Information & Technology Services (ITS): Computing & Email

Most students find their computers indispensable for writing essays, doing research, and communicating with   one another. Although there are computer labs scattered around campus, many students prefer to bring their own   machine. The college provides internet access and simons-rock.edu email accounts. All personal computers   must be registered with the college's Information Technology Services (ITS) in order to access the campus   network; registration of computers will take place during orientation or the first time you connect to the wired   network and open a web browser.

For pre-registration and placement testing, you will be given a temporary username and password to log in to   the Simon's Rock portal at http://my.simons-rock.edu. Your username will match your future campus email   address; however **your Simon's Rock email account will not be activated until you arrive on campus**. Once   on campus, the college portal http://my.simons-rock.edu and email are primary modes of communication contact from many departments. It is important that you check the portal and your Simon's Rock email frequently.

Selecting a Computer

Laptop and small netbook computers have the advantage that you can take them to class, the library, or a friend's room, whereas desktop computers tend to be cheaper and easier to upgrade. The disadvantage of portable computers is that they are more fragile, and can more easily be lost or stolen. For this reason, we recommend that portable computer users purchase a padded sleeve or carrying case, plus a lock or computer recovery software. For laptops, the manufacturer's extended warranty is often worthwhile, especially a plan that covers accidental damage such as spills, if available. Lower cost netbook computers are inexpensive enough that an optional warranty may not be cost effective. Desktop computers are by far the best value but the lack of convenience may be too limiting. Any current new computer should be sufficient for general use. Many older computers are also serviceable for email, web browsing, and word processing.

Operating Systems & Software

We ask that your computer run a secure, modern operating system. All computers are required to have current OS security patches and updated application software, and to be running any automatic update services provided with your OS. The college requires installing antivirus software on every Windows machine before connecting it to the campus network. Every Windows 8 or Windows 10 computer already has this in the form of Windows Defender. If you have Windows 10, we recommend you enable SmartScreen as well. If you have a Windows 7 computer, we need you to download and install Microsoft Security Essentials (which is available from Microsoft at no cost). Linux and Unix are permitted and encouraged for those who are able to maintain their own systems.

You should have access to word-processing software, such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel) or LibreOffice. Students can typically purchase Microsoft Office software directly from Microsoft. Alternatively, LibreOffice is an open-source office suite freely downloadable for students who prefer not to pay for the Microsoft product.

We also recommend and support the free Mozilla Firefox web browser and Thunderbird email client.

Printers

General-use network printers will be available in select public locations on campus (e.g. Library, Fisher Science and Academic Center, Student Union, Daniel Performing Arts Center, and Liebowitz Center for International Studies). You can also choose to bring a small printer to campus with you or acquire one once you arrive.

The Campus Network

Simon's Rock has a wired and wireless network throughout campus. For wireless, Simon's Rock is a member of the eduroam consortium, which gives secure wireless access to members of university communities around the world; see www.eduroam.org for a list of member institutions. Once you have configured your device to join the Simon's Rock eduroam network, you will be able to get online at any eduroam institution with no further changes. See [http://w ire le ss.simo ns-rock.ed u](http://wireless.simons-rock.edu) for connection instructions and a coverage map.

Dorm rooms also have one wired network connection per student. This is the best way to connect game consoles and other small devices that generally are not able to connect to a WPA2 Enterprise network. Do not bring personal Wi-Fi routers, as they will compete with the campus network for available airtime, hurting the throughput for everyone in a crowded dorm.

In addition to email accounts, all students are given a server storage area for personal webpages and file backup. The College requires all members of the community to read and agree to our Network Acceptable Use Policy before connecting to the campus network. In particular, note that unauthorized duplication or distribution of copyrighted material is illegal in the US. The ITS webpage at [http://simo ns-rock.edu/its](http://simons-rock.edu/its) has links to the Acceptable Use Policy and more information about copyright.

Computer Repair

All computers break eventually, usually at inconvenient times. To help guard against data loss and lessen the time it takes to get back up and running, we ask the following:

1. Be sure to bring the system discs that came with your computer to school with you. If your system did not come with system disks, most new computers will have a recovery partition instead. This makes restoration possible if the system gets corrupted.

2. Perform regular backups of all your important data. ITS is happy to demonstrate various ways to make safe copies of your documents to USB flash drives or media such as recordable CDs and DVDs, all of which are available for purchase at the local Staples store, Radio Shack, or online from Staples or other providers. Secure storage is also available on a shared server; however, this space is for documents you generate only, not for copied music or other media.

Training and Support

Computer Assistants (CAs) and ITS staff are typically available 9-5, Monday through Friday in the ITS Offices under classrooms 9-14 to help with basic IT issues. A CA is available in the Library until midnight Sunday through Thursday nights. For serious failures, such as damaged hardware or boot failure, we may be unable to help. In these situations, we will be happy to suggest local repair shops or help you get in touch with your machine's manufacturer. We strongly recommend purchasing the

extended warranty for computing equipment, particularly laptops; if a hardware problem occurs at any time during the warranty coverage, the contract generally pays for itself.

Telephone

Each dorm room has one active telephone jack/line on which there is dial tone for local calling. If you choose to take advantage of this service, you and your roommate will be responsible for providing a telephone. If you wish to receive voice messages from callers, please plan to bring a telephone that has a built in answering machine. You will be responsible for informing the Security Office and ITS that you plan to use the phone service in your room. Security will ensure that the College's emergency communication system and other systems are updated appropriately. Phone is one of numerous means the College uses to contact students and to pass along important information.

Simon's Rock has no billable long distance service for students; we suggest you purchase a prepaid calling card prior to your arrival on campus. Although good in some areas of campus, cell phone service remains spotty and intermittent on campus. Cell phone service is reliable for most carriers in downtown Great Barrington.