need to fund the new hardware associated with the laptop that is scheduled to be replaced.

Secondary monitors (as well as supporting hardware (ie. cables, stands, adaptors, etc.)) are the responsibility of the employee, or the employee's department, to fund.

2.2. Classroom, Lab, and Public Space Computer Provisioning

Similarly to employee-use computers, User Services budgets for, and schedules, computer replacements in classrooms, labs, and public spaces on a defined rotating basis to ensure that end user computing needs are met with new hardware as machine hardware becomes dated over time. User Services collaborates with the departments which

primarily use a particular space in order to provide computers which best meet the needs of the space.

2.3. Scientific Instrumentation and Special Use Computer Purchasing

Computers which support faculty research, specialized equipment, or computers in private labs are typically funded by departments, grants, committees, or the Provost's Office. These categories of equipment are the property of the College and are not eligible for replacement using User Services funds. Replacement of such computers is the responsibility of the department. Grant funding, the Science Executive Committee, or the Provost's office should be considered for replacement funding when these machines near the end of their useful life, as defined below. User Services will provide support to the extent feasible given the skills and knowledge of current User Services staff members. In some cases, departments may provide their own staff to support such computers, however these computers are still subject to the College's technology policies.

3. Computer Disposition

The following section describes aspects of computer use on campus, tangential to provisioning and lifecycle, which includes exceptions and re-use of existing computers for secondary uses.

3.1. Multiple Computers Per Employee

Multiple computers per employee naturally incur added support burden for User Services due to; additional systems for support technicians to maintain, added costs at replacement time, additional licensing fees for software and inventory applications, and added hardware costs when components fail and need to be replaced. Therefore, as stated in the Employee Computer Provisioning section above, **Dickinson College will provide one College-owned computer (primary) to each member of the faculty and professional staff of the College, including visiting faculty, to perform the required work of their position. Any subsequent computers used exclusively by an employee are considered are referred to as the employee's 'secondary' computer(s).**

However, as also stated earlier, with any complex scenario involving resources and those who need them, there are circumstances that call for exceptions. The section below discusses acquiring, retaining, and supporting 'Secondary' computers for employees (ie. any computer used solely by an employee that is not their 'primary' computer).

3.1.1. Acquiring Multiple (Secondary) Computers

Employees can acquire secondary computers via the following avenues:

- Purchasing the computer with departmental funding.
 - Purchasing the computer with startup funding.
 - Purchasing the computer with grant funding.
 - Requesting the computer through a governing committee (such as the Science Executive Committee).
 - Requesting the computer from their division head with justification for the need.
- Note that if the request is to accompany a primary desktop computer with a

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secondary laptop for mobility purposes, if would be preferable to attempt to replace the desktop with a laptop and peripherals to maintain one primary computer which satisfies both needs.

3.1.2. Support for Multiple (Secondary) Computers

The following points outline the support and lifecycle parameters of secondary computers which have been acquired via any means other than division head approval:

- User Services will label secondary computers as ‘secondary’ in the asset inventory system.
- Secondary computers will NOT be replaced as part of the normal Computer Replacement Cycle (see section titled ‘Employee Computer Replacement Cycle’ above)
- Employees may retain the secondary computer for as long as it is supportable by User Services (see section titled ‘End Of Life’ below).
- Employees will need to seek a funding source to renew/replace the computer when either they, or User Services, determines the device has reached the end of its supportable life (see section titled ‘End Of Life’ below).
- Software on secondary computers will be supported by User Services for the useable life of the device.
- Hardware in secondary computers will be supported by User Services so long as replacement hardware is readily available in inventory. Replacement hardware will not be purchased by User Services, but User Services will assist in affecting physical replacement of hardware components which the employee has obtained via other funding sources.

3.2. Reassignment and Re-Use

Computers must be returned to User Services when they are no longer needed and/or the employee using the computer has left the College. User Services staff will work with departments to determine whether computers are no longer needed and if replacement computers are necessary. In the event an employee leaves the College, User Services must be contacted so that the computer can be reformatted, the asset inventory system is updated, and the needs of any newly-hired employee can be evaluated.

3.3. Bumpdown Computers

When a computer is at the end of the lifecycle prescribed in the sections above titled ‘Employee Computer Replacement Cycle’ or ‘Classroom Computer Replacement Cycle’, User Services may choose to re-designate the computer as a ‘bumpdown’. Bumpdown computers are gently-used computers which are used in locations where basic computing resources are needed and the use of a new computer is unnecessary. Bumpdown computers may be used for student-used computers where only web browsing and/or light work is needed, or for temporary staff, where the specifications of a new computer would not be a requirement for daily use. User Services labels bumpdown computers in

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the asset inventory system and replaces them as needed, usually, with newer bumpdown computers as they become available via established replacement cycles.

3.4. Emeriti Faculty

Emeriti faculty are not eligible for College-provided computer hardware and are expected to return their primary computer at the time of their retirement. Emeriti faculty may be provided ongoing access to shared computer resources within their academic department in coordination with their department chair and the Provost's Office. Software may be provided to emeritus faculty when it can be done in compliance with current license agreements. License agreements limit what User Services can provide and can change from year to year at the software license provider's discretion. In particular, software licenses may require User Services to install software only on College-owned computers or require a College affiliation of 'current faculty, staff or student'.

3.5. Asset Management

User Services installs KACE client software on College-owned computers to track inventory information about devices, which is essential for installing software and security updates, making configuration changes, and assessing where the computer is deployed as well as where it is in its lifecycle. It is not permissible to alter or disable the KACE client software on any college-owned system.

Library and Information Services reserves the right to apply security measures and updates, and modify operating system settings and functions on College-owned computers in the interests of protecting College data and the College community as a whole.

4. End-of-life

The following section describes the processes by which computers and peripherals are off boarded.

All computers and equipment must be returned to User Services at the end of their useful life and are not, automatically, eligible for replacement. User Services generally defines the "end of usable life" as equipment that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- is unable to run a supported operating system
- requires an operating system that is considered by the vendor as "end of life"
- is greater than 7 years old
- lacks necessary specifications (hard drive space, memory, etc.) to apply critical security patches or software updates
- is damaged and is too expensive to repair

When a computer is at the end of the lifecycle (as prescribed in the sections above titled 'Employee Computer Replacement Cycle' and 'Classroom Computer Replacement Cycle', has completed service under 'bumpdown' designation, and/or meets the "end-of-life" criteria above), User Services may choose to liquidate the computer via one of the three following methods:

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4.1. Resale for Revenue

The newest decommissioned employee and classroom computers, which are not serving in a bumpdown role, are sold to third-party vendors in bulk to provide a valuable revenue source to fund new computers each year. Where fiscally, and contractually, feasible, User Services will make every attempt to use local vendors for this effort.

4.2. Hardware Donation

Older computers, generally those that have completed their service in a bumpdown role, are donated to the United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County, which orchestrates locating organizations in need of computers in the Carlisle area. Using only this organization as a means of distribution assures fairness in the charitable dispersal of College-owned hardware and is an excellent community outreach venue for Dickinson.

4.3. Hardware Recycling

The oldest hardware coming out of service that cannot be sold or donated, is disposed of via the materials recycling service contracted by the department of Facilities Management.

4.4. Data Security on Decommissioned Computers

For security purposes, the hard drives of ALL decommissioned computers are wiped using Department of Defense compliant erasure software with multiple zeroing passes to assure college data is completely destroyed before hardware leaves campus.

4.5. Resale of College Computers to Employees

It is not allowable for employees to acquire computers for personal use that have been purchased with College funding, for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include, but are not limited to; information security, restrictions of software licensing contracts, risk of dated equipment failure, and the general avoidance of issues pertaining to fairness for any who may wish to buy used equipment from the College.

5. Sustainability

Dickinson has an institution-wide preference to purchase:

- EPA Energy Star computers and monitors
- Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) Certified Computers and Monitors

The College has currently standardized to all EPEAT Gold and Energy Star-compliant equipment for all Windows- and Mac-based desktop and mobile computers. Additionally, the College is working to achieve this for monitors as well.

Related Information

History/Revision Information

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Also Found In: