



Department of Physics

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Laptop requirement for all students in PHY1004W

Each student in PHY1004W at UCT is required to have a laptop for use during class sessions as well as after hours. The minimum specifications which the laptop must have are listed below. A “netbook” would not be suitable.

Intel Core i3; 4 GB RAM; 500 GB HDD; Optical drive; 802.11 wireless; Microsoft Windows 7 or 8 or 10, or Mac iOS; Microsoft Office, or equivalent.

The Physics Department will supply additional (open source) software.

Students will be able to obtain a laptop with these specifications at a significantly reduced price from the national Student Technology Programme. (For more information please see: www.icts.uct.ac.za | Student Computing | Student Technology Programme). These laptops include Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office.

There will be various initiatives announced for students who already have a laptop meeting the specifications, to purchase the software at special prices: around R200 for a Microsoft Windows upgrade and R250 for Microsoft Office.

Students who are bursary holders should inform their sponsors of this requirement.

Students on full NSFAS financial aid will be provided with a laptop from UCT.

The laptops acquired for PHY1004W will continue to be used throughout the three years of the degree. The specifications have been chosen so that they will be able to handle all the computing requirements in senior years, including programming tasks, and data-acquisition in labs.

Students in PHY1004W are going to need to use their laptops in the following ways:

- Modelling of physics problems using VPython.
- Real time data acquisition in laboratories.
- Data analysis using Excel, and other programs.
- Access to ebooks and online material.
- Participating in online quizzes in class.
- Development of good writing skills with frequent written tasks requiring polishing and editing.
- Frequent download of materials from the course website.
- Regular use of email for receiving announcements and communicating with lecturers.

Andy Buffler, HoD and PHY1004W course convener