LITS Computer Replacement and Support Strategy for Faculty and Staff Computers

This document outlines the **Computer Replacement and Support Strategy** for faculty and staff computers funded and supported by Library, Information, and Technology Services (LITS). LITS recognizes the central role desktop and laptop computers play in enabling faculty and staff to work effectively in support of the College’s goals, and thus the overall aim of this strategy document is to outline a coherent action plan to properly position end-user computer technology in support of those goals.

Other specific goals of this strategy document are to:

- improve communications and achieve greater transparency and understanding of the process and options
- ensure that each faculty and staff member who uses computing resources in his/her position has a computer of sufficient capability to fulfill his/her responsibilities;
- realize a fair but flexible approach to meeting the diverse needs across campus;
- position the College to take advantage of new consortial models and improve planning;
- achieve more effective computer support services;
- enhance “green” computing practices.

The funds to support this Strategy are limited and reside in a separate budget earmarked for these needs called the LITS Desktop Equipment Reserve Allocation.

1. **LITS’ RESPONSIBILITIES**

LITS’ responsibilities within the context of this Strategy include:

- planning and budgeting the Desktop Equipment Reserve Allocation
- defining the standard computer models to be employed on campus
- managing the stock of existing and new computers
- identifying computers ready for replacement;
- maintaining the College’s inventory database of computer equipment (regardless of funding source);
- ordering new hardware;
- removing old equipment and recycling;
- refurbishing old equipment and redeploying to meet supplementary needs, in cases where old equipment remains reasonably reliable and can be sustainably supported;
- delivering and setting up computers;
- installing campus standard networking, office, and Internet tools and software;
- supporting, troubleshooting, and repairing the computer equipment that is purchased through this funding;
• providing limited support for computers not purchased through the Fund or which do not align with LITS standard models;
• continuously testing/piloting new hardware, operating systems and patches, and anti-virus and other protective systems;
• continuously developing/testing computer configurations.

2. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

In order to meet as many needs as possible with limited resources, LITS employs the following allocation principles

• LITS normally supports one computer per faculty or staff member on the replacement cycle when computer usage is required as part of his/her job responsibilities. When there are compelling work-related reasons, exceptions may be made or a dual boot computer (which allows both PC/Mac capabilities) may be purchased. Because extra resources may be involved to accommodate exceptions, faculty and staff members considering an exception should clear the request with appropriate individuals in their area (e.g. Dean of Faculty’s office, department head, manager). Officers will be contacted for final approval on exceptions. Generally, any costs to fund the exceptions are considered a departmental expense until the replacement is included in the LITS annual budget.

• The current goal is to replace faculty and staff computers on a five-year replacement cycle. Monitors, keyboards, and mice are reviewed periodically and replaced as needed. These replacement cycle goals ensure that:
  • all computers meet current functional requirements;
  • standardized configurations can be deployed for more sustainable and efficient desktop support;
  • effective network operations are well supported;
  • security of desktop computers can be maintained;
  • effective budget planning can occur.

Replacement decisions are made based on the age of existing computers, the job requirements and individualized needs of the faculty or staff member, and known problems identified by LITS staff, all within the larger context of technology changes, overall faculty and staff needs, and available funds;

• Peripheral hardware (e.g. external storage devices, DVD players) and computer supplies are funded through departmental budgets or other means. Departmental purchasing of College-owned peripheral hardware or computer supplies should be done in consultation with LITS in order to take advantage of potentially better prices, and to benefit from the broad technology purchasing and support experience of LITS staff;

• As part of a standard workstation configuration, LITS will provide a 19" or 22" flat screen monitor, full size USB keyboard and mouse. Alternative models of monitor, keyboard and mouse will be provided by LITS if necessary to meet ergonomic needs when the requested
item is comparable in cost to standard items. Other requests are directed to Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) for an ergonomic assessment or the Dean of Faculty or Director of Human Resources for disability accommodations. Standard ergonomic office furniture is available from Facilities Management. Other ergonomic needs are evaluated and assessed by EH&S. More information is available at http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/ergo

- Desktop computers are most commonly deployed since they are less expensive, have larger monitors, are more secure, and more durable in meeting MHC’s computing needs. To support and promote technology in teaching and allow faculty and staff who require or would benefit from mobile computing capabilities in their work, Mount Holyoke provides these faculty and staff with laptop computers, in consultation with LITS staff and with the approval of the appropriate department chair or manager, and Officer. All laptop computers are configured with encrypted hard drives for enhanced security in case of loss or theft;

- Except in rare circumstances, new computers are not purchased for student employee workstations, other shared-use office workstations, and short-term needs. Instead, previously deployed equipment that has rotated off a standard faculty/staff deployment on the replacement cycle, and which still meets minimum College standards are allocated for these purposes (LITS' common term for these computers is a 'rollover' computer);

- When special situations arise, LITS will consult with the appropriate department chair, manager, or Officer in addressing the matter;

- Assuming availability and when requested, LITS will allocate external monitors for laptop computers from the MHC monitor pool instead of purchasing new ones.

- For individuals who regularly work with personally identifiable information, additional extended computer security requirements are required and will be incorporated in the computer replacement planning.

3. RECOMMENDED HARDWARE STANDARDS

At present, the College has standardized on Dell and Apple desktop and laptop computers. The College's current recommended standards are located here: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/tech/hardware.html

These standards have been carefully chosen because of their power, flexibility, quality, ability to meet a wide variety of campus needs, capability to meet the replacement cycle goals, and value for the money. Furthermore, these are models for which LITS staff can provide full support and get parts, and for which the College maintains service agreements. These recommended standards change frequently in order to keep up with technological changes and product availability.

All computers purchased by Mount Holyoke College will reflect the College’s Green Computer Purchasing Policy (Appendix A), which states that all desktop computing purchases should meet Energy Star requirements as well as the EPEAT Silver or Gold environmental standard.
Because extra resources may be involved for non-standard computer configurations, faculty and staff members considering a non-standard configuration should clear the request with appropriate individuals in their area (e.g. Dean of Faculty’s office, department head, manager). Once the request has been cleared, the faculty or staff member should fill out the Computer Special Request Form to document the required needs and cost coverage arrangements: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/tech/computer_requests.html

Officers will be contacted for final approval on exceptions to the standard configurations. Generally, any costs to fund the exceptions are considered a departmental expense until the replacement is included in the LITS annual budget. If the exceptions are approved, LITS places the order and arranges to charge-back any costs over and above the standard configuration to a departmental or other fund. Please contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) with any questions and they will ensure your question or request is directed to the correct individual.

4. COMPUTER EQUIPMENT FOR NEW HIRES

• New tenure-track faculty
  LITS coordinates with the Dean of Faculty regarding new tenure-track faculty computer needs. The Dean expects new faculty members to use start-up or grant funds for computer equipment (for office and lab). LITS will facilitate the computer purchasing process.

  Faculty who have special requirements for software not already included in the standard setup, or for higher capacity or performance hardware than the standard LITS desktop or laptop, can fill out a Computer Special Request Form online: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/tech/computer_requests.html
  This form will help LITS staff match the needs of faculty with an appropriate configuration. The evaluation process for special situation requests will be expedited for new tenure-track faculty. The general process for evaluating a special situation request is outlined in Section 6, below. For questions about new tenure-track faculty member computer needs, please contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu);

• New adjunct/visiting/temporary faculty
  LITS coordinates with the Dean of Faculty’s office on computer needs for new adjunct/visiting/temporary faculty. In the case of last minute hires, it’s beneficial for Department Chairs to contact the Help Desk directly (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) about computer needs for the new adjunct hires. It is not always possible to fulfill last minute requests immediately given the press of other needs on campus, so notification of these new hires as soon as possible will ensure a smoother process for new colleagues.

• New staff members
  If a computer is needed for new staff hires, supervisors should fill out and submit the Computer Request Form located here: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/tech/computer_requests.html or contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) as soon as the position is approved for hiring. Given competing needs for equipment and the many needs LITS staff are supporting across
campus, it is not always possible to fulfill last minute requests immediately, so notification of these needs as soon as possible will ensure a smoother process for new colleagues.

5. STANDARD COMPUTER REPLACEMENT PROCESS

The goal of the College’s computer replacement plan is to replace faculty and staff computers on a five-year replacement cycle. Monitors, keyboards, and mice are reviewed periodically and replaced as needed. These replacement cycles have been developed to ensure that all computers meet current functional requirements, that standardized configurations can be deployed for more sustainable and efficient desktop support, that effective network operations are well supported, that the security of desktop computers can be maintained, and that effective budget planning can occur.

Annually, LITS searches the inventory of College-owned computers eligible for replacement through this plan, considers known problems identified by LITS staff through service visits and other means, considers technological changes, and reviews communications initiated by faculty and staff about the eligibility of their computer for replacement.

If a computer is eligible for replacement its user will be contacted individually via e-mail and directed to information about the replacement options and process. LITS staff welcomes the opportunity to consult about the most appropriate option for an individual’s needs. Don’t hesitate to call the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) with any questions.

In addition, a general message is sent or posted to faculty and staff, informing them that the computer replacement process is underway and inviting them to submit the appropriate form if they have non-standard computer replacement needs.

Once new computers are received, they are inventoried, tagged, and checked, and the standard tools and software are installed. LITS staff will contact users to set up a mutually convenient time to deliver the new equipment. LITS will work to prepare and deliver all awarded equipment as quickly as possible.

6. EARLY REPLACEMENT, NON-STANDARD CONFIGURATIONS, SUPPLEMENTARY PURCHASES, AND OTHER SPECIAL SITUATIONS

In certain circumstances a faculty or staff member’s teaching, research, or job responsibilities may require special accommodations such as:

- **Early replacement**: replace a computer in advance of the standard replacement cycle;
- **Non-standard configuration**: when teaching, research, or job responsibilities exceed the capabilities of the College’s current standard configurations or there are other special requirements;
- **Supplementary purchases for new purposes**;
- **Other special situations**.
If one of these situations occurs, the user should fill out the Computer Special Request Form: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/tech/computer_requests.html or contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) to discuss the issue and consult about options. A clear and thorough explanation and justification of the situation is needed so that an informed decision can be made. Requests take time to evaluate and process so planning ahead is strongly encouraged.

Special situation requests undergo two evaluations: first by LITS staff on technical grounds, and then a consultation with the appropriate Officer for operational considerations. The evaluation process considers the explanation of need, how similar situations have been handled in the past, available resources, and competing needs. The decision may be to purchase a new computer; to recycle a better existing computer; to upgrade the current computer; or to make no award. Users and the appropriate Officer will be notified of the outcome and have an opportunity to discuss the process with LITS staff if desired.

7. **PURCHASE AND REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT PURCHASED WITH NON-LITS COLLEGE FUNDS (GRANT, ENDOWED, DEPARTMENTAL, RESEARCH, PLUS FUNDED OR SPECIALLY FUNDED, ETC.)**

All computers purchased with College funds, including LITS funds, grants, endowed, departmental, research or special funds are considered College property, and are tagged and added to the College's computer inventory database maintained by LITS.

LITS is available to provide planning, pricing, and technical information and assistance to individuals and departments using grant, endowed, departmental, PLUS funds or special funds to purchase computing equipment. Please contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) to discuss your needs.

Consulting LITS on these types of equipment purchases can result in the following gains:

- more economical – cost savings can often be realized, over and above the educational discount, when purchasing the College's current standard models through LITS, additionally it may be possible to purchase a more powerful computer with the same amount of funding;
- simpler process - LITS can assist in the computer evaluation, specification, ordering, and service agreement process;
- higher level of service – equipment that conforms to current College standards is fully supported by LITS. If you purchase non-standard equipment, LITS will provide more limited support. Requests for service of non-standard equipment are handled on a case-by-case basis.

LITS strongly recommends that all computer purchases include a warranty program to ensure serviceability and parts.

Since grant, endowed, departmental, and special funds are often one-time money or represent special situations, computers funded from these sources are not generally placed in the automatic
replacement cycle, and replacement requests are reviewed by the appropriate Officer. In addition, desktop computers purchased with non-LITS funds that are kept off-campus at the faculty or staff person's home, will be supported at the same level as personally-owned computers (see page 8).

When computers purchased with these special funds are no longer needed for their intended purpose, there are several disposition options:

- the equipment may be redeployed by the individual or department to meet another College need, providing this change has the approval of the granting agency and the equipment still operates effectively. Please contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) to ensure the College's computer inventory database is updated with the new location;
- the equipment may be given to LITS, providing this change has the approval of the granting agency. Depending on the type of equipment and its age, LITS may redeploy it to meet another College need or recycle it. Please contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu) to discuss the options.

8. INSTALLATION PROCESS

Data Transfer. Prior to the delivery of a new computer, the user will have a scheduled appointment with a LITS staff member to back up and transfer any locally-stored data from the current computer to the new computer. Typically, these processes take a few hours to complete. More time may be needed in certain circumstances.

Out with the old, in with the new. After the new computer has been delivered and data transferred, LITS collects the old computer. The drives on the old computer are carefully reformatted and completely cleaned or destroyed before redeploying to meet other needs or recycling, as appropriate. This process supports a "greener" and more efficient workflow, ensures the safety of sensitive data, and helps LITS manage computing equipment as fairly as possible across the campus. In some cases it may be necessary to remove existing computer equipment from service without replacement.

Getting to know the new computer. When a new computer is delivered, some time should be taken to "test drive" it. If any issues or questions arise, please contact the Help Desk (x2600, or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu).

Ownership. All computers purchased with College, grant, endowed, departmental, or special funds are considered College property and must be added to the College's computer inventory database maintained by LITS.

Relocating computers: If there is a need to relocate a computer from its original location, please contact the Help Desk (x2600 or helpdesk@mtholyoke.edu). This step ensures that the MHC computer inventory database is updated with the new location. When the Help Desk is contacted with questions or problems about a computer, this database is consulted and the accuracy of the information is important to ensure needs are properly addressed.

Desktop computers should not be taken off campus without prior written approval from both the appropriate department and LITS.
Computers for travel or sabbatical. Computers are essential tools for faculty and staff when travelling on college business or sabbatical. Should a portable computer be needed for off-campus usage there are several options:

- For short-term needs, LITS maintains a small pool of loaner laptops which can be checked out. Please consult with Media Services (x3163) with questions about the units or to discuss needs.
- For longer-term or frequent off-campus usage needs, a laptop computer can be requested as a desktop replacement for a previously allocated faculty or staff computer.
- If a desktop computer is preferred and longer-term portability needs exist (travel, sabbatical, etc.), inquire with Media Services (x3163) about the availability of a laptop for extended loan.

Leaving MHC employment. The Help Desk should be notified when faculty or staff members leave MHC employment, including retirement. As with keys and ID cards, computers purchased with College funds are College property and must be left with the department when the faculty or staff member leaves College employment. Grant-funded computers should follow appropriate disposition procedures as required by the Office of Sponsored Research and granting agency. (see: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/sponsoredresearch/post_award.html) LITS staff will consult with the department chair, departmental administrative assistant, or supervisor regarding the redeployment of the computer and disposition of the information on the computer.

Personally owned computer support. LITS can help troubleshoot the following types of issues with a personally owned computer:

- Connecting the personally-owned computer to the College network;
- Installing the College-owned McAfee anti-virus software on current faculty, staff, or student personal computers.

The above personal computer troubleshooting services provided by LITS are only available on campus or in Mount Holyoke College locations. For liability and staffing reasons LITS does not perform other work on personally-owned equipment, nor will LITS be held responsible for any loss or damage to personal computers or devices. Please note that LITS' software licensing agreements do not allow for the installation of College-owned software on personally-owned devices.

For more extensive support of your personal computer, LITS maintains a list of local companies you can contact under the ‘Alternate Repair Solutions’ at: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/tech/get_tech_help.html.

Personal Computer Purchases. When making personal technology purchases, Mount Holyoke offers an excellent purchasing program in collaboration with the Smith College Computer Store that includes computer hardware and software, with educational discounts from Apple, Dell, Microsoft, Adobe, and other companies.
9. REVIEW OF THIS PLAN

This plan was endorsed by the LITS Advisory Committee on February 22, 2011 and the Administrative Technology Steering Committee on February 23, 2011. It will be evaluated each year as part of LITS’ budgeting and planning processes, and as technologies evolve. Adjustments will be made as necessary. The LITS Advisory Committee and Administrative Steering Technology Committee will be consulted about significant changes to this strategy.
Mount Holyoke College is committed to using greener equipment and implementing practices that are environmentally friendly and promote sustainability. Our green computer purchasing policy is a reflection of that commitment.

Benefits of Green Computers

Green computers save electricity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent water pollution emissions, reduce use of toxic materials and reduce the need for disposal of hazardous waste.

Certifications

Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) is an easy-to-use, on-line tool helping institutional purchasers select and compare computer desktops, laptops and monitors based on their environmental attributes. EPEAT was developed using a grant by EPA and is managed by the Green Electronics Council (GEC). It is dedicated to informing purchasers of the environmental criteria of electronic products.

- EPEAT-registered computer products have reduced levels of cadmium, lead, and mercury to better protect human health, and are easier to upgrade and recycle, in addition to meeting the government's Energy Star guidelines for energy efficiency. By buying EPEAT registered products, purchasers are significantly contributing to reducing the environmental impacts of their computers.
- EPEAT products are measured against both required and optional criteria. A product must meet all of the required criteria in its category to be added to the registry. It is then rated Bronze (meets all required criteria), Silver (meets all required criteria, plus 50% of optional criteria) or Gold (meets all required criteria, plus 75% of optional criteria), depending on how many of the optional criteria it meets.

Energy Star is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping to protect the environment and save money through energy efficient products and practices.
Products and Purchasing

All standard computer desktop and laptop configurations at Mount Holyoke College are EPEAT Gold or Silver products. In addition, all computers purchased by Mount Holyoke College meet Energy Star requirements to reduce their impact on the environment. The College preference is that all future computer purchases are Energy Star-certified and meet the standard of EPEAT Silver or higher.

Policy Review

Library, Information, and Technology Services (LITS) will periodically review this policy during the computer replacement process and when new products are considered. As technology is ever changing, we will consider the environment with all purchases.

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