



Office of Online Learning

Indian Hills Community College

Computer Standards for Online Courses

Students who take online courses at Indian Hills Community College (IHCC) are required to have reliable access to computers which meet the following minimum hardware and software specifications. A personal computer “crash” will not be accepted as an excuse for missing assignment due dates.

These are the *minimum* standards which are sufficient to successfully complete an online course. However, as technology changes and our courses continue to develop, these standards may have to be raised. Thus, it may be beneficial to invest in a computer which surpasses the minimum standards, if affordable. Further, online students are encouraged to meet the *recommended* standards, if they are able, as this will greatly enhance their online learning experience.

Note: These standards represent the requirements for online courses in general at Indian Hills Community College. However, specific programs may have additional computer requirements. Please consult the director of your specific academic program for more information. Also, not every online course currently requires that all of these standards be met. If you are unsure as to the requirements for a specific course, please contact the IT Help Desk (helpdesk@indianhills.edu).

Computer Standards

Hardware

Processor: Intel Core 2 Duo Processor or AMD Athlon/Turion 64 X2 (or above) ¹

Memory (RAM): 2 GB ²

Hard Drive: 80 GB ³

DVD-ROM Drive: 16X

(Note: DVD-ROM Drives can typically also read CD-ROMs. Ensure that yours does) ⁴

Sound Card: 32-bit, SoundBlaster-compatible

Video Card: 256 MB of SDRAM graphics memory (**recommended:** 512 MB of SDRAM)

Audio Headset with built-in Microphone and a Webcam: These may be used in some courses to listen to audio lectures and for interaction with faculty and other students. ⁵

¹ Most computer retailers are now using more advanced processors in their new computers. Unlike other components, upgrading a processor after you purchase your computer can be costly and difficult. Because of this, it is wise to purchase a processor with enough performance power to meet both current and future needs.

² The price of computer memory continues to drop, making memory upgrades increasingly affordable. Students should consider exceeding the minimum listed above. Increasing RAM is a relatively inexpensive way to significantly increase the speed of a computer. 4 GB of Dual Channel DDR2 SDRAM is **recommended**.

³ Hard disk space is relatively inexpensive. It is often more convenient to buy a larger hard drive when purchasing a computer than to attempt an upgrade later if you run out of space.

⁴ Optional: Students may also wish to purchase a separate CD-RW or DVD-RW Drive, which allows them to create their own CDs and DVDs for storage purposes. A [USB flash drive](#) may also be helpful in transporting files.

⁵ A headset with built-in microphone combination is best, as it reduces echo/feedback which can keep those on the other end of the conversation from hearing clearly. Some laptops come with built-in web-cameras. Students will need to purchase their own headset/webcam, if required for the course, as these are **not** provided and are also not available in the computer labs on campus.

Monitor: 17 " SVGA color ⁶

Modem: 56 Kbps minimum
(**highly recommended:** cable, DSL, or other high-speed connection)

USB Flash Drive: Available in various sizes (512 MB to 16 GB). Allows you to transfer files easily from computer to computer. Also, useful for temporarily backing up files.

Software

Operating System: Windows XP (or later)

Web Browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer 7.0 (or above) ⁷

Email: When interacting with faculty and fellow students in their online courses, students are expected to use the "Course Mail" tool within ANGEL/MyHills⁸ rather than their external email accounts. However, when interacting with various college offices, students must also be able to receive, view, and send attachments using their Indian Hills Community College email account (www.indianhills.edu/studentemail | ____@ihcc.cc). Note: Due to the many difficulties experienced by students who use AOL, CompuServe, and web browser-based email services, such as Hotmail and Yahoo!, Indian Hills Community College does not support their use. Students who choose to use these options, do so at their own risk.

Microsoft Office Products: MS Word 2007, MS Excel 2007, and MS PowerPoint 2007 or above are required. ⁹

Internet Media Software (required: free downloads)

Adobe Acrobat Reader:
<http://get.adobe.com/reader>

Adobe Flash Player:
<http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer>

Java:
<http://www.java.com>

QuickTime:
<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

Windows Media Player:
<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/>

⁶ Set your screen resolution to 1024 x 768 or higher for optimal interaction with our online tutorials and online courses. See our online tutorial, which can walk you through how to do this (www.indianhills.edu/tutorials).

⁷ If using Internet Explorer 8, you will need to enable "Compatibility View."

⁸ ANGEL® is the online course management system used by Indian Hills Community College (IHCC). IHCC refers to its ANGEL interface as "MyHills."

⁹ The education version of MS Office 2007, which contains these programs, is significantly less expensive than the standard version. Please contact the IHCC Bookstore for more information (800.726.2585, ext. 5264). Other comparable software programs may be acceptable, depending on individual course requirements, as long as they can save files in the corresponding MS Office 2007 formats (i.e., .docx, .xlsx, .pptx).

Internet Service Providers (ISP)

A reliable Internet connection, which includes direct access to the World Wide Web and an email address is required.

Students must have at least a 56 Kbps Internet connection. Although not required, many areas have high-speed Internet access (e.g., cable, DSL, etc.), which can make interacting, downloading course materials, and doing research online much faster. If available in your area, we strongly **recommend** a high-speed Internet connection.

Students may obtain Internet connectivity through a national carrier or through a local Internet service provider. In choosing an Internet provider students should weigh cost, reliability, connection speed, and customer service.

Additional Notes

Students are expected to check their MyHills Course Mail and Indian Hills Community College (IHCC) email accounts **daily**. Otherwise, they may miss important emails sent by the school and professors. Official emails originating from the school will be sent to your IHCC email address (@ihcc.cc) while course-related emails will be sent using the MyHills Course Mail tool. In any case, students are responsible for all information sent to them via email regardless of problems they may have with an alternate account or Internet access.

We feel we must caution students about WEBTV (MSN TV), AOL, CompuServe, and other proprietary providers. While these companies advertise easy Internet access, we have found that their products do not always interact reliably with others. Students who use these services have often been known to have difficulty receiving/sending emails and attachments, as well as interacting in our online class environment, ANGEL[®] (known at IHCC as "MyHills"). Students who use Mac/Apple computers have also been known to experience difficulty interacting with the college. Therefore, IHCC does not encourage the use or provide special support for the use of these products. Students who choose to use these options to interact with IHCC, do so at their own risk. Special accommodations (e.g., extensions on assignments, etc. and specialized technical support) will not be provided.

Students should become familiar with the necessary hardware and software, and their functions (e.g., creating footnotes in MS Word, using the communication tools in MyHills) well in advance of assignment due dates to ensure successful completion and submission of assignments.

Computer Tutorials are provided to assist students: www.indianhills.edu/tutorials.

Indian Hills Community College is not able to provide support for software and hardware purchased by students with the exception of assisting students in connecting to the on-campus wireless Internet service. Please direct all other technical support questions to the applicable vendor.

On-Campus Courses: Since computer labs, which contain the required software, are provided for use by on-campus students, it is assumed that they have access to the programs required to complete assignments, etc. If an on-campus student has trouble interacting with the school or putting assignments in the proper format (e.g., MS Word, etc.) from his/her personal computer, he/she is expected to use the on-campus computer labs.

All students taking *online* courses are expected to have their own home computers and home Internet connections that meet the specifications provided above, in order to ensure they have reliable and timely access.

If you have questions or are unclear about anything in these computer standards, please feel free to contact the IT Help Desk for assistance: www.indianhills.edu/helpdesk.